



AROUND BURKE

Burkmont Baptist Church will present a special program called "Overdose" on each evening from Oct. 25 through Oct. 30. Four times will vary from 5 to 8:30 p.m., depending on the presentation night. For reservations, call 828-437-6582. A \$3 per person donation is requested, but is not required.

The Valdese American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Unit 234 will hold its annual Red, White and Baked Spaghetti benefit on Friday, Oct. 20, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. or until all spaghetti is gone. Meals will be available at the entrance to the Warren Room, which is located downstairs at the American Legion building. The American Legion can be found at 709 Church St., in Valdese. The cost of the meal will be \$8 and will include baked spaghetti, salad, bread, and dessert. For those who would like to pre-order, call the American Legion at 828-522-1511. All pre-orders must be received by Oct. 16 at 7 p.m.

The Trail of Treats will be held on Friday, Oct. 27, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Rutherford College Greenway Park, located behind Town Hall on Malcolm Boulevard.

Burke's Amazon' Race, sponsored by the Burke County United Way, has been postponed until the spring of 2024! Check the United Way's social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) and website to stay
See **AROUND**, Page 2A



MUSIC ABOUNDS

Live music lovers can get their fill at concerts on the Courthouse Square and Hidden Hill.

PUMPKIN MANIA

Columnist John Setzler shares his favorite pumpkin recipes.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

The Paper Plate begins restaurant reviews with Happy Taco.

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Burke legend needs community help

By **SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN**
Education Reporter
THE PAPER

Ralph Collette spent his educational career buying lunch for kids who had no money and doing laundry for students who didn't have washing machines at home.

Now the man who helped so many young people in Burke County needs help himself.

The retired longtime local educator suffered a spinal injury in a fall last February that left him paralyzed from the neck down. His good friend

Jimmy Warlick has established a GoFundMe account to help Collette pay for the nursing-home care he needs as he recovers.

It's been a successful campaign so far, but more is needed.

"I try to help myself first,"

See **COLLETTE**, Page 9A

Jimmy Warlick (right) and Elizabeth Cobb, of Morganton, visit their high school friend, Ralph Collette, at Autumn Care in Drexel.

SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN / THE PAPER



Welcome to Burke County

What message do giant Confederate flags convey to visitors?



WSOC-TV / FOR THE PAPER

A large Confederate flag adjacent to the Hildebran exit on I-40 in eastern Burke County.

By **ALLEN VANNOPPEN and SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN**
THE PAPER STAFF

Travelers entering Burke County on I-40 from either direction are greeted first by official county welcome signage. "Burke County," the signs read. "All. About. Advancing."

Within a mile, east-bound and west-bound I-40 travelers encounter gigantic, high-off-the-ground Confederate flags.

One is near the Dysartsville exit to the west, the other adjacent to the Hildebran exit to the east.

They are monster big, 20-feet by 30-feet, atop 80-foot poles, and almost impossible to miss when unfurled in the breeze. The flags appear so close to the interstate that passing motorists say they wonder if the flags are planted on private or public property.

The western flag is installed

on an 0.92-acre plot adjacent to I-40 near exit 94 (Dysartsville Rd.), 3860 Jamestown Road, Morganton, owned by Dale V. Curtis, according to Burke County records. Neighbors say it is not his primary residence.

Curtis purchased the land in August 2005, according to property deeds.

The eastern flag is adjacent to I-40 exit 119 (Henry River Road) on land owned by Cook Properties, LLC in Hildebran, accord-

ing to the county records. The five-acre plot carries an address of 8968 Dietz Ave., Hickory, NC and was purchased by the Cook family in 1997.

See **FLAGS**, Page 12A

A monumental decision

WRAPPING UP NEXT WEEK:

- What other towns have done
- The Paper's editorial position

Confederate monument has negligible impact on downtown Morganton business

By **MARTY QUEEN**
Senior Reporter
THE PAPER

Opinions about the Confederate monument that has stood on the grounds of the Historic Burke Courthouse for the last 105 years vary greatly.

But a number of downtown business owners and workers,

regardless of their own personal feelings on the issue, agree the memorial, with its 9-foot-tall, bronze soldier, doesn't have a huge effect on their livelihoods.

Beth Davidson, who, along with her husband Eric, owns Uncle Eee's Restaurant on South Sterling Street, said the popular Black-owned cafe

hasn't been affected adversely, although she hates seeing the monument every day.

"Because we are steeped in faith, that has been my prayer, that we don't have any effect from it, so I would have to say 'no,'" Davidson said when asked if the memorial affects her business.

"Now, is it a disgrace to have

to look out the door and look up there and see that? Of course. Because our downtown monies are contributing to the City of Morganton, so why shouldn't I have a say in something I find so egregious in the middle of downtown, that my money contributes to taking care of?"

The soldier, put into place atop an existing monument base in 1918, has been a polarizing presence at times, especially three years ago when violence nearly broke out on the Historic Courthouse Square among op-

See **BUSINESS**, Page 12A



'It's important to remember on this issue and any other issue, that we respect each other's opinions and values.'

TOMMY SAIN

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THE WEEK AHEAD



SATURDAY Sunny HIGH: 69° LOW: 40°



SUNDAY Sunny HIGH: 63° LOW: 40°



MONDAY Sunny HIGH: 69° LOW: 47°



TUESDAY Sunny HIGH: 74° LOW: 46°



WEDNESDAY Sunny HIGH: 76° LOW: 50°



THURSDAY Mostly sunny HIGH: 75° LOW: 48°



FRIDAY Cloudy HIGH: 77° LOW: 58°

AROUND

FROM PAGE 1A

updated on the new dates, coming very soon! The organization will be reaching out to sponsors, vendors and registered teams to keep them updated as well.

On Sunday, Oct. 8, at 11 a.m., Shiloh AME Church will observe their annual Lay Witness worship service. The guest speaker will be Penny S. Oliver from Burlington. She is the AME Church's immediate past president of the Western North Carolina Conference Lay Organization.

Celebrate Daniel Morgan Day with the Burke Historic Foundation on Sunday, Oct. 22. The free event begins at 1:30 p.m. on the grounds of the Historic Burke County Courthouse, 102 E. Union St. General Daniel Morgan is the hero of the Battle of Cowpens during the American Revolution.

On Sunday, Oct. 29 at 11 a.m. Shiloh AME Church will celebrate their annual Men's Day worship service. The guest preacher, Elder George Isbell, is a member of St. Luke Church of Opportunity.

The Burke County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Outreach Committee will meet on Wednesday, Oct. 11 at 8:10 a.m. The meeting will be held in the Club Room at the Collett Street Recreation Center in Morganton.

IMAGINE Morganton 2040 Strategic Plan community workshops will be held Tuesday, Oct. 24, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and Wednesday, Oct. 25 from noon to 2 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

The Morganton Arts Design and Engineering Competition (MADE) will be held at CoMA Friday, Oct. 20, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event will feature 13 teams from across Burke County middle and high schools competing in an exciting, onsite, design build challenge.

FOCUS ON MORGANTON

Morganton climbs aboard for passenger rail service

By MARTY QUEEN Senior Reporter THE PAPER

The Morganton City Council is all aboard with passenger rail service.

The council passed a resolution in support of funding the proposed expansion of passenger rail in western North Carolina at its regular monthly meeting Monday night.

Passenger trains haven't run in western N.C. since Southern Railway discontinued the service in 1975, but a recent feasibility study by the N.C. Department of Transportation assessed the viability of restoring a route that could take people from the mountains to the

piedmont. The study coincides with the release of an abundance of federal funds for transportation projects.

As a result, the movement to re-establish rail service is picking up a full head of steam. Mimi Phifer, who, along with neighbor Barbara Lynam, heads up a group called Waiting for the Train, said the project has developed an enthusiastic local following in a short time.

"I grew up here, and left here in 1966 to go to school, but before I left, the train was still running, and we used to pick up my grandma when she would come from Florida," said Phifer. "I rode on the train a couple of times. And when I came back, I read in the newspaper about a feasibility study and money that had become available."

Phifer's group has met twice, and attendance greatly increased at the second meeting. Waiting for the Train meets again Wednesday, Oct. 18, at the Collett Street Recreation Center at 5:30 p.m.

"We're going to have four times as many people as we had at our first meeting," said Phifer, addressing the board and the audience. "We've gotten a lot of enthusiastic support and I wish you would all come."

Proponents of passenger rail have been working for more than two decades to make it a reality, and the Federal Government's \$550 billion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, a bipartisan law passed by Congress in 2021, allocates \$66 billion for passenger and freight



MARTY QUEEN / THE PAPER

Laurie Johnston speaks on behalf of members of the historic marker committee during Monday's Morganton City Council meeting. Saturday, Oct. 14 was designated as Morganton Civil Rights Day. The city has been awarded a marker on the North Carolina Civil Rights Trail by the N.C. African American Heritage Commission.

rail service in the United States.

Western N.C. groups hope the money will help open a 139-mile Amtrak route from Asheville to Salisbury, with various junctions in between, including possible stops in Morganton and Valdese. Federal funds would cover up to 80% of the \$665 million cost.

"It's a real possibility now, and by 2035, we're going to be able to ride the train," said Phifer. "I'm looking forward to riding the train through the mountains in the fall, up to Asheville.

I might not stop, might just turn around and come back, but still, how much fun would that be? So, thank you for taking it up, and thank you for approving the resolution."

The resolution states the city "fully supports the creation of an attractive, marketable and cost-effective rail connection service for Western North Carolina, that includes funding by the FRA and North Carolina General Assembly with financial participation from local governments and economic en-

See COUNCIL, Page 11A



MARTY QUEEN / THE PAPER

Mimi Phifer speaks to Morganton's City Council during last Monday's meeting. Phifer helps lead a group called Waiting for the Train, which advocates for the return of passenger rail service to Western North Carolina.

LEAVES ONLY, PLEASE!

'Leaf Season' now underway for Morganton Public Works

By ALLEN VANNOPPEN Publisher THE PAPER

Leaf season for Morganton Public Works isn't what Leaf Season is for the Tourism office.

The Tourism team is busy answering questions about upcoming peak viewing times to behold the beauty of the seasonal extravaganza known as Fall Foliage.

The Public Works Department, led by Michael Chapman, is gearing up to vacuum up residential leaves in all their glorious color raked from yards and piled along street curbs.

From Oct. 1 through Jan. 31, Chapman's team pilots specialized street-cleaning vacuum

trucks throughout Morganton's neighborhoods collecting leaves, free of charge. (Starting Feb. 1, there is a \$25 charge to have leaves collected from residents.)

"If you bag your leaves there will be no charge for collection all year," Chapman said. "Bags should not exceed 35 pounds. Excessive weight bags will require a \$25 charge."

The tons of collected leaves

are deposited in the City's composting yard. "We dump the leaves there and offer leaf compost back to our citizens," Chapman said.

GUIDELINES

There are some guidelines for this free service.

Place your leaves behind the curb in front of your residence

without spilling over into the curb line. Residents should pile leaves as close to the road as possible without blocking the street or sidewalks.

Do not blow leaves into the street as it causes safety problems.

Keep leaves away from storm drains and out of the street to help prevent flooding. If your vehicle is parked on the side of the street blocking a leaf pile or making it difficult to pick up without damaging your vehicle, your leaves will not be collected.

Please use extreme caution when operating motor vehicles in the vicinity of leaf collection crews for the safety of everyone.

Do not pile leaves on top of utility boxes, around power poles, mailboxes, or close to



City of Morganton leaf collection trucks will be busy for the next several months.

See LEAVES, Page 7A

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Standing-room-only crowd demands removal of school library books

By SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN
Education Reporter
THE PAPER

A standing-room-only crowd of about 175 people packed the Burke County Board of Education meeting Monday night. They filled every available seat, stood along both sides of the room and even spilled out into the hallway at the Olive Hill Resource Center.

The crowd came to address the board about removing books from school library shelves. Many of the 15 speakers had talked about the same subject several months ago, when a smaller group of concerned citizens raised the issue before the board at its April 17 meeting.

Spectators held poster board signs decrying pornography and demanding books containing what the group perceives as inappropriate material for school-age children be removed from school libraries.

The board heard from 15 representatives during a 40-minute public comments session, but did not make any comments about the issue. No action was taken by the board.

Several of the speakers read explicit portions from some of the books in question.

According to Board Chairwoman Wendi Craven, addressing the issue of controversial books has been one of her priorities.

"When I was sworn in in December 2021, I said this was the first thing we needed to work on," she told The Paper in April.

For several years, parents in Burke County have approached the board with concerns about students' access to certain books. Recently, the board of education drafted and approved a policy that Craven says puts power in the hands of parents when it comes to access to books for their children.

This year, surveys were sent to the parents of a total of 3,819 students at Draughn, East Burke, Freedom, and Patton High Schools, as well as Burke Middle College. The survey asked parents to indicate whether their child(ren) should be allowed access to books deemed appropriate for older students.

The schools use an online grading system, similar to movie ratings, to identify reading selections deemed appropriate for children 14 years of age or older. Those books are labeled "14+."

According to Cheryl Shuffler, the school system's public information officer, the 14+



The Board of Education meeting was packed with people demanding the removal of certain books from the shelves of high school libraries.

survey only went out to high school parents because the goal is to keep age-appropriate material in the high school media centers (i.e. no 14+ material available to elementary or middle school media centers).

This is the messaging parents received: "Burke County Public Schools has several layers in place that allow parents to be involved in their student's reading choices from school media centers. We are asking high school parents to complete the 14+ Teen Approval Form. The form collects parents' and students' names and their high school name. It also includes a "Yes" or "No" question about permission for books with a "14+ Teen Label," indicating these books may contain mature content not suitable for students under 14. If parents do not fill out the form or if you answer "No," you do not give your student permission to check out these books. Your student's name will be flagged in the library check-out system and the student will not be allowed to check out books designated 14+."

As of Thursday, parents of 1,627 of Burke's 3,819 high school students have responded to the survey. Of those respondents, 1,546 chose to allow their children access to the restricted materials and 81 have said their children may not read the books labeled 14+.

"We will reevaluate (the results of the feedback) at the end of the nine weeks as a leadership team and take a look, as a board, and see where we are," said Dr. Melanie Honeycutt, Chief Information Offi-

cer for Digital Teaching and Learning.

Parents may challenge any book on the shelves of a school library. When there is a challenge, the book is reviewed by a committee, and one of three things can happen: the book can stay on the shelves; it can be kept behind the library desk and will only be available to students whose parents have given permission for access; or the book can be removed from libraries.

If a book is challenged and deemed inappropriate for one library in the district, that title is removed from all of the county's media centers.

According to Honeycutt, the book selection committee in each school consists of the media coordinator, some of the teachers at the school, Instructional Technology Facilitator Debbie Dale, and Honeycutt.

She explained the process librarians go through when

choosing books.

"When new titles are ordered, each media coordinator must go through reviews, and teachers provide feedback and suggestions," she said. "The list comes to Ms. Dale and if she sees any red flags, and we did see two, and we sent those (titles) back to the media coordinator and said you can't order these two books."

"Then it comes to me, and I do a final review," she said. "We try to take care of everything we can, but there can still be (books) that can fall through the cracks."

Board Chairwoman Craven said the current policy does a good job of protecting students from materials their parents may deem inappropriate.

"We went through an extensive process last year to revise our supplemental material policy and came up with comprehensive procedures that balance offering a variety of op-

tions to students while also protecting parents' rights and wishes to be a part of the choices their students make when it comes to reading and checking out materials from media centers," she said.

"We are being recognized across the state for the proactive measures we are taking," Craven continued. Several have reached out to us to share how we have navigated this delicate situation."

Superintendent Swan said, "We recognize that some parents are uncomfortable with some of the content, which is the reason we did not include examples in the form. However, parents are welcome to request a list of books and examples of the mature content."

"Our hope is to be as transparent as possible with parents while also being sensitive to the possibility of students being exposed to content that parents do not want them to be exposed to," he stated.

Rev. Dean Hart, associate pastor at Winkler's Grove Baptist Church in eastern Burke County, spoke to the board on Monday. He said the group will continue to show up for board meetings in the future.

"We aren't going anywhere," he stated. "This (issue) is very important to us. Some things are worth standing up and fighting for."

A live feed of the event was broadcast on the Burke County Board of Education's YouTube channel, where their meetings are archived. The channel may be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/@burkecounty-publicschools4510/playlists>.

Sandra Wilkerson Queen is the education and business reporter for The Paper. She may be reached at 828-445-8595 or via email at sandra@thepaper.media.

Albert Francis Garrou Sr. family in 1935




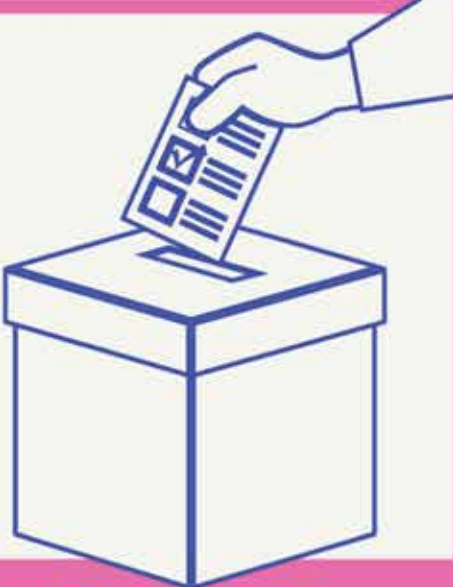
PICTURE BURKE / FOR THE PAPER

The family of Albert Francis Garrou, Sr. is pictured in front of their home on Main Street in Valdese in 1935. Mr. Garrou was born in Italy in 1893 and immigrated with his parents that same year in the third contingent of Waldensian settlers to Valdese. At the age of 17, he became part owner of the Waldensian Hosiery Company that later became Alba-Waldensian, Inc. Front row, left to right: Albert Francis Garrou, Jr., Mary Frances Garrou. Second row: Albert Francis Garrou, Sr. (1896-1978) and his wife, Louise Victoria Holloway Garrou (1897-1955). Standing are Leith Holloway Garrou, Jane Gardner Garrou, Louis William Garrou, and Alba Louise Garrou. This image was created by Greene Studio. The History Museum and the NC Room (John T. Oxford, Jr.'s Walt Greene Collection) provided this image to Picture Burke, a digital photograph preservation project of the NC Room of the Burke County Public Library.

RE-ELECT

FRANCES HILDEBRAN

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VOTE FOR AN INDEPENDENT VOICE THAT LISTENS TO ALL CITIZENS

PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO RE-ELECT FRANCES HILDEBRAN

NOVEMBER ELECTION

Six candidates seeking three seats on Valdese Town Council

TIM SKIDMORE



Full name: Timothy James Skidmore (Incumbent)
Age: 66
Education:

- Valdese High School
- East Burke High School 1975
- Western Piedmont AA, AS, AAS with honors
- Attended WNC

Military service: None
Employment:

- Daimler Truck North America, Mount Holly Plant
- I am the Chief Automation Engineer responsible for Automation Networks, Machine and Control Systems. Also responsible for all Automation Projects and installation of Robot interfaces and inter-connected systems.

How long have you lived in the town in which you desire to serve? 66 years
Do you own your home? If so, how long have you lived at that address? 36 years

WHY ARE YOU SEEKING ELECTION?

I was appointed to finish out the term of Keith Ogle when he resigned citing health problems. I have lived in this town all my life, born and raised, and went through the Valdese Schools for 11 years.
 I worked in local industry for 28 years. I know and understand Valdese as well as anyone could. I felt I had something to contribute with my engineering and facility background to repay what the town and its people had done for me and my family.

If elected, what will be your primary focus during your first six months in office?

Our primary focus should be to continue the programs that have been started. Street paving is very important.
 I hear this the most from people I talk with. Another is to continue to fund our Police and Fire departments, to make sure they have the resources needed to keep Valdese the 19th safest town in NC and to make it to number 1!
 Continue support for the broadband installation. This is a very important infrastructure for Valdese to have. Lots of businesses now allow for remote work and this is a critical requirement.

If elected, how will you address recent property revaluations and the subsequent increase in the actual dollar amount citizens are paying in property taxes?

No one likes paying more tax. My own home increased 70 percent. The county re-evaluation came at a very inopportune time for real estate values.
 Many feel housing was grossly overpriced causing a false value to be calculated. This may be so, but now the towns in our county are left to deal with those numbers. The council faced rising prices of labor, in-

surance, and materials and had little choice but to adjust the rate.

We did lower the rate, but not enough to suit some. With the extra funds we will increase wages of some part time employees. Most will be used to start a long overdue paving program that will not cease until all streets in the limits of Valdese are paved.

Our citizens' tax money must be spent wisely to improve the town as a whole and add value to their lives as residents of Valdese. We should promote home ownership.
 Owning one's home creates a feeling of belonging and a sense of community. Continue to promote our downtown area and attract diverse businesses. Continue with the CIP that will insure town infrastructure reliability. Continue to advance the water project with Lenoir to keep our water rates low.

What is your understanding of the proposed public safety building and how it will be funded?

This is a very contested and dividing topic in the Town of Valdese. A new Public Safety building will be a costly endeavor. There is no doubt that it must be built.

The old building in my opinion and others, is that it should not be repaired. The original building is approaching 100 years of age. The South wing is of substandard construction and is failing.

The North wing has been gutted because of black mold and still has roof problems. The older center building has wooden floors and is two stories. It is not ADA compliant. Many expensive upgrades to just get the building to modern standards are more than it is worth.

There is also a possibility of asbestos. If testing shows it is present, any repairs will double the cost. The new building will address all these deficiencies.

The building will be funded by monies that are made available during the year as debt is cleared of various items. Thus, no extra funding will be necessary. The freed-up capital will pay the yearly amount of the new loan. There is also an amount set aside to cover initial costs and contingencies.

Do you support moving forward with a new building? Why or why not?

I do support the new building. I think it is a must. I thought this long before I became a council member.

It is not feasible to repair the old building as it has fundamental deficiencies that will not be corrected economically. There are differences of opinion on the Pineburr site. It is not ideal but is the only parcel available in town that is large enough.

The condition of the current building is such that we can not wait much longer. The government agency supplying the loan has been very long in pro-

See SKIDMORE, Page 10A

TIM BARUS



Full name: Timothy Bryan Barus (Incumbent)
Age: 53
Education:

- East Burke High School Icard, N.C. 1988
- Western Piedmont Community College - Associate of Arts
- Western Carolina University Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice
- Western Carolina University Masters of Teaching (Core Curriculum, Mild to Moderate Special Education)
- North Carolina Department of Public Safety - Corrections Officer Training
- North Carolina Safety and Health Education and Research at UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Workforce Development Certifications

Military service:

- US Army 25th Infantry Division Schofield Barracks HI, 1990 to 1993, Rank: Specialist E-4 (Squad Leader)
- Gulf War Veteran
- Honorable Discharge

Medals:

- National Defense Medal - Gulf War
- Army Commendation Medals: Acting Platoon Leader during Humanitarian Missions and for being Squad Leader during Missions - going above and beyond call of duty; and, Humanitarian Service Medal - Humanitarian Aid/Rescue to Hurricane Iniki Survivors

Advanced Training:

- Air Assault Training
- Urban Warfare Tactics
- Water/Survival Training Expert
- Infantryman/Small Arm Weapons Specialist
- Jungle Warfare

Employment:

- Retired, Draughn High School Exceptional Children's Teacher
- Coach for Football, Men's and Women's Golf, and Powder Puff football. Served as the Voice of the Wildcats - Public Address Announcer for Football

How long have you lived in the town in which you desire to serve? 1 year inside city limits
Do you own your home? If so, how long have you lived at that address? 1 year
 Running for elected office

WHY ARE YOU SEEKING ELECTION?

As I was planning to retire I answered the call from Valdese Citizens to serve. My family has served Valdese and its citizens since the train brought my Great-Grandfather here in 1893.
 I am a fifth generation Waldensian who was raised in my Great-Grandfather's home. My entire life has been about serving others as it began with my three years of military service and then 30+ years of state and county (Burke) service to its citizens.
 Investing in Valdese's future just as my Great-Grandfather, Grandfather, and parents have is why I am running for reelection.

If elected, what will be your primary focus during your first six months in office?

I will be evaluating the needs and the wants of the public safety building that fits within the budget and loan amounts.
 If the bids and data come back higher than what is budgeted due to the loan amount, then we will need to reassess the project plan. The loan limit has been set at \$7.4 million that the government will allow.

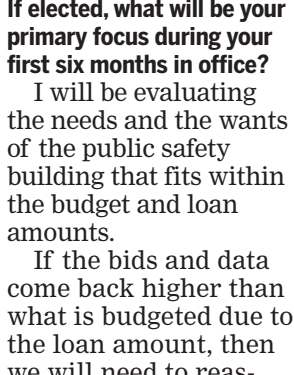
If elected, how will you address recent property revaluations and the subsequent increase in the actual dollar amount citizens are paying in property taxes?

Another focus will be on getting all three housing projects completed. Pineville Crossing, which is a WORK-FORCE, Valdese Weavers Mill, and Tron Place will be completed soon. One of these projects will house citizens 55 and older.
 A revenue neutral rate was held in our town for over 30 years. Revenue neutral only applies to current property and delinquent taxes not the other 54 line items in our budget.
 The 2023 property tax revenue only represents \$394,000.00 out of a \$7,693,609.00 general fund budget (not water or sewer budgets). Or 19.234% of the budget revenues.
 Again this is only property taxes and the budget is based on actual expenses with increases based on current and projected costs of services and supplies.
 Valdese is blessed with a diverse real estate market. We have original homes, older homes, renovated homes, and new construction. Each property has different values which allows the homeowner to use the value to their benefit.
 We offer a payment plan and residents have the availability to have their property tax value reduced by the county.
 We voted to lower our tax rate from the previous year to help offset some of the financial difficulties of citizens and maintain the level of services that we are blessed with.

What is your understanding of the proposed public safety building and how it will be funded?

Since I was sworn in as a Councilman back in January of this year, I realized that I had inherited an ongoing project that has been handed down by previous councils.
 Citizens have been allowed to give input at several Public Hearings held over previous years in regards to the Public Safety Building Project.
 The previous Council held a meeting at the Old Rock School to present their findings regarding the proposed public building design that lasted nearly three hours and it was thorough, and it included input from citizens.
 The conclusion from these meetings as well as multiple studies re-

FRANCES HILDEBRAN



Full name: Frances M. Hildebran (Incumbent)
Age: 68
Education:

- Valdese High School 1973
- Western Piedmont Community College - Associate Degree, 1975
- UNC Institute of Government/Municipal Clerk Certification School - Certified Municipal Clerk, 1986
- Notary Public since 1980

Military service: None
Employment:

- UNC Blue Ridge HealthCare, Sr. Executive Assistant to the President and CEO and Secretary to the Board of Directors
- Retired Municipal Government Administration, 30 Years

How long have you lived in the town in which you desire to serve? 50 years
Do you own your home? If so, how long have you lived at that address? 17 years

WHY ARE YOU SEEKING ELECTION?

I have lived most of my life in Valdese with over 32 years of experience in municipal government.
 I have served on the Town Council for 12 years and as Mayor Pro Tem for the past two years.
 I am committed to continuing to represent my constituents and help maintain an excellent small-town quality of life.

If elected, what will be your primary focus during your first six months in office?

If elected, my primary focus during my first six months in office will be to:

- Continue working with the street paving committee on street resurfacing.
- Engage with town departments to enhance the beauty of our neighborhoods, parks, and downtown.
- Oversee the replacement of 80-year-old water lines.
- Work with engineers/architects and management to build a new public safety building.
- Recruit small businesses and restaurants to Valdese.

If elected, how will you address recent property revaluations and the subsequent increase in the actual dollar amount citizens are paying in property taxes?

Due to a property revaluation conducted by Burke County during the peak of a housing boom, property values in Valdese have increased, resulting in higher property taxes for all residents.
 The Valdese Town Council recognized the financial burden this would place on residents and reduced the tax rate from 54.5 to 51.5 cents per \$100 valuation.
 However, the town has faced several challenges in recent years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and supply chain disrup-

What is your understanding of the proposed public safety building and how it will be funded?

As a result, the town was unable to reduce taxes by more.
 The implemented tax rate will be used to maintain essential services, such as police and fire protection, road resurfacing, and sanitation.
 It will also be used to provide recreational activities for seniors and youth.

What is your understanding of the proposed public safety building and how it will be funded?

After studying the issue for over five years, we have concluded that the current police and fire department facility is dangerous and no longer meets the needs of a modern department.
 Multiple engineers and architects have confirmed that the facility is not up to code and cannot withstand a major hurricane, ice storm, or tornado.
 While the existing building could be renovated, it would be costly and would not provide enough space for the department's expanding operations.
 The cost of a new facility would be comparable to the cost of renovating the existing building, and it would provide a number of benefits, including:

- A secure area to bring arrestees into the facility
- Larger bays for easier vehicle access
- Quicker response times due to the proposed location and facility features
- Separate bunk rooms, showers, and lockers for male and female firefighters

 A new facility would also have a projected minimum life of 40 years and be classified as a category 4 essential facility. It would be designed to withstand severe weather events and other disasters.
 The construction of the building will be funded with cash we have already saved for the project, a grant from the state, and a loan from USDA.

See BARUS, Page 10A

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Age: 68
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- Western Piedmont Community College - Associate Degree, 1975
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See HILDEBRAN, Page 10A

NOVEMBER ELECTION

This week, The Paper features candidate profiles for the six individuals seeking seats on the Valdese Town Council. Three seats will be on the ballot.

Each candidate was provided with an equal and fair opportunity to respond to the questions specific to their community and given 10 days to complete their responses. Each candidate's answers

are presented here as they were provided to The Paper without editing except in the case where an obvious spelling error was noted or if the response exceeded allowed word count. In such cases, the candidate was contacted for clarification.

The Paper's questions are in bold. Responses are in regular type.

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 7. Early voting begins on Thursday, Oct. 19. The early voting site closest to Valdese is the town hall in Rutherford College.

Pam Walker, the Central Burke Reporter at The Paper, provided the questions for the candidates and compiled the submitted materials and images for this series. She may be reached at pam@thepaper.media or 828-443-6103.

GLENN HARVEY



Full name: Glenn Francis Harvey
Age: 83
Education:
 • Winfield-Clinton High School, Cabot PA, 1957
 • Slippery Rock University, BSEd, biology and physical sciences
 • Duquesne University, MEd, guidance and counseling
 • Vanderbilt and Ohio Wesleyan Universities, graduate work in math and physics.
 • University of Pittsburgh, MBA, finance emphasis
Military service: None
Employment:
 • Latest and concurrently, CEO of the American Ceramic Society (3 years) and President of Murex, Inc., General Contractors.
 • Retired, Instrument Society of America, CEO
How long have you lived in the town in which you desire to serve? Eighteen years
Do you own your home? Yes.
If so, how long have you lived at that address? Three years.

WHY ARE YOU SEEKING ELECTION?

My wife and I fell in love with Valdese and its unique history in 2005 and chose it as our permanent retirement home. Valdese reflects the unique congeniality of the 19th-century Waldensian colonists and the 18th-century Scotch-Irish settlers who welcomed them and supported them through their difficult early years. We have been disappointed to see our town governance become a closed, rule-by-a-few in turning a deaf ear to the safety and financial well-being of 4000+ citizens. I answered the call to put citizens first once more, in this "greatest small town in North Carolina."

If elected, what will be your primary focus during your first six months in office?
 I WILL NOT CUT SERVICES – as rumored by incumbents who are denying their records. I will: 1) involve citizens through public and live-streamed meetings; 2) reverse the 2023 actions that would explode our long-term debt from \$11 million to over \$24 million; 3) appoint local business and finance experts to review and advise on improving all services; 4) regarding public safety, I will aggressively address the growing drug problems and bring back local, after-hours answering of non-emergency police calls; 5) roll back the 2023 tax hike. Then, I will start recruiting new, job-creating businesses.

In your own words, if elected, how will you address recent property revaluations and the subsequent increase in the actual dollar amount citizens are paying

in property taxes?
 The historically high 2023 tax hike was the unfortunate result of a council that does not understand how property taxation works or consider the impact their decisions have on citizens. Burke County reevaluates property every four years, setting values at the current market rate. Yes, the 2023 revaluation increased average property values by 43% countywide. But then, our council adopted the highest tax rate of any Burke town, falsely claiming, "The county made us do it." To protect taxpayers upon revaluation from the very thing that the Valdese council did, NC requires municipalities to calculate a "Revenue Neutral Rate" (RNR) which the State believes to be fair.

For Valdese, the RNR is 41.5 cents per \$100 property value. The Valdese Town Council unanimously adopted the manager's recommendation to raise \$400,000 of "new revenue" by setting the tax rate at 51.5 cents, or 24% above the Revenue Neutral Rate. Not one dollar of that new revenue is allocated to recreation, police, fire, or other essential services. That is why the unnecessary 2023 tax hike must and can be rolled back to the RNR 41.5 cents in 2024, with no impact, whatsoever, on citizen services.

What is your understanding of the proposed public safety building and how it will be funded?
 The proposed public safety building has Valdese on a path to financial disaster. In August 2018, the council consensus was to renovate the existing building for \$700,000 and finalize the decision at the next meeting. That did not happen. Instead, the manager, fire chief, and police chief want the grandest public safety building in North Carolina. In September 2020, the council approved hiring an architect for \$445,000 to design a new building. The 2018 need for \$700,000 to renovate the existing building has exploded to funding that may exceed \$10 million. Further, the 24/7 emergency traffic and sirens would be relocated from mid-town to a residential community.

In 2022, the manager applied for a USDA loan based on 2021 construction cost estimates. At a special meeting on March 16, 2023, the council approved USDA's detailed list of conditions for a preliminary \$7.2 million loan and total cost of \$8.9 million, before getting bids. USDA will reconsider the loan if the construction bids exceed \$275/sq ft. With construction cost increases in the past two years, no one can know what this building would cost in 2024, how it could be funded, or if it could be funded.

Do you support moving for-

See HARVEY, Page 10A

GARY OGLE



Full name: Gary Norman Ogle
Age: 71
Education:
 • Valdese High School, 1970
 • Gardner Webb College, BS – Health, Physical Education, Science, 1974
 • Appalachian State University, MA – Public School Administration, 1981
 • Educational Specialist (EDS) - Public School Administration 1985
Military service: None
Employment:
 • Burke County Public School, 30 years of service, Retired 2004
 • Served as Coach, Teacher, Asst. Principal and Principal in various schools throughout the county during my tenure.
How long have you lived in the town in which you desire to serve? 32 Years Total
Do you own your home? Yes
If so, how long have you lived at that address? 8 Years

WHY ARE YOU SEEKING ELECTION?

The people of Valdese feel unheard, alienated, and shell-shocked by our recent tax bills. They're nervous about funding a public safety building that will bring millions of dollars of debt to the town that will be left to our legacies. I want to be a voice for all residents of Valdese and keep them involved and informed regarding town decisions. I want to work closely with all public services to assure they will absolutely continue to provide much needed amenities for our residents.

If elected, what will be your primary focus during your first six months in office?
 I will work diligently to become familiar with all aspects of town government. This will include all services and budgets attached to each department. I will encourage citizen input on all matters. Citizens will be encouraged to attend council meetings in person but may also view meetings via virtual means. I will seek to understand and begin working on ways to improve all existing services for Valdese residents. I would like to see an expansion of police services, including local non-emergency calls.

If elected, how will you address recent property revaluations and the subsequent increase in the actual dollar amount citizens are paying in property taxes?
 We have the highest property tax of any city or town in Burke County. I want to be involved in decreasing this tax rate from 51.5 cents back to a revenue neutral rate of 41.5 cents without compromising any town services. This can be done with careful consideration of all

spending plans. What is your understanding of the proposed public safety building and how it will be funded? There has clearly been no transparency in the actual bottom-line cost of the building. In our town's newsletter (distributed with the water bill), there were 12 areas of financing listed to pay an annual payment of approximately \$400,000 for an unknown number of years.

I want to first understand where the council stands on a whole cost estimate for the facility and what features they seek in this building entirely. As a Town Councilman, I seek to fully access the needs of a public safety building along with other Council members and weigh the best options for our town. It will be important, again, to seek the opinions of our citizens before making final decisions regarding the current or any future facility.

Do you support moving forward with a new building? Why or why not?
 I do not support a quick move to build a new fire department without complete and immediate understanding of exactly what our current facilities offer. I also do not support a rash decision to construct a new building without a clear understanding of the total cost that will fall on the backs of our citizens through tax dollars. I do believe there is an immediate need to assess the existing public services building and hire qualified people to give their professional opinion as to how we can provide a safe environment for our police and fire personnel.
If elected as a public servant, what legacy do you hope to achieve during your tenure in office?

I want to be the Councilman that assures people of Valdese were heard during my tenure. I seek to make honest and fair decisions. I hope they will feel they were represented and advocated for during my time on the Council. I hope they will believe I had the best interest of all residents at heart when making any town decisions.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

I want to reiterate that my campaign platform has never been or will be to cut any town services. Our goal is to only improve the services for the residents of the Town of Valdese and to be good stewards of our tax dollars.

HEATHER WARD



Full name: Heather Nicole Ward
Age: 42
Education:
 • Higher Ground Christian Academy, 1999
 • Ministerial Credentials from Lee University, 2020
Military service: None
Employment:
 • River of Life Church - Director of Outreach and Youth Leader
 • Warehouse 18 Event Venue - Event Specialist
 • Southern Bliss Weddings - Wedding and Event Coordinator, Officiator, and Decorator
How long have you lived in the town in which you desire to serve? 21 years
Do you own your home? Yes
If so, how long have you lived at that address? 15 years

WHY ARE YOU SEEKING ELECTION?

I am running for town council in Valdese because I believe the constituents deserve accountable and transparent representation. The ward I live in, Ward 5, grapples with drug problems, theft, and homelessness, and I'm dedicated to addressing these challenges with compassionate yet effective solutions. Many of my neighbors and friends feel they are not being heard on these issues and asked me to consider the office. Additionally, I want to see lower taxes while maintaining essential services, ensuring a balanced approach for our community's well-being. Together, we can create a safer, more prosperous Valdese.

If elected, what will be your primary focus during your first six months in office?
 In my first 6 months as a town council member, I'm committed to building a stronger community connection. I will organize open forums outside of regular council meetings, to listen to the citizens' voices and gather their concerns. Every taxpayer is a crucial stakeholder in Valdese, and I will actively encourage their input. Additionally, I aim to enhance transparency by live streaming council meetings, ensuring more residents can witness our town's decision-making process.

I will pursue rolling back taxes to a revenue-neutral state, providing relief from recent revaluation hikes, especially for the elderly and low-income individuals who were hit hardest.

If elected, how will you address recent property revaluations and the subsequent increase in the actual dollar amount citizens are paying in property taxes?
 If elected, my priority is to address the impact of recent property reval-

uations on citizens' property taxes. I understand the financial strain this has placed on our community. I will diligently work to roll back taxes to a revenue-neutral state, ensuring that citizens do not bear the brunt of substantial increases in property tax payments due to reevaluations. I will advocate for a thorough review of our tax structure, seeking fair and equitable solutions that consider the economic circumstances of our residents, particularly the elderly and those with lower incomes.

It's essential to find a balance that allows us to fund necessary services while also being mindful of the financial capabilities of our citizens. Transparency will be a cornerstone of my approach. I'll actively engage with constituents, ensuring they understand the factors influencing property taxes and the steps we're taking to address the situation. Collaboration with fellow council members and even local business owners is key to finding sustainable solutions.

What is your understanding of the proposed public safety building and how it will be funded?
 The proposed new public safety building in Valdese has not been a very thought-through project, in my opinion. It seems like a significant financial risk if not carefully reviewed. From what I understand, initially, an estimate of \$700,000 was given for the renovation of the current building in August 2018. The new public safety building project has ballooned to \$8.9 million.

I feel it is prioritizing opulence over fiscal responsibility. The fixation on creating an extravagant fire station raises concerns about the project's financial impact on Valdese's stability. Relocating a public safety building with all the extra traffic and sirens to a residential area doesn't seem wise. It adds another layer of worry regarding public safety and community well-being. The speed it takes to go out on those calls would be more of a risk in that area. Constituents and the incumbents have to realize the recent approval of a preliminary \$7.2 million USDA loan is based on outdated estimates. There's so much uncertainty surrounding actual costs and funding in the current economic climate of 2023 and 2024. Inflation has taken a toll on everything. A prudent reassessment of this undertaking is essential. We have to emphasize financial responsibility and the overall welfare of the Valdese community.

Do you support moving forward with a new building? Why or why not?
 I will always be a strong advocate for our public safety departments. Given the sharp rise in inflation since

See WARD, Page 10A

FOCUS ON MUNICIPALITIES

Darel Malcolm appointed to Rutherford College Town Council

By **BILL POTEAT**
Editor
THE PAPER

The Rutherford College Town Council has a new member with a familiar last name — Darel Malcolm.

Malcolm, 75, is the son of the late Zeb Malcolm, who pushed for the reincorporation of the town in the 1970s and who served as its first mayor after that incorporation was achieved.

Malcolm replaces Zachary Cagle who resigned from the council due to health concerns at the board's September meeting.

He was sworn in by Mayor Yates Jensen during the council's regular October meeting on the evening of Oct. 2.

A Burke County native, Malcolm graduated from Western Piedmont Community College in 1971 with an associate degree in nursing and from Appalachian State University in 1979 with a bachelor of science degree in health education.

After retiring from his nursing career after several de-



BILL POTEAT / THE PAPER

Darel Malcolm was sworn in as a new member of the Rutherford College Town Council on Monday evening. From left, Malcolm, his wife Carol, and Mayor Yates Jensen who administered the oath of office.

Malcolm has his own business — Malcolm's Handyman Service — but is now “just about fully retired.”

Malcolm finished just a few votes behind Cagle in the town council election of November 2021 and the town has traditionally filled council vacancies with the next highest vote getter.

Malcolm is a member of Abnerthy Memorial United

Methodist Church where he serves as chairman of the trustee committee and also volunteers with the food pantry. He is also a member of the Rutherford College Lions Club.

The new councilman has been married to his wife, Carol, for 34 years. He has a son, Curtis, a daughter Lacey, and a stepdaughter, Cori.

“I want to continue moving Rutherford College forward in

a positive direction,” said Malcolm. I would love to see our town grow, but it needs to be positive growth. I want to see us bring in new small businesses and new residents.

“We have good people on this council,” he continued. “People who care about this town and who want what's best for its people. I'm honored to be a part of this council and I look forward to what we can accomplish.”

In other actions at the brief meeting, the board:

- Accepted the town's 2022-23 audit report from Robert Brown of the accounting firm of Boggs, Crump and Brown.

- Brown noted that the town has enough reserves in its fund balance to operate for a full year, which is double the minimum amount recommended by the state government.

- He also saluted the town for having a property tax collection rate of 99.27 percent, which he called “absolutely outstanding.”

“Basically,” he told the council, “what I'm telling you is it's all good.”

- Gave its blessing to the N.C. Department of Transportation's proposal to lower the speed limit on Benfield Street to 15 mph and on Gideon Street to 25 mph.

- Noted that the first meeting of the Rutherford College Business Association will be held on Monday, Oct. 9., at Town Hall. According to Town Manager Jessica Bargsley, the purpose of the meeting is to discuss plans and project the town has upcoming, as well as to provide an open forum for business owners and managers.

“We hope to create a better line of communication between Town Hall and the businesses that make up our small town,” Bargsley said.

Breakfast will be provided at the meeting and those attending are asked to RSVP by calling 828-874-0333 or via email at townclerk@rutherfordcolleg-enc.us.

Bill Poteat is the editor of The Paper. He may be reached at 828-445-8595 or via email at bill@thepaper.media.

Burke native, E.B. grad Bill Carroll named town manager in Drexel

By **PAM WALKER**
Central Burke Reporter
THE PAPER

Drexel has chosen Burke County native and East Burke High graduate William “Bill” Carroll as its new town manager.

Carroll's selection was announced Monday evening by Mayor Dennis Anthony at the October meeting of the Board of Aldermen.

Anthony said that the board had received 20 applications for the position which were narrowed to eight candidates and from these, two finalists were selected.

Ultimately, Anthony said,

the town offered the position to Carroll based on his education, experience, and personal characteristics.

As chief administrative officer, Carroll will earn an initial base salary of \$108,000 annually.

Carroll will join the Drexel staff in December as assistant town manager, working alongside Sherri Bradshaw, the current town manager, until her retirement at the end of the year. He will officially become the Drexel town manager on Jan. 1, 2024.

Alderman Matt Johnson had stepped down from the board in July to apply for the town manager position but was not

selected as the final candidate.

A 2012 East Burke High School graduate, Carroll is currently the Public Works Director for the city of Belmont where he is responsible for budgeting and expensing \$13 million in public works operations.

“I'm very excited to come from Belmont. I'm originally from here, Burke County. I'm an East Burke graduate and excited to come to a small town I am familiar with,” said Carroll.

In the Belmont position for over three years, Carroll has had supervisory responsibilities for 65 employees as well as coordination of public works



PAM WALKER / THE PAPER

William “Bill” Carroll will take over as Drexel Town Manager at the end of the year. He and wife, Fabiola, are expecting their first child.

projects such as distribution of clean drinking water, wastewater collection, and management of public infrastructure.

Following a six-month internship, Carroll joined the staff at the city of Belmont as Policy Office Director in 2018 and was responsible for working with the Police Department to find solutions for policy problems and streamlining the data processes.

He is a graduate of Lenoir-Rhyne University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Government. He holds a Master of Public Administration, Local Government, from UNC Chapel Hill.

See **CARROLL**, Page 12A

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Historic marker unveiling celebrates the West Concord Mothers



Slades Chapel AME Church in downtown Morganton is shown in this photo from the 1960s. Morganton has been awarded a marker on the North Carolina Civil Rights Trail, and a ceremony is set for next Saturday, Oct. 14, at 11 a.m. at the church.

FOR THE PAPER

FOR THE PAPER

Morganton has been awarded a marker on the North Carolina Civil Rights Trail, sponsored by The North Carolina African American Heritage Commission.

The historical marker commemorates and honors the “West Concord Mothers,” a group of mothers who issued the first formal challenge to the segregated school systems in Burke County in 1961. They petitioned the Morganton City School Board and the Morganton Town Council for transportation assistance for their children to attend school.

In 1963, these mothers petitioned for their own children to be among the first to integrate local schools, two years prior to mandated desegregation. These mothers were part of a local movement to speak for change, but they did not act alone.

While the prevailing narrative in our community has often portrayed the school integration process as smooth and

conflict-free, the unveiling of this marker sheds light on a hidden history of secret meetings and strategic planning.

The mothers participated in meetings to plan and strategize courses of action, often in secret, in order to provide a measure of protection, but it is assured that they did not act alone. There were pastors, teachers, and other leaders present in these meetings, and it was determined that the mothers would likely pose less of a threat and would be received more peacefully.

The pastor of Slades Chapel AME Church, where five of the mothers attended, was Rev. James L. Hunt. He was also President of the local chapter of the NAACP and played a critical role in the leadership of civil rights activities during this time, providing advice and direction for the mothers and others. He helped advise the West Concord Mothers to work diligently within the system and employ nonviolent means to drive progress.

As civil rights issues grew

stronger in the community, the church became a hub of civil rights activity.

Meetings and non-violent demonstrations were held, both in secret and eventually in public. The large expanse of church steps at the front of the building became a meeting place for walkouts, demonstrations, and songs of unity and protest. Mildred Largent, one of the West Concord Mothers, was a member of Slades Chapel AME Church, and she became the first female President of the local NAACP chapter after serving as its secretary for 13 years.

The marker commemorates both the courageous actions of the West Concord Mothers and the significance of Slades Chapel AME Church as the site of meetings and demonstrations during the Civil Rights era.

Please join us on Saturday, Oct. 14, at 11 a.m., at Slades Chapel AME Church, as we come together to celebrate and remember our local civil rights history.

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Dedication ceremony held for 'The Crossing' monument

By **BILL POTEAT**
Editor
THE PAPER

On Oct. 1, 1780, nearly 1,400 patriots, known as the Overmountain Men, from Western North Carolina and Southwestern Virginia, crossed the Catawba River at Greenlee Ford on their way to battle British and Tory forces at Kings Mountain.

On Oct. 1, 2023, 243 years after that historic crossing, a monument honoring that key moment in American history was formally dedicated at the western terminus of the Morganton Greenway near where Judge's Restaurant once stood.

More than 100 people gathered on a picture-perfect early afternoon to commemorate the monument which lists the names of the 33 patriots who were killed in battle at Kings Mountain or who died from their wounds on the journey home.

Robert Patton, past president of the Col. Alexander Erwin Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, which spearheaded the placement of the monument and its funding, paid homage to the Overmountain Men and their courage as he began the ceremony.

"Thirty-three men crossed on that Sunday morning 243 years ago," he said, "who did not cross again on the way home. They gave their lives at Kings Mountain. That battle was an important reason that we won the Revolutionary War."

Other speakers included Morganton Mayor Ronnie Thompson, Drew Christy,



BILL POTEAT / THE PAPER

A ceremonial volley was fired by the Overmountain Victory Trail Association marchers as part of the ceremony.

Western North Carolina Representative for Gov. Roy Cooper, Steve Van Pelt, state president of the Sons of the American Revolution, Diana Bramble, superintendent of Kings Mountain National Military Park, W.F. Brown III, past president of the Col. Alexander Erwin Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, Dr. Pat Wells, regent of the Quaker Meadows Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and Dr. Linda Lindsey, president of the Historic Burke Foundation.

The keynote speaker for the event was David Doan, president of the Overmountain Victory Trail Association.

Doan recounted how the Overmountain Men banded together to defend their homes and families from the forces of

British Major Patrick Ferguson who had warned the patriots, "If you do not desist your opposition to the British Arms, I shall march this army over the mountains, hang your leaders, and lay waste to your country with fire and sword."

Men responded to this threat from all across what is now Western North Carolina, Southwestern Virginia and Eastern Tennessee. The convergence point for the various forces was Quaker Meadows, the plantation owned by Col. Charles McDowell, where they gathered on Sept. 30, 1780.

The following day, Oct. 1, they crossed the Catawba at Greenlee Ford and began to march south to find Ferguson and his forces. The opposing armies collided on Oct. 7 at Kings Mountain.



BILL POTEAT / THE PAPER

The dedication ceremony for the monument commemorating the crossing of the Catawba River by the Overmountain Men was held Sunday afternoon at the Greenlee Ford.



BILL POTEAT / THE PAPER

The Presentation of Colors at the dedication ceremony was performed by the Color Guard of the Sons of the American Revolution.

and that we remember what they gave up for a cause they believed in."

Two of the men named on the monument were from Burke County: Ezekiel Berry and William Berry.

One of the more solemn moments during the ceremony was the recitation of the Sons of the American Revolution Pledge: "We descendants of the heroes of the American Revolution who, by their sacrifices, established the United States of America, reaffirm our faith in the principles of liberty and our Constitutional Republic, and solemnly pledge ourselves to defend them against every foe."

Bill Poteat is editor of The Paper. He may be reached at 828-445-8595 or via email at bill@thepaper.media.

LEAVES

FROM PAGE 2A

landscaping.

The large vacuum trucks are designed to inhale leaves, and only leaves. City officials ask that people refrain from tossing sticks, limbs, branches, firewood, trash, dead squirrels,

beer cans, worn brake rotors or any other non-leaf matter into the pile.

LEAVES ONLY

"Every year we damage equipment due to someone putting something other than leaves in their piles," Chapman said. Costly repairs can interrupt service.

The City provides a Leaf Collection Schedule on its website for residents to keep track of where we are on the route. Time allotted in each area is based on the number of mature trees in each area.

February through September, residents must pay \$25 to have loose leaves collected. If you bag your leaves there will be no charge for collection all

year. Bags should not exceed 35 pounds. Excessive weight bags will require a \$25 charge.

Chapman said that there are other alternatives to piling leaves in the street. "We encourage residents to utilize mulching lawn mowers to mulch leaves back into the lawn, providing nutrients back into the soil," he said.

This service is dependent upon the weather conditions. Chapman asks that residents please be patient and understand that the route could be delayed due to inclement weather.

Allen VanNoppen is the publisher of The Paper. He may be reached at 828-445-8595 or via email at allen@thepaper.media.

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They Say...



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H I am Glenn Harvey, an 18-year resident who loves this town and will apply my business experience to improve council decision-making and all citizen services.



O I am Gary Ogle and I will apply my life's work as a teacher, principal, and coach to improving our recreational opportunities and making them available to all youth, regardless of means.

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- **Want the Best Fire Station in NC, Paid for by a Loan that Will Destroy Valdese.**
- **Make Town Decisions by Text and Email.**

They Are...



Tim Barus. Appointed. Valdese resident for only one year, made the motion to set the highest 2023 tax rate of any Burke County Town. He votes "yes" on every staff proposal.



Tim Skidmore. Appointed. He seconded the motion to borrow \$7.2 million for a proposed building of unknown cost and seconded the motion for the record 2023 tax hike. He, too, always votes "yes."



Frances Hildebran. Elected 12 years ago, receiving pay and employee group health insurance coverage from Valdese ever since, while businesses left town and our streets crumbled.

The Incumbents do not Understand Taxes or Their Role in Council-Manager Governance.

A SAD ENDING AWAITS VALDESE RESIDENTS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS IF THIS CONTINUES

Paid for by the Committee to Put Valdese Citizens First
Authorized by Heather Ward, Glenn Harvey, and Gary Ogle

Nelson leaving post as Main Street Manager

By **MARTY QUEEN**
Senior Reporter
THE PAPER

Downtown Morganton is losing one of its most enthusiastic advocates, whose lively personality and innovative ideas have left indelible marks on the city.

Abby Gentry Nelson is leaving her post as Morganton's Main Street Manager after three years in that role and 10 years with the city to become project director with Cottonwood Development Company of Morganton. She said she and her family have no plans to leave Morganton.

Nelson, 35, will remain on the job until mid-December. She said it's tough to leave a position and team she loves so much, adding the offer to join Cottonwood came out of the blue.

"I've cried so much," Nelson said with a smile. "I didn't know I was seeking a new career path. Early August, I was like, I love my job, I had no plans of changing. This was my future, and this was where I was going to be, until I was sought out."

"I'll be leaving a job that I absolutely love and fellow employees that I admire and respect so much."

Nelson, a Reidsville native, holds a Bachelor of Science degree in interior design from Appalachian State University and a Master of Science degree in historic preservation from UNC-Greensboro. She joined Morganton's Main Street program 10 years ago as Community Events Coordinator.

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, the city combined Main Street, the City of Morganton Municipal Auditorium (CoMMA), and the Community

House into one entity, with former Main Street Manager Sharon Jablonski taking over as Director of Cultural and Creative Development.

"I came here on a whim, knowing that Sharon Jablonski was well-respected in the state and actually nationally for being a Main Street manager," Nelson said. "I'm very fortunate to have worked under the leadership of Sharon Jablonski. I feel like under her leadership I've been able to grow. We've also had the support of the mayor and council, who believe in downtown and believe in the Main Street approach to community development. Not every community has that."

Jablonski said she hates to see Nelson go but supports her decision 100%.

"It's a hard loss," said Jablonski. "She is so good at what she does and has been so good for Main Street and downtown in her working with the property owners and businesses. But I have always believed in people making even better of themselves, and this was a great opportunity for her and her family, and I support that."

"I'm thrilled she's going to stay in the community and be a part of it in a different fashion."

During Nelson's tenure, she has assisted with the Downtown Master Plan adopted in 2018 and the Courthouse Square project that helped revitalize that area. She also started the Morganton Arts Design and Engineering Challenge (MADE), a student competition which combines the efforts of the school system, local industries, and other enti-



MARTY QUEEN / THE PAPER

Abby Nelson is leaving her post as Main Street Manager for the City of Morganton to take a job in the private sector. Nelson has held the position for three years and has been with the city for 10. She and her family are staying in Morganton.

ties. The sixth installment of the challenge is set for Friday, Oct. 20 at the CoMMA.

Nelson said some of her favorite moments on the job have centered around the stress and elation of planning and pulling off some of the city's numerous festivals.

"Ultimately, doing these events and doing things that bring the community together I think have been the most fun and the most cherished moments for me," she said.

Nelson has also cherished her work relationship with Community Events Coordinator Kasey Goodfellow, who came over from CoMMA when the pandemic shut the theater down in 2020 and numerous city employees were subse-

quently moved to other departments. The two, unofficially known as Morganton's Dynamic Duo, are tireless promoters for the city, producing humorous videos and live streams from events.

Goodfellow said she'll miss her partner in crime.

"I was so extremely lucky to get the opportunity to work with Abby and get to bond with her," said Goodfellow. "She's an incredible woman. I think it's so rare that a person gets to go into a position and work with the person who previously had the position. That has been extremely beneficial to me, so I lucked out that not only was she fantastic as community events coordinator, but she's a fantastic human being."

"She will forever be my friend and my mentor in life. We have great chemistry when we do our funny videos. It's extremely hard to find somebody you click with so well on that level. I think that also reflects our friendship and our respect for one another as strong ladies in this community."

The feeling is mutual. "We have just been a duo for the past couple of years and I'm greatly going to miss that," said Nelson. "She's such a creative person, high energy, everybody knows Kasey. I'll greatly miss her, but I totally believe in her abilities to continue doing a fantastic job. Whoever comes in next as Main Street Manager is going to be lucky."

Jablonski said the search is on for a replacement, and she's optimistic the city will find the right person to fill Nelson's shoes.

"We found Abby, and I hope we can find something pretty darn close," said Jablonski. "The one thing we should be thankful for in this community is that downtown Morganton is very well known, not only across the state, but across the whole national Main Street program as being a top-quality Main Street program."

The Main Street America program began in 1977 with the goal of revitalizing downtown areas across the country by fostering preservation-based economic development. In 2020, there were 860 such programs nationally, with several in nearly every state.

Marty Queen is the senior reporter for The Paper. He may be reached at 828-445-8595 or at marty@thepaper.media.

OBITUARIES



Max Lowery

Max T. Lowery, 84, of Morganton, North Carolina, transitioned to his heavenly home on Sunday, October 1, 2023.

A native of St. Pauls in Robeson County, he was born December 13, 1938 to the late

John Duren Lowery and Nellie Holder Lowery.

Max attended Appalachian State University and graduated from Pembroke State College in 1963. He began his business career at Whiteville and Charlotte before coming to Morganton in 1970.

Max worked for Morganton Savings and Loan and was the third man to serve as top CEO since the association was established in 1903. His life of stewardship made Morganton Savings and Loan one of the most successful financial institutions in the county.

He was a member of First Baptist Church in Morganton as a member of the Huffman Sunday School Class. He was

also past chairman of the church's auditing committee.

Mr. Lowery engaged in various business, civic, and recreational activities including Burke Mission Station, Hospice, Western Piedmont Community College, Burke County Public Library, Habitat for Humanity, and the South Mountain Children's Home.

Max was a member of Burke County Kiwanis Club and served as its president in 1974. He was a member of the Burke County Board of Realtors, past chairman of the Burke County Heart Association, director of the Morganton-Burke Merchants Association, and had been treasurer of the Fourth of July Celebration Committee.

He was instrumental in the preservation and history of the Cedars, the historic home in the heart of downtown Morganton. Mr. Lowery was also a veteran of the N.C. National Guard and a charter member of the Mimosa Investment Club.

An avid outdoorsman, Mr. Lowery had served as state treasurer of Trout Unlimited and held the same office in the local Table Rock Chapter of Trout Unlimited. He also served on the state committee of Ducks Unlimited.

Those left to cherish his memory include his wife of 58 years, Lois A. Lowery; son, Greg Lowery and wife, Myriah; daughter, Kelly Story and hus-

band, Scott; granddaughter, Madison Story; and step-grandchildren, Luke and Mason Carlisle.

The family will receive friends from 1 to 2 p.m., Saturday, October 7, 2023, at the First Baptist Church of Morganton. The funeral will be held at 2 p.m. in the church with the Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Bland, Jr. officiating. Burial will follow in Burke Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to First Baptist Church in Morganton.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

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Mary Jane Winfrey

Mary Jane Winfrey died October 1, 2023. She was born June 28, 1930 in Stocksville, N.C. which became part of Weaverville. Her parents were George and Thelma Winfrey, with much care from her Aunt Marie. Throughout her life, she remained a resident of western North Carolina. After graduation from Cecil Business College, she began her career in Asheville with General Electric. She then was hired as an Administrative Assistant at Asheville Biltmore College, which became the University of North Carolina at Asheville. After 30 years at UNCA, she retired.

At every step along the way, her outgoing personality brought her friends. An animal lover, she was a dedicated dog-mom. Memory Care for humans and Wild for Life Center for wildlife rehabilitation demonstrated her pas-

sions. Born and known in school as the red head, she always considered the other person, always was thoughtful and kind, full of energy and vivacious. She cared for "Auntie Re" in assisted living as if she were her mother. Susie Wright and Mary Beth Bryman from UNCA and Wild for Life were like her children. She called Charlie Slye her "pseudo-grandson." Her cousin, Suzanne Radcliffe was always on call. UNCA Biology Professor John C. Bernhardt was a long-time friend, companion, and dedicated caregiver in her final years. The list goes on and on, and she will be missed by many.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Wild for Life; 33 Possum Trot, Asheville, NC 28806 or Memory Care, 100 Far Horizons Lane, Asheville, NC 28803. A memorial service was held at St. Eugene Catholic Church, 72 Culvern Street, Asheville, NC at 11:00 am, Friday, October 6. The reception followed at the church.

TABLE ROCK PRINTERS

SPECIAL EVENTS

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Barus

FROM PAGE 4A

ceived from structural engineers, architects, and consultants, have concluded that the existing Public Safety Building is not structurally sound to serve Valdese's needs moving towards the future.

I concur and support this decision. We need a more updated Public Safety Building that will fill Valdese's needs for future generations to come.

Previous councils prepared the way to pay for the Public Safety Building. This was in place before I took my seat on the Council.

I feel that it is a good plan and I like that it was already in place in preparation for this future project.

Do you support moving forward with a new building? Why or why not? (100 words or less)

Based upon the recommendations of and multiple studies produced by structural engineers, architects, and consultants, as well as my own training from the NC Occupational Safety and Health Education and Research Center at UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School Workforce Development, I agree with going ahead with a new Public Safety Building.

One of my certifications was in Asbestos Awareness and Removal and the law states that any building that was constructed before the year 1970 is deemed to have asbestos.

We need a Safety Building that can sustain Valdese's growth and last for future generations to come.

Fire and First Responders' Codes change consistently and our current Police Department desperately needs improvements to align with current Policing standards.

If elected as a public servant, what legacy do you hope to achieve during your tenure in office?

The best tools for elected office are "HUMILITY" and "INTEGRITY."

I hope to leave a legacy of being humble and remembering that it is an honor to serve this town just as my heritage and family have done before me. They did this by action not words.

Serving is not about ME. It is about putting others before yourself by primarily focusing on their benefit.

My father taught me the value of "keeping your word". If you tell someone that you are going to do something, then you do it. If you fail, then you own your mistake and correct it.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Most of my career has been spent working in "Team" concepts. Experience has taught me that more gets accomplished when a group of people are working together towards a common goal. Especially when it comes to investing in the future of our beautiful town.

Valdese has been growing over the last 130 years. We need to continue to maintain, repair, and replace infrastructure in a manner that is long lasting and financially responsible. Keep our current services in place and improve them as needed.

Our citizens take pride in the quality of our services, and they understand what it takes to maintain these services.

We are also excited about receiving \$7 million from the state to upgrade the Valdese Water Plant for the Interconnection Project with Lenior.

This investment will help our citizens by seeing a reduction in water rates as Lenior will be purchasing up to 4 million gallons of water daily.

It is my desire to keep working to supply the demanding need of more and affordable housing, businesses and restaurants. It is my hope to continue that legacy and keep on investing in Valdese's future. Our citizens, our families, and our children are worth the continuous investment.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Valdese holds a special place in my heart, a town teeming with charm and untapped potential. As a passionate resident, I envision a thriving future, building on our industrial legacy.

By inviting businesses into our community, we can sustain beloved services and programs without burdening our citizens financially. Addressing the pressing issues of drugs, theft, and vagrancy is paramount. We must confront these challenges head-on, fostering a safer environment for all.

My commitment is unwavering — I will advocate for solutions that safeguard our town financially while preserving essential services and cherished programs. Unlike distant politicians, I am one of you — a Valdese resident deeply invested in our community's welfare.

Every decision made on the council directly impacts my family and me. I aim to be a voice for all, representing the concerns and dreams of our fellow Valdese residents.

Together, we can sculpt a future that honors our history and embraces the promise of progress. Valdese deserves a representative who lives, breathes, and loves this town, ready to steer it toward a brighter tomorrow.

Skidmore

FROM PAGE 4A

cessing it. Waiting just adds to the anxiety of everyone involved.

If elected as a public servant, what legacy do you hope to achieve during your tenure in office?

My hope is to leave things better than I found it. In my professional life I have followed this mantra. It should apply here as well. Many problems await the next council.

Things that will take time and treasure to manage. The main thing is to plan for our town's future. Do not deal with today only. Long range planning will build the next Rock School, the next Lakeside Park, the next Clock Tower.

We must keep moving forward so our children can have the same experience growing up in Valdese we did. I hope that my legacy reflects these values.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

This is proving to be a very contentious election. My fear is after it is over whoever wins will leave wounds that will be a long-time healing. If this town is to continue to grow, we must be forward thinking.

We also need to think about the community. I talked to a citizen recently and his only concern was taxes, nothing else. He did not note the good things the present council is doing for the community. He did not use the town's amenities and was upset that his tax monies supported such things as parks, gyms, pools, etc.

This town is for all its residents. That I think is why people live in towns and cities to enjoy the services they bring. Local government is much different than Federal or State.

We live with the people we represent. It does not matter what your politics are. These are our friends, family, and neighbors. Something we must keep in mind.

Hildebran

FROM PAGE 4A

will be a fair and transparent leader who will always put the needs of the community first.

I will work tirelessly to create a safe, warm, and friendly town where everyone is respected and has the opportunity to thrive.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Valdese is a wonderful place to live, and I want to help make it even better. I believe that we can do this by attracting more small businesses, quaint shops, and restaurants to the downtown area.

This will help to create a more vibrant and attractive community that will be more appealing to young families and others looking for a place to live.

We should also continue to celebrate our heritage and culture, and make sure that our community is a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

Harvey

FROM PAGE 5A

ward with a new building? Why or why not?

We must immediately engage an architectural and engineering firm to evaluate the existing building, as only an independent third party can do.

If it must be shored up to protect our public safety employees as recommended in 2018 by the fire chief and structural engineer, then get that done.

Concurrently, we must get preliminary bids for the proposed building while a CPA firm determines what funds actually are available for new construction or renovation.

Only with those facts can citizens and council members draw businesslike conclusions about the largest decision this town has ever faced.

If elected as a public servant, what legacy do you hope to achieve during your tenure in office?

ing your tenure in office?

Glenn Harvey answered a call to apply his business and financial background to serve the town that his wife and he love and chose as their final residence on earth.

He dedicated his time and experience to helping Valdese achieve its full potential as the best small town in North Carolina, providing jobs, affordable taxes, safe communities, and the highest possible quality of life to present residents and future generations.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

My experience of serving thousands of association members while managing their businesses, subsidiaries, and properties brings new dimensions of planning and development to the council.

A few examples: construction of two commercial buildings in Research Triangle Park; acquisition, renovation, and resale of the former Baptist State Convention Head-

quarters in Raleigh; restoring financial solvency to the American Ceramic Society (founded 1903) by renovating and selling its oversized building; developing a Pender County subdivision.

I have been inspired by talking with hundreds of Valdese citizens about our town. It was a wonderful reminder of how intelligent and caring our citizens are. The only downside of this election experience has been the negative campaign tactics of a few desperate officials who fear a change in the status quo.

The citizens with whom I am talking agree that Valdese needs to be saved from financial ruin and that tax dollars should be managed more frugally. They agree that all services, from public safety to the swimming pool, can and should be expanded by reducing waste such as the recent hiring of Burke County and a contractor for \$30,000 to \$45,000 to perform tasks previously done by existing staff.

Ward

FROM PAGE 5A

initial estimates, a reevaluation is sensible.

I believe revisiting the plans for the public safety building is necessary. We should be very cautious of burdening our town with excessive long-term debt. More debt means higher taxes, which means a heavier load for many who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Redirecting funds towards improved compensation and resources for our public safety officers seems a more prudent use of resources in the current scenario. This will improve retention.

If elected as a public servant, what legacy do you hope to achieve during your tenure in office?

I am eager to uphold the adage "leave things better than you found them," I envision a revitalized Valdese as a potential town council member. My goal is a safer, more united community.

I aim for financial security, fostering local businesses, and reducing crime for a prosperous future. Ultimately, I aspire to create a place where my descendants, and all residents, can proudly call Valdese home, cherishing the legacy of progress and unity I strive to leave behind.

'Astronomy for Everyone' at Lake James

The Catawba Valley Astronomy Club will host a program called "Astronomy for Everyone" today, Saturday, Oct. 7, from 6:45 until 9 p.m. at the Paddy's Creek area of Lake James State Park.

The club will set up telescopes at the upper gravel parking lot above the swim beach. Participants can use

the club's telescopes or bring their own equipment if they want.

Even though the weather will be cooler, participants are asked to bring bug spray and, for comfort, lawn chairs.

The constellations of late summer and early fall will be visible, including the planet Saturn.



VOTE

Dolores Huffman

For Morganton City Council



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I am running for City Council, District 1, on a write in ballot. I intend to question the wasteful spending in the city, improve conditions of the streets, and eliminate the vehicle registration tax. I will not favor any one individual over another.

Early voting begins on October 19, 2023

I would appreciate your vote!

Contact me! (828) 403-0768



New life being breathed into historic Gilboa Methodist Church

By SUSAN AMICO
FOR THE PAPER

I just wanted to provide our community with a heads up about our new 501(c)(3), Historic Gilboa Foundation.

Gilboa Methodist Church is located off Hwy. 64 South about five miles past the Morganton Honda dealership.

There is a gate down a winding road that is usually locked,

however, for the event, we're opening it up. The church will also be open.

It's hard to describe this church. You drive through the woods down a gravel road that has twists and turns and then you see the most beautiful simple white church in the woods.

Our goal is to preserve and protect the oldest standing wooden church in Burke County. We've raised a good amount

of money and will be replacing the tin roof soon.

This project was born from some Daughters of the American Revolution, who volunteered on their Day of Service to clean the church, and tend the cemetery.

Well, when you get a few history-loving DAR women, many of whom are Methodists, involved, things start to happen.

In one year, we've been able to establish the Foundation. The UMC Western North Carolina district has transferred the title for the church and cemetery to the foundation.

Marsha Riddle has managed to get several grants for historic preservation. We are in contact with the official folks in Asheville for guidance on the requirements for a historical structure.

All are welcome to come to the ribbon cutting ceremony and we'll have the church open so visitors can come inside. The ceremony will be outside in front of the church.

Lastly, we will be having a homecoming at the church on Sunday, Oct. 15, at 1 p.m. First United Methodist Church Morganton will be assisting in the Vespers service and the new Historic Gilboa Foundation



FOR THE PAPER

The historic Gilboa Methodist Church and a section of its cemetery.



FOR THE PAPER

The Daughters of the American Revolution held a workday at the historic Gilboa Methodist Church which is located about five miles south of Morganton.

will be hosting.

We plan to have shape note singing directed by the new minister of music; Dr. Brent Lawrence. It will be a wonderful gathering.

Many of those with relatives buried in the cemetery will have an opportunity to visit the graves. There is even a

Revolutionary War Patriot buried at Gilboa.

The history of Gilboa Methodist Church is a special story. One we hope to share with others.

(Susan Amico describes herself as a "Morganton resident since 2016 by the Grace of God.")

COUNCIL

FROM PAGE 2A

ties for the proposed Amtrak rail service between Asheville and Salisbury."

The council also awarded a contract to McGill and Associates Engineering of Hickory for planning on the city's stormwater project. City Manager Sally Sandy said the city has garnered grant funding to get the project underway.

Stormwater issues have caused street flooding and washouts for several years in Morganton.

"Several months back, the city applied for some state funding that was available in order to do some planning,

some mapping, some assessment on our current stormwater system," said Sandy. "We were successful in receiving a \$400,000 planning grant (from the Division of Water Infrastructure), and to that end, we are in need of some consulting engineer work in order to cause that project to happen.

"This is something we've been talking about since our workshop last winter in February, but we've been talking about stormwater for years."

Sandy said the city is still waiting for the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality to return the results of its stormwater audit so the project can commence. "We are told we can expect that in January of 2024," Sandy said.

In an item that wasn't on the

agenda, the council set a public hearing for a reuse grant to be held at the next meeting, Monday, Nov. 2.

The council also approved a pair of rezoning requests. A block of properties around 500 East Meeting was changed from a High Intensity District (HID) to a Central Business District (CBD). A section of Kirksey Drive was changed from an Exclusive Industrial District (EID) to an HID.

Morganton Development and Design Director Wendy Smith explained the differences in those classifications largely pertain to what kind of land use is permitted within the various zones.

In other action, the council issued a trio of proclamations: Saturday, Oct. 14 was design-

ated as Morganton Civil Rights Day. The city has been awarded a marker on the North Carolina Civil Rights Trail by the N.C. African American Heritage Commission. The marker will honor the West Concord Mothers, who sought equality in education in the city's schools in 1961.

The marker will be placed at Slades Chapel AME Church across the street from City Hall. A ceremony will be held there at 11 a.m. on Oct. 14.

Laurie Johnston, N.C. Room Curator at Burke County Public Library and a member of the historic marker committee accepted the proclamation and was joined by other members of the group.

"This marker is not only a

symbol of our shared past, but also a reminder of hope for future generations, a testament to the enduring struggle for civil rights, and a reminder that change can be achieved through peaceful means and through unity," said Johnston.

Council also proclaimed Oct. 1-7 Public Power Week. Electrical Services Director Brooks Kirby accepted the proclamation.

Morganton Department of Public Safety Fire Services Director Chief Israel Gibson accepted a proclamation recognizing Oct. 8-14 as Fire Prevention Week.

Marty Queen is the senior reporter for The Paper. He may be reached at 828-445-8595 or at marty@thepaper.media.

THE BIGGEST TAX HIKE IN VALDESE HISTORY!

YOU CAN ROLL IT BACK

Elect This New Town Council Majority

Heather Ward – Ward 5



A working Mom and community organizer. Came to Valdese 20 years ago in a pastor's family, becoming a dedicated citizen and a devoted wife and mother of two teenage sons. Passionately strives to serve the youth, the elderly, and the marginalized in

her community through outreach activities on the west side of town. She believes that Valdese can do more for less, in serving all Citizens by seeking their input and putting Citizens' needs FIRST.

Glenn Harvey – Ward 1



A retired CEO, contractor, and developer who, along with his wife, fell in love with this village in 2005, when seeking an old home to restore. As the "CEO/servant" of an association with 45,000 members, he led members in setting their priorities, and managed their \$25 million businesses and properties, efficiently. He believes that 3000 Valdese households should set the town's priorities and our Town Council should ensure that citizens' priorities are served FIRST and cost-effectively.

Gary Ogle – Ward 4



An educator, administrator, and coach who retired from the Burke County Schools with 30 years of service. Born and raised in Valdese, he attended all the Valdese schools and continued his education at Gardner-Webb and Appalachian State University. He believes that citizens deserve a council that is transparent and puts all citizens' interests first. He pledges that the Town Council will hold itself, town employees, and contracted services, accountable and fair to ALL RESIDENTS.

When Elected We Will serve Citizens FIRST by

1 – Cutting Your Taxes in 2024 and Beyond by Reducing the Proposed Crippling Long-Term Debt Load
An "Efficiency Panel" will analyze all town operations and will advise the council.

2 – Seeking Your Input on Major Issues
Public meetings will discuss major issues BEFORE council votes.

3 – Making all Town Council Decisions in Public
Live streamed, with video available to all.

4 – Aggressively Addressing Our Crime, Drug, and Vagrancy issues
The Town will collaborate with schools, churches, and all relevant agencies.

Elect Us – Hold Us to Our Pledge!

W *Heather Ward*
ARD, HEATHER (ward 5)

H *Glenn Harvey*
ARVEY, GLENN (ward 1)

O *Gary Ogle*
GLE, GARY (ward 4)

Our Pledge – sworn to and notarized.

PUBLISHER: Allen VanNoppen | allen@thepaper.media | 828-445-8595, ext. 2008
EDITOR: Bill Poteat | bill@thepaper.media | 828-445-8595, ext. 2004

Should the Confederate monument be removed?

YES

'We know this symbol in the heart of our community is wrong'

AN EDITORIAL REFLECTION from Burke Coalition for Reconciliation

Burke Coalition for Reconciliation (BCfR) started in January 2021 with one speaker addressing the county commissioners. Two months later, 75 people asked the county commissioners to move the Confederate monument from our county's central gathering space. Since January 2021 and amidst the pandemic, BCfR has had speakers at every monthly county commission meeting (except 1) totaling 312 public comments in favor of moving the monument. BCfR meets every month in partner churches or various venues around the county. Over 300 households in Burke County have requested to be on our mailing list.

We started as individuals with a Christian faith trying to make sense of a divisive symbol on our county's central gathering place. We each had our own story, our own history and our own reconciliation work to do.

Wrestling with our personal histories has also involved looking honestly at American history. As Christians we



ANGELA COPELAND / FOR THE PAPER

Shown above are the co-leaders of the Burke Coalition for Reconciliation. Seated are Allen Fullwood and Carolina Avery. Standing are Molly Hemstreet and the Rev. George Logan

needed to understand the church's role in racial inequities and discrimination.

We seeded reading groups across the county focusing on Jamar Tisby's book "The Color of Compromise," in which the author documents the American church's 400-year role in racial discrimination including slavery, the Civil War, reconstruction and the Jim Crow south.

We began gathering every month to

See **YES**, Page 2B

NO

'It is not a time to remove a manifest element of history'

I DECIDED TO SUBMIT this guest opinion to The Paper because I love Burke County, our community, and detest the evil of division, because of the saving grace of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In Luke 11:17, our Lord tells us that "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls."

I believe that there is a better way than destruction of a memorial.

I respect the emotions and opinions of others, but I simply wanted to express mine, regarding an option I had not heard voiced previously.

I do not intend to focus in detail on the arguments for or against removal of the memorial; however, I am voicing support for it remaining in place as is.

It is a solemn reminder of lives lost in the Civil War from Burke County, just like grave markers in a cemetery, as one article said, "a tribute to those who fought and died."

It is not at all a tribute to the Confederacy.

Pursuing this point now, in my



Dr. Kenneth Carrico

opinion, that is how many in this community view this memorial. I don't know of anyone that I have met here that views this statue as honoring the Confederacy or the institution of racism, or more specifically, viewing African Americans or other minorities as genetically inferior to Caucasians, which is the sole, core tenet of racism.

Again, this is a memorial of lives lost, fathers or grandfathers, during a tragic period in American history. This memorial is an important reminder of how the evils of mankind can and will unfold, unless godly men and women speak up courageously.

As a country, we have learned from

See **NO**, Page 2B

Burke County's political leaders respond to monument issue

IN MID-SEPTEMBER, the following letter was sent to the five members of the Morganton City Council, Morganton council candidate Dolores Huffman, the five Burke County Commissioners, N.C. State Rep. Hugh Blackwell, and N.C. State Sen. Warren Daniel:

We at The Paper have decided to tackle the issue of the Confederate monument standing on the Historic Courthouse Square in the very heart of downtown Morganton.

As you well know, this is a controversial issue which raises strong feelings.

Our intent is to provide a balanced, thoughtful look at the situation, including the legal and historical perspectives, written by Marty Queen.

What I'm asking from you is where you personally stand on the monument.

Legalities aside, do you think it should be removed or left where it is, and why do you think so?

We think the residents and taxpayers of Morganton and of Burke County have the right to know where their leaders stand on this issue, and we trust that you think so too.

If you could respond with your thoughts by the end of the day on Sept. 29, it would be most appreciated.

Here are their responses as submitted:

Sen. Warren Daniel

I supported the current monuments protection law that passed the Senate in 2015 with unanimous, bipartisan support. It was passed to protect current historical monuments of all types regardless of the era or conflict they represent.



Daniel

The law prohibits acts of vandalism and gives local governments limited authority to remove monuments to protect them

from being removed or destroyed based on political considerations.

The history of our country has at times been admirable and inspirational, but also on many occasions it has been ugly and sinful. History should be our teacher. It is important that we as Americans remember and learn from it, especially at a time when most Americans can't identify the rights guaranteed to them by the First Amendment.

As with many state laws, over time they may need review and possible amendments. I am not aware of any current efforts in the General Assembly to modify this current law, but I am willing to hear from constituents in the 46th District about whether they believe changes should be made.

Here is a link to the vote count in the Senate. It is worth noting that when it passed it had support from our current Attorney General and three current Democratic members of Congress. <https://www.ncleg.gov/Legislation/Votes/RollCallVoteTranscript/2015/S/124>.

Rep. Hugh Blackwell

We are still in the processes of this year's long legislative session. As I expect you know, my own legislative focus has been mostly in the areas of education, mental health and health care issues, the opioid epidemic, as well as parks, recreation and trails.

I will be following your se-



The Burke County Board of Commissioners, from left, Scott Mulwee, Johnnie Carswell, Randy Burns, Phil Smith, and Jeff Brittain.

ries with great interest. I invite those in Burke who wish to share their own views or comments with me to do so.

The most efficient way is to email me at my legislative email address which is Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.gov. I'll do my best to review each.

Board of Commissioners

The Burke County Board of Commissioners (a joint statement authored by Chairman Scott Mulwee for Vice-Chairman Jeff Brittain, Randy Burns, Johnnie Carswell, and Phil Smith):

As The Paper referenced in its reporting on this topic, North Carolina law prohibits removing objects of historical significance, including the monument in question, except under very limited circumstances.

Burke County, like all communities in North Carolina, is

a legal subdivision of the State of North Carolina, which requires the Board to remain committed to the specific areas that we have statutory authority.

As an elected local governing Board, we must all seek to first uphold the law and to focus on leveraging public policy and public resources in the areas that are in our purview.

While always keeping this duty at the forefront, the Board of Commissioners are focused on community advancement, public safety enhancements, support of education policy, job creation and economic development, as well as projects like broadband expansion, substance abuse prevention, and housing.

We want to make the most positive impact on the lives of Burke County citizens.

Morganton Mayor Ronnie Thompson

I took my oath of office to uphold all North Carolina laws. Removal of the statue would be a violation of a current North Carolina law. I



Thompson

would prefer to remove the soldier since it was an addition to the original memorial. The memorial should stay because it includes the names of Burke County families.

Morganton City Councilwoman and Mayor Pro Tem Wendy Cato

As I have pondered your request for my personal opinion regarding the Confederate monument on the Historic Courthouse Square, I realized that once you are an elected official, your opinion also reflects the decisions you make.

I must also realize that I represent all the citizens of Morganton who have pro and con opinions on this matter.

I also believe in the law and abiding by the law. Whether I agree with the state statute, regarding monuments on government property, the current State law does

not allow for the removal of the monument and soldier at this time.

Having said that, I do have an opinion regarding the monument on the Square. My personal opinion mirrors a compromise suggested by the City Council in past conversations.

I would like to see the original stone monument and finial remain.

It was a war and lives were lost, families grieved, and the monument provides an outward recognition of their sac-

See **RESPONSE**, Page 6B

Giant Confederate flags gave me pause about moving to Burke County

NOT MANY MONTHS AGO, I interviewed a student about his first year at the Morganton campus of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. As he reflected on his junior year, he admitted to initially second-guessing his decision to attend the school.

The Confederate flag he saw waving near the border of Catawba and Burke counties on his drive in from Charlotte made him uneasy. This White teen worried that the county was home to antiquated philosophies associated with the flag. He wondered whether he would be accepted or labeled an outsider.

Our conversation back in May got me thinking about my reaction to the flag I saw on the other end of the county.



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND

My husband and I decided to move to Western North Carolina from Texas (and Colorado before that) to be closer to family. After nearly two decades of living two or three days' drive away from loved ones, losses during the pandemic taught us that life is short and we need to see family more often.

We packed up our two dogs

and everything we owned and moved into a rental house in Black Mountain in January 2022 with the hope of soon purchasing a home.

LOOKING AT BURKE

Burke County was not originally on our radar. We looked at homes from McDowell County to Haywood County and Madison County down to Henderson County. We spent most weekends following our realtor to potential places to buy.

Months went by without finding something that we liked and could afford. We decided to broaden our search, looking at homes in Valdese, Glen Alpine, and Morganton.

Each time we drove from Black Mountain to Burke

County on I-40, I'd stare at the Camping World-sized Confederate flag.

My chest would tighten each time. The truth is that I shared the same worries as the young man at NCSSM.

I'm not from here, but I am a Southern gal. I spent the first 18 years of my life in South Carolina, where I would catch crowds in the creek near our rural home and build tree forts in the acres of woods that separated our place from the neighbors. The next 17 years were spent in Alabama. I attended Auburn University and then started my professional journey at the daily newspaper in Montgomery.

As a kid, I don't remember having a reaction to the rebel flag. I didn't know or compre-

hend the full meaning of the flag back then. The symbol was simply part of the landscape and my focus was school and friends.

As I got older — and developed a broader knowledge of history — I began to see that battle flag as a distortion of the American flag and something that promoted an "us vs. them" mindset.

As a young adult living in Montgomery, the color of someone's skin seemed a part of every aspect of life. With the naivete of youth behind me, I became hyper-aware of how people were categorized by their race, religion, clothing, family background, what part of town they lived in, and a thousand

See **COPELAND**, Page 8B

Let's hope our Atlanta Braves are good, hot, and lucky

THE ATLANTA BRAVES are absolutely without question, argument, or discussion the very best team in Major League Baseball.

The 1927 Yankees had nothing on these guys. Check out these stats:

- **Ronald Acuna** – 41 Home Runs – 106 RBIs.

- **Matt Olsen** – 54 Home Runs – 139 RBIs.

- **Ozzie Albies** – 33 Home Runs – 109 RBIs.

- **Marcell Ozuna** – 40 Home Runs – 100 RBIs.

- **Austin Riley** – 37 Home Runs – 97 RBIs.

These guys have more power than Duke Energy ever dreamed of.

The Braves won more games than any other team, scored more runs than any other team, hit more home runs than any other team, and had the only 20-game winner in either league, a young fellow named Spencer Strider.

So Atlanta should be a shoo-in to win the 2023 World Series. In fact, let's just cancel the rest of the post-season, hand the boys from Cobb County the trophy, and officially proclaim that from now til February, football reigns supreme.

Oh, if only baseball, and life, were so simple.

The 2022 edition of the Braves was pretty darned good also.

They tracked down the Mighty New York Mets, threw them out of first place, and rolled to 101 wins.

They also lost in the Division Series, three games to one, to the Philadelphia Phillies.

The Philadelphia "Frigging" Phillies.



BILL POTEAT

Most Braves fans would pull for the Vladimir Putin KGB All Stars over the Philadelphia Phillies. But those Phillies, with their poster child for jerkhood, one Bryce Harper, were hot and they were lucky.

And in Major League Baseball, hot and lucky will always trump talent and skill.

Case in point of hot and lucky, the 2021 Atlanta Braves.

Those boys simply weren't that good.

Ronald Acuna went down with a mid-season injury and the Braves made do with a patched-together outfield of journeymen and second-stringers.

The Giants won 107 games that year. The Dodgers 106. Milwaukee captured 95 victories and even the Cardinals notched 90 wins. No way the Braves could get past that bunch to the World Series.

But they did. Joc Pederson, who wore a string of pearls during each at-bat, was smoking during the divisional series and the Braves pounded the Brewers, winning three games to one.

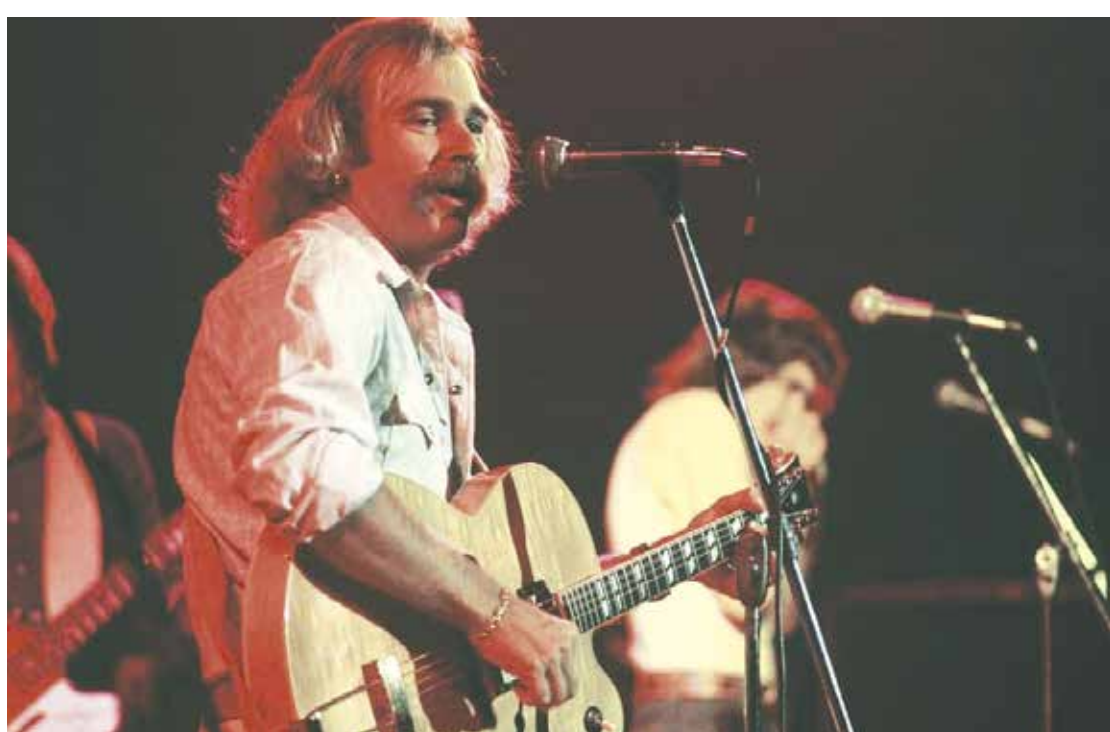
In the League Championship Series against the despicable Dodgers, it was Eddie Rosario who absolutely caught fire. When the smoke cleared, Los Angeles was in the dirt, defeated four games to two.

And in the World Series,

See **POTEAT**, Page 8B



JIMMY BUFFETT



FOR THE PAPER

Jimmy Buffett in concert in the '70s.

Bidding farewell to an old and dear friend

MY WIFE SANDRA picked up the Sept. 9 edition of The Paper the day it came out and turned to the Opinion section. A puzzled look crossed her face.

"I figured you'd write about Jimmy Buffett this week," she said.

"I just couldn't," I replied. "It's still too raw."

The inventor and sole purveyor of a musical genre some folks used to call Caribbean Soul had died only eight days earlier at the age of 76 from Merkel cell carcinoma, a rare, sneaky, aggressive form of skin cancer.

I felt like I had lost a dear, old friend.

I never knew him of course; never even met him. Still, we had been buddies for 40 years.

My first exposure to Buffett's music came shortly after I read a newspaper column written by an older



MARTY QUEEN

friend of mine when we were both just kids. Scott Hollifield, who eventually became my longtime boss and partner in crime at The McDowell News, began writing a column for that publication shortly after he left high school.

In one of them, he recounted an eventful trip with his buddies to see Buffett during the singer's annual stop at Carowinds, a staple of his tours before he got way too rich and famous to play that kind of venue. The way Scott described Jimmy's music

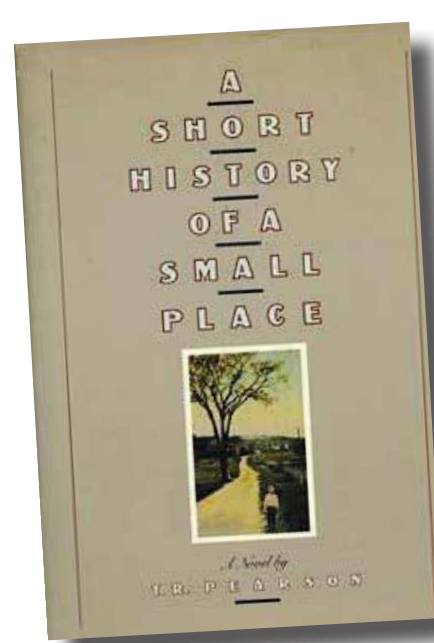
made him sound like a pretty cool guy to listen to, and sure enough, he was.

Soon after, another buddy of mine gave me an old Buffett cassette tape that had been lying around unappreciated at his house for some time. The tape turned out to be "You had to be There," a live double album of Buffett in his prime.

I was hooked deeper than any marlin that ever swallowed a bait. Hooked, as Buffett himself put it, in the heart.

When I first realized I was destined to become a Parrot Head, as Jimmy's fans are known, not many of my other friends had even heard of Jimmy Buffett. But as the 80s wore on, and the lucrative college circuits finally realized what they were missing and began booking him, his popu-

See **QUEEN**, Page 8B



"A Short History of a Small Place," by T.R. Pearson.

FOR THE PAPER

'Short History' of direct and roundabout dialogue wherever it leads.

USUALLY THE PURPOSE of communication — written or otherwise — is to get from Point A to Point B as efficiently and directly as possible. Spontaneous twists and turns enroute can muddle the message.

The Master of Directness is my pal Sam Avery. Here's how our conversations typically go:

ME: Sambo! How you feeling, my man?

SAM: Fine.

ME: Good, good. Per usual, I'm sure. Whatcha doing?

SAM: Going to the store.

ME: Store, huh? Whatcha getting? Cold beer for the upcoming road trip, HA HA HA?



ALLEN VAN NOPPEN

SAM: Leaf bags.

ME: Leaf bags, huh? Listen, I want to run something by you. When will you be back home?

SAM: When I get there.

There it is. Brilliant directness. Simultaneously efficient

and evasive.

Pal Sam's style can be uncomfortable for some Southerners who prefer to breeze shoot and fat chew and lollygag around the point, whatever that point may be.

The best current recorder of our windy, Southern-style, roundabout way of getting to an eventual point, is T.R. Pearson. He is a Winston-Salem-born author whose first novel, "Short History of a Small Place," was published in 1985.

Jean, my wife, The Beloved, no slouch when it comes to direct A-to-B dialogue, gave it to me in the mid 1980s.

The first time I read "Short

History," I laughed so hard I couldn't sleep. The second time I read it I paid sober appreciation to the book's extraordinary commitment to structure, originality, authenticity, familiarity, and representation of Southerners everywhere.

Pearson's story takes place in the fictional town of Neely, N.C., "a place you won't find on any road map of the state but which you may one day discover on the wonderful literary landscape of the South," reads the book's flap-jacket, "somewhere to the east of Twain's Mississippi

See **VANNOPPEN**, Page 8B

2023 HOMECOMING COURTS

NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF



Madison Harrell
(Junior)

Parents: Wilena Harrell and Keith Jones
Escorted by Jaidon Johnson



Veatriz Mendoza
(Senior)

Parents: Joaquin Candelario CruzCirina Mendoza Canseco
Escorted by Daniel Candelario Mendoza



Lauren Miller
(Sophomore)

Parents: Shiquitta Miller and Desmond Sneed
Escorted by Jada Miller



RoRo Van Artsdalen
(Freshman)

Parent: Vickie Van Artsdalen
Escorted by Vickie Van Artsdalen

DRAUGHN HIGH SCHOOL



Carleigh Alesie Meadows

Carleigh is the daughter of Jeff and Jaime Meadows. She is escorted by her father, Jeff Meadows.



Rylyn Mae Deal

Rylyn is the daughter of Ryan and Casey Deal. She is escorted by her father, Ryan Deal.



Kadence Michelle Clontz

Kadence is the daughter of Brandon and Jamie Clontz. She is escorted by her father, Brandon Clontz.



Courtney Marie Sisk

Courtney is the daughter of Clay and Jamie Sisk. She is escorted by her father, Clay Sisk.



Addison Grace Aldridge

Addison is the daughter of Bill and Kelly Aldridge. She is escorted by her father, Bill Aldridge.



Speed Kara Hatley

Speed is the daughter of Michael and Annette Hatley. She is escorted by her father, Michael Hatley.



Finlee Marie Young

Finlee is the daughter of Josh and Jennifer Young. She is escorted by her father, Josh Young.



Riley Grace Schutt

Riley is the daughter of LenighAnn Genovese. She is escorted by her brother, Brayden Schutt.



Laney Grace Winebarger

Laney is the daughter of Chad and Christi Winebarger. She is escorted by her brother Payton Winebarger.



Ellery Michelle Smith

Ellery is the daughter of Michael and Tonya Smith. She is escorted by her father, Michael Smith.



Jenna Diane Abernathy

Jenna is the daughter of Justin and Karen Abernathy. She is escorted by her father Justin Abernathy.



Addie Hope Poteet

Addie is the daughter of Casey Charlet and Lindsay Baker. She is escorted by her mother, Lindsay Baker.



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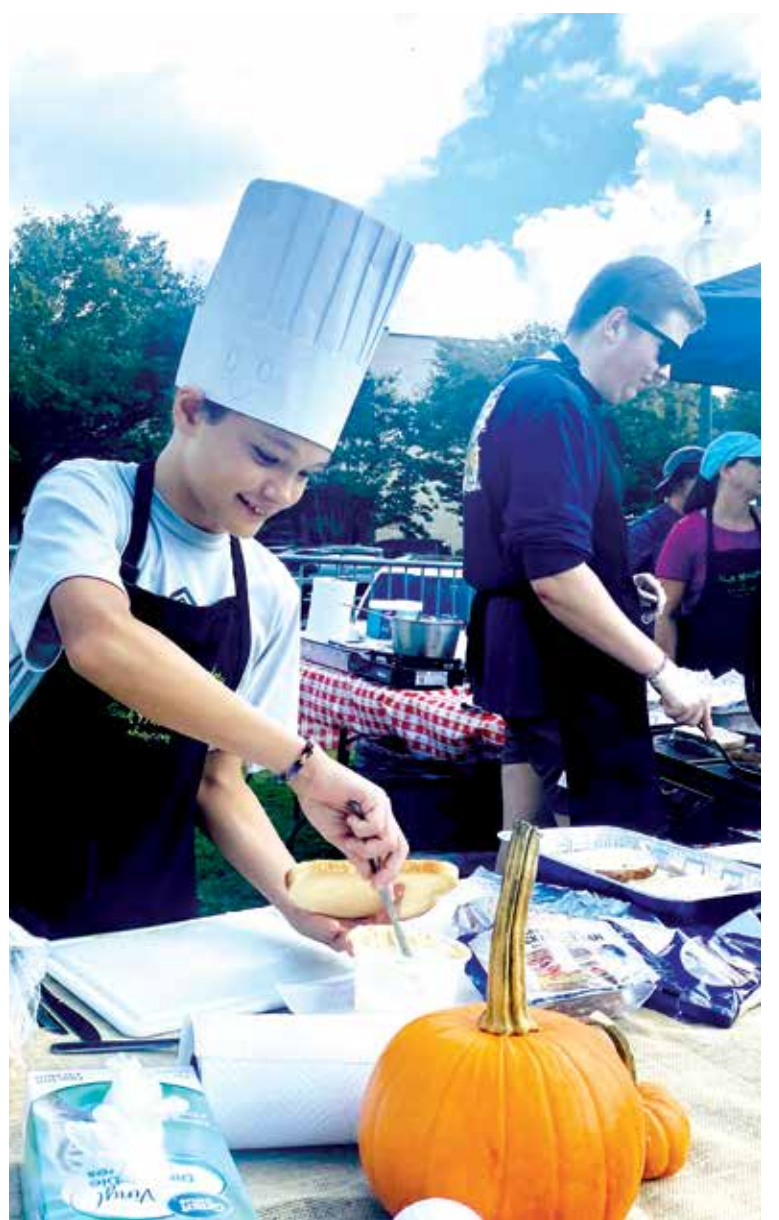
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ALLEN VANNOPPEN / THE PAPER

Give cheese a chance

JAMESON SMITH, left, prepares a grilled cheese sandwich with all the fixin's while Alex Sisk works the cooktop during last week's Give Cheese a Chance fundraiser on the Historic Burke County Courthouse Square in Morganton. They

represented Oak Hill United Methodist Church. Local custom ink manufacturer Siegwark won the contest. The event raised funds for the Meeting Place Mission, working to end the cycle of homelessness.

Human face of slavery in Burke County brought to life in new historic exhibit

By ANGELA KUPER COPELAND
Arts & Entertainment Editor
THE PAPER

About 160 miles northeast of Burke County sits Stagville Plantation, the largest plantation in North Carolina. About 900 enslaved people were forced to work the 30,000 acres of wheat, corn, rye, and other crops.

The geography of Western North Carolina meant there was no operation of that scale here, but slavery was very much a part of Burke County.

In fact, this area had one of the largest percentages of slaves in all of Appalachia, comprising nine states and 215 counties. In 1850, 27% of the population was enslaved, 26% 10 years later.

“That’s the highest number of Black people you’ve ever had in Burke County,” said Dr. Leslie McKesson, a local historian who led a class this spring in the Honors College at Appalachian State University called “Interrogating Antebellum Slavery in Appalachia.”

The area didn’t have large plantations like the eastern half of the state. Instead, slaves were put to work in sustainability farming and raising hogs and cattle. They also were forced labor in mining and building railroads.

The misconception that there were few slaves in Burke County is only one of the myths debunked in the new exhibit “Shadows of a Time Gone By: Glimpses of the Lives of Enslaved People at the Historic Captain Charles McDowell, Jr. House.”

The exhibit is a collaboration between the Historic Burke Foundation and ASU. Student research during McKesson’s class formed the slave narratives in “Shadows,” the voices of the enslaved people at Quaker Meadows Plantation in Morganton. The students recorded the stories, which can be listened to on any smartphone using the QR codes provided in the exhibit.

The students will perform the slaves’ stories reading-theater style in a special presentation today, Saturday, Oct. 7, at the Historic Burke County Courthouse. Doors open at 2 p.m. with the presentation beginning at 2:30 p.m. in the courtroom.

“I designed the class around the Charles McDowell House,” McKesson said. “I knew Burke County would be the perfect microcosm to study (slavery in Appalachia). Morganton is the oldest city in Western North Carolina, so a lot of the things that were going to happen around slavery would have happened here. I knew there would be documentation from the McDowell House and a lot of documentation from the Avery plantation Swan Ponds that we could use to help us figure out how to tell the story.”

The methodology of the class and the resulting exhibit is called deeply informed imagining. The term is thought to have been coined by poet Elizabeth Alexander, who is also a scholar of African-American literature and culture.

Stories weave history together into a storyline. McKesson will lead a similar class focused on slavery at Fort Defiance in Caldwell County in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program at ASU in the spring of 2024.

The exhibit is the realization of a goal that’s been years in the making. Before this exhibit, lessons centered around the McDowell House, often focused on general Colonial life and the Overmountain Men’s pivotal role in the American Revolution.

“The McDowell family was the wealthiest in the county



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND / FOR THE PAPER

Dr. Leslie McKesson and her ASU students created ‘Shadows of a Time Gone By,’ an exhibit at the Heritage Museum located inside the Historic Burke County Courthouse.

for 150 years, up to the time of the Civil War. The influence of the McDowells in this place for 150 years can’t be denied,” said Dr. Linda Lindsey, president of the Historic Burke Foundation. “We’ve always wanted to tell the whole story and not part of the story.”

Lindsey and McKesson reiterate that the exhibit is not connected to the Confederate monument that sits on the square outside the courthouse.

“This was envisioned long before the monument became such a talking point. When I designed the class, my goal was to bring humanity and agency and self-emancipation to enslaved people,” McKesson said.

The six Honors students participating in McKesson’s class used scholarly research and documentation as the basis of each of the characters they voice in the exhibit. Some exhibit characters are based on documented enslaved people at McDowell House, while others are pieced together from what was learned about the people and events of the time.

“While not all the characters (in the exhibit) are people we can point to and say this person existed here on this property and did this particular thing, we have placed the characters within historical events we know happened,” she said.

LEARNING THROUGH NARRATIVES

McKesson saw firsthand the value of learning through narratives.

She wrote a ghost story based on the Quaker Meadows cemetery for the Historic Burke Foundation newsletter a few years back. She discovered how putting historical facts into a story helped her to remember those details.

“There were too many names, too many years, but when I put it in the form of a ghost story that talked about the people at Quaker Meadows, I got it.”

The stories found in the exhibit are supplemented by census records, letters, and other documentation. For example, “Shadows” includes the pages of the 1850 census, which shows that Isaac T. Avery of Swan Ponds plantation was the largest slave owner at the time with 122 slaves. Swan Ponds is about 2 miles down NC-126 from Freedom High School.

“The stories are probably 10%, 15% of the presentation,” McKesson said. “The majority of the presentation is straight-up history. The majority of what you are seeing here is

straight history. There is a heavy focus on facts, documents, and textbooks. These are things written by people who are deemed credible academics. We want people to realize that this is based on the kind of facts that they hold high.”

“Shadows” aims to push back against the “Lost Cause” mythology that enslaved people were happy and treated like family. Reading the letters of slaves at face value could give someone the impression they were content.

But that’s not understanding the context in which they wrote. Slaves showed deference to their masters out of fear that not doing so would have grave repercussions for themselves and their families. The slave narratives provide vital context to the documents

included in the exhibit.

“In my mind, even when you look back on some of the choices they made, that’s an act of agency,” she said.

“That’s me taking a step trying to protect my family. If I have to blow up the master’s skirt to do it, then doggone I’m going to do it.”

“The thing this project has shown me is that every situation is different.”

McKesson hopes those who view the exhibit will have a similar experience to the students who helped put “Shadows” together.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

“We built relationships. We got close to each other during the course of this study. There was no one that ever felt they were being put on the spot or

called out. We had to work through some hard conversations, but there was an understanding that we were only trying to understand what happened historically,” she said.

Yet that history doesn’t come to life without showing the humanity of the people involved. McKesson hopes the exhibit shows enslaved people as “a fuller, more human person and help Black people move away from the abject shame of being enslaved and help White folks see these were real humans. Africans who came over here were people with vital cultures and belief systems.”

“White folks, when you talk about slavery, it’s the guilt thing. Black folks when you talk about slavery, it’s the shame thing. And my goal with this is to move beyond that. To tell stories of formerly enslaved people or people who were enslaved their entire lives that reflect their humanity. They were not this monolithic stereotype of slaves that we have in our minds.”

Stripping away their humanity facilitated dehumanization.

“I think this exhibit, the humanity comes through loud and clear,” Lindsey added.

“Five of her students told me that (the class) was a life-changing experience and that they would never look at the world the same. This is not just a course. This is something that’s pivotal for people. I believe this exhibit will be pivotal.”

“Shadows of a Time Gone By: Glimpses of the Lives of Enslaved People at the Historic Captain Charles McDowell, Jr. House” will be the featured exhibit at the Heritage Museum inside the Historic Burke County Courthouse until next fall.

Angela Kuper Copeland is the arts & entertainment editor at The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595.

UNC HEALTH

Blue Ridge

UNC Health Blue Ridge

Welcomes

Robert Cope, MD

Dr. Robert Cope has joined the UNC Health Blue Ridge Spine Center of Excellence and Dr. Jason Zook to provide comprehensive spine surgery. He earned his medical degree from the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM). He completed his orthopedic surgery residency at Beaumont Health, Detroit, MI, and his spine surgery fellowship at Geisinger Health in Pennsylvania.



Robert Cope, MD Jason Zook, MD

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(These Will Not Be Published)

FOCUS ON BUSINESS

A place of beauty, rest, and solace

Burke Memorial Park has been serving Burke County for 70 years

By **SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN**
Business and Education Reporter
THE PAPER

Situated on the outskirts of Morganton, on a picturesque hill overlooking the mountains, Burke Memorial Park has been providing a final resting place for local and regional residents for 70 years.

Gantt Stephens prides himself in continuing the tradition of service and of trust his father Gerald began when he purchased the business.

The park was created in 1953 by George Earp, a businessman who started several cemeteries across the Southeast. After his death, Earp's widow remarried Carl Wall, Sr. who sold the business to Gerald Stephens in 1979.

Gantt was 8 years old when his family took ownership of the business, so the memorial park has been a constant in his life. He and his staff provide customers with the assurance they will be treated like family.

Salesman Jeffery Raustis, helps families with pre-planning as they consider end-of-life decisions.



The rolling hills of Burke Memorial Park on a picture-perfect October afternoon.

SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN / THE PAPER

PRE-PLANNING AIDS RELATIVES

He says pre-planning burial is a way for individuals to provide comfort and security for their loved ones.

"Pre-planning is a way people can give themselves peace of mind," he said. "They can give (peace of mind) to each other, husband and wife, mother and daughter."

According to Jeffery, the memorial park is growing. Already home to 16 developed acres, Burke Memorial Park recently began the first of a four-phase project known as "Peace Gardens."

"We have opened up a new burial garden we are currently selling," Jeffery said. "It's called Peace Garden One. It will be a beautiful garden area."

When complete, Peace Garden One will hold about 1,000 graves, and with the completion of Phases 2-4, an additional 3,000 graves can be placed on the property.

"It's got a beautiful view of the mountains," Gantt said.

"We also started in March, selling a new mausoleum to go in the complex," Jeffery added.

Visitors to Burke Memorial Park will be impressed with the beauty of the grounds. The park is immaculate and beautifully-manicured.

"What separates us from most is we put a big emphasis on care and maintenance," Gantt said. "We're focused on value. You get more here than you get at other public or private cemeteries."

Maintenance is a full time job, and is covered by an in-house grounds crew.

"We haven't found that you can get that personal care from a contracted crew," Gantt said. "It has to be people on staff."

"Then they understand what they are doing is more than just a job. That's what we try to train them to do."

DIFFERENT OPTIONS

Burke Memorial Park offers several options for clients wishing to make arrangements for themselves or loved ones. In addition to the cemetery, the park offers a mausoleum as well as a variety of options for customers who choose cremation.

"We have a lot of options, from cremation to ground to mausoleum," Jeffery said, "and multiple options in each of those."

"The mausoleum is a popular above ground option that people have really taken to here," he stated.

The staff at the park understand burial purchases can strain a family's budget, so they offer payment plans.

"We sit down with the family and find out what they've talk-



Burke Memorial Park staff includes (from left) Jeffery Raustis, Carol Johnson and owner Gantt Stephens.

SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN / THE PAPER

ed about, if they have even talked about it," Jeffery said. "We guide them through and show them their options and then we show them ways they can pay for it."

"In the end, it's giving them peace of mind," he added.

Plans include several options for cremated remains, including benches, cremation niches outside of the mausoleum, and inside the chapel. Niches have bronze plaques on the fronts and include places for cameo pictures if the customer desires.

The mausoleum also features lighted glass niches, shadowbox-like spaces, where clients can place loved ones' urns, as well as mementos and pictures.

The park even assists customers with burying cremains in an underground plot if they wish.

Other clients choose to purchase a cremation bench, which is placed on the park property. The front of the base can be removed, and up to four urns placed inside. The bench is engraved with the deceased's names and other personal information if the family desires.

According to Gantt, Burke

Memorial Park completes an average of 240 burials per year.

A PLACE OF BEAUTY

The park is decorated with a variety of statuary, with each section of the property featuring a different element.

"We have the American flag area and the Singing Tower (which housed the original cemetery office)," Gantt said.

The tower plays bells, chimes the hour and plays Taps every evening at 6, according to Gantt.

One statue depicts Jesus and the woman at the well, another is a Bronze Bible, open to the 23rd Psalm, and another is a large rendering of praying hands.

One outstanding feature of the park is their Perpetual Care program.

"We are regulated by the state of North Carolina," Gantt said. "We are a licensed cemetery, different from a church, municipal, or private cemetery."

PERPETUAL CARE

The park is licensed and regulated, and as a Perpetual Care



The Mausoleum at Burke Memorial Park.

SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN / THE PAPER



One of the "cremation benches" at Burke Memorial Park.

SANDRA WILKERSON QUEEN / THE PAPER

facility, is required to maintain a trust fund to ensure care of the park "until the end of time."

The fund, currently \$800,000, guarantees there will be funding to meet maintenance needs into the future.

"A portion of every space, every crypt, every niche, every bench, all of that, goes into a trust fund," Gantt said. "And we don't get the money that's in the trust."

"The proceeds that trust generates, because it's invested, will care for the cemetery until the end of time," he said.

"That is why, when Jeffery is meeting with a family, he can say 'It (the park) will look like this until the end of time and this is how, because we have the money there. We have a design to cover it, to pay them to cut the grass and re-seal the roads.'"

The Perpetual Care label is a unique distinction.

"It's an apt name, the Perpetual Care trust fund," he added. "Based on findagrave.com, there are 20,000 cemeteries in NC but only 175 are Perpetual Care."

Gantt said he is grateful for his longtime staff, which feels like family.

"We have been very blessed with a staff that combined, have 150 years of experience between them," he said.

The staff at Burke Memorial Park is headed by Gantt and his parents, Gerald and Jean. Donna Powell is a Family Ser-

vice Counselor who came to work at the park in 1977.

Administrator Carol Johnson came to work in 1981 and her husband, Gary, is a Family Service Counselor. He started in 1982. Debbie Scott is the business' controller. She began work in 1984. Jeffery and Michelle Raustis are both Family Service Counselors. They began work in the spring of 2023.

Burke Memorial Park offers custom designed markers for their graves. All memorials are bronze attached to granite.

"We can show them the memorial, and they can pick out a border," Jeffery said. "Then we get on the computer and completely custom design the memorial so that when they walk out of here, they've got a picture of what their marker is going to look like."

The staff of the park also sponsors events that enable them to give back to their community. Beginning next week, the office will be a drop-off location for Toys for Tots.

"This is our community, it's not just the cemetery," said Jeffery. "We like to give back. The only way you receive is to give back."

Through mid-November, anyone may bring unwrapped toys to the office and place them in the collection box.

A PLACE OF SOLACE

Gantt hopes his customers will find Burke Memorial Park a place of solace.

"I want it to be a place that helps with their grief, brings them comfort, brings them peace," he said. "When they come here and bring their flowers, and they've gone to all of the trouble to care, (they will know) that grave will be cared for until the end of time."

"It's not just a job, we see it as helping people through their grief," he said.

Burke Memorial Park is located at 2506 Burke Memorial Park Road in Morganton. They can be reached at 828-437-0624.

Sandra Wilkerson Queen is the business and education reporter for The Paper. She may be reached at 828-445-8595 or via email at sandra@thepaper.media.



Hundreds of Christmas luminarie blaze behind the Praying Hands statuary at Christmastime at Burke Memorial Park.

FOR THE PAPER



JAMES LYNCH JR. / THE PAPER

Draughn's Nigel Dula (5) walks in for a touchdown during a home game last month. Dula tied Burke County records with six rushing TDs and seven total offensive TDs on Sept. 29 in Bakersville in a 57-42 Wildcats' win over previously undefeated Mitchell.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

HALF-DOZEN AND COUNTING

Another record Dula effort helps Wildcats add to win streak

By PAUL SCHENKEL AND JOSH MCKINNEY
Sports Staff
THE PAPER

Draughn running back Nigel Dula, who was a sophomore at the time, looked over at Wildcats head football coach Chris Powell's father, Sput, sheepishly after a 62-14 road loss to Mitchell in the fall of 2021.

The team had been flat-out humiliated, but Dula told the elder Powell that would never happen again.

"I think that loss up there two years ago really affected him and created a drive in him," Chris Powell said, "because that was embarrassing to what we've built as a program."

On Sept. 29 in the Wildcats'

return trip to Bakersville, Dula certainly made good on his promise.

Tied 21-21 almost midway through his first season playing at PHS in August as the starting goalkeeper for the JV squad, and he was off to a fine start.

In his three games, the JV Panthers were 2-0-1 and had allowed just one goal. He also

relinquish as they rattled off three more unanswered TDs spanning the halves en route to a 57-42 victory.

It was another milestone night for Dula, who rushed 29 times for 248 yards with a Burke County-record-tying six touchdowns. He added a team-high 49 receiving yards and another TD to also tie the county record with seven total offensive TDs on the evening, becoming the first non-quarterback to do so.

Dula's other rushing TDs covered 14, 1, 18, 23, and 4 yards. Before that, his 39-yard receiving TD on what Powell

REGULAR SEASON'S FINAL MONTH

In Week 8 action late Friday to open the final month of the 2023 regular season, the Wildcats hosted Madison for homecoming, while East Burke faced league-leading Bunker Hill at home, and Freedom and Patton hit the road to take on South Caldwell and R-S Central, respectively. Visit thepaper.media for more on each of those games.

See FOOTBALL, Page 7C

HIGH SCHOOLS

Booster clubs an integral part of local athletic programs

By JOSH MCKINNEY
Assistant Sports Editor
THE PAPER

It takes a lot of people to run a high school athletic program. The athletic director oversees the entire department, while a multitude of coaches are needed to lead the different teams, and community support is vital as well.

At the end of the day, one of the most important aspects of a high school athletic program is the presence of a booster club. Athletic booster clubs are often overlooked and underappreciated, but what they do to assist a school's athletic department is integral to its success.

There are four traditional high schools in Burke County, with Freedom opening in 1973 and East Burke in 1974. Patton's first year was 2007, while Draughn opened in 2008.

But regardless of how long a school has been around, every booster club faces challenges.

The Patton and Freedom booster clubs both have fewer than 10 people show up for most of their meetings. Patton's boosters meet at 5:30 p.m. the third Monday of each month in the school's media center, while Freedom's boosters hold meetings at 5:30 p.m. the first Tuesday of every month at the school.

East Burke has the largest booster club in the county at nearly 30 members, while Draughn usually has somewhere between 10-20 individuals attend its meetings. East Burke's meetings take place at 7 p.m. the first Monday of every month in the football field-house, and Draughn's boosters typically get together the second Tuesday of each month at the school, with the meeting time varying based on what sports are being played at that particular point in time.

'I SAID YES BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE WOULD'

Vivian Radford is in her second year as Patton's booster club president. She has helped off and on since 2011, but after membership dwindled during the COVID-19 pandemic, she decided to step up and assume the role of president.

"There just weren't many people willing to kind of stand up, and it is a needed part," said Radford of becoming president. "And I was not willing to watch all the hard work of people that had gone before us end in vain, so I said yes because no one else would."

Booster clubs receive no money from ticket sales, with their funds largely coming from the sale of concessions and apparel. Patton's boosters have also done fundraisers.

"We in the past have done the Motown Throwdown 50-50 split where we sell tickets with Freedom and split (half of) the pot, and then a winner takes half," said Radford. "We have done a 'just bid it' auction where we took some of the great pictures that the school purchases to hang in the lobby - as new teams come up, those pictures come down - and we have auctioned those off before

See BOOSTER, Page 11C

HIGH SCHOOLS

Patton soccer now playing #ForJosue

Panthers sophomore keeper recovering from brain aneurysm

By PAUL SCHENKEL
Sports Editor
THE PAPER

As the Patton varsity boys soccer team chases down what it hopes will be a first undefeated conference title

season since 2017, it does so with added motivation.

The Panthers are now playing for Josue.

Josue Raymundo Lopez, a 15-year-old sophomore, opened his first season playing at PHS in August as the starting goalkeeper for the JV squad, and he was off to a fine start.

In his three games, the JV Panthers were 2-0-1 and had allowed just one goal. He also

played all 80 minutes in goal for a varsity game against Draughn, a contest the Panthers won while allowing just one goal.

Then while Raymundo Lopez was home the morning of Sunday, Aug. 27, the day before the school year began, he started complaining of a headache.

"My dad gave him pain medication, and then later, my mom noticed the head-

ache was really bad because (Josue) kept kind of rolling around on the bed and said it was hurting too much," said Josue's older sister, Melissa, a junior at UNC-Charlotte who previously played soccer at Patton and who was also at home that day.

"So that's when my mom said (we needed to) just take him to the hospital and see

See JOSUE, Page 9C

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Salem visits Mull in youth football



PHOTOS BY JAMES LYNCH JR. / THE PAPER

Salem's Mason Black runs against Mull on Sept. 30 as the Tigers visited the rival Mustangs in a battle of unbeaten squads in the 10-12 age group of the Burke County Recreation Department's youth football league. Salem used a late touchdown to steal a 14-12 win and improve to 4-0 for the season, while Mull slipped to 2-1.



Salem's Brylon Carter (left) tries to elude a Mull defender during the ages 8-9 game. The Tigers won and stayed undefeated at 4-0 in the county league's middle age group as well.



Mull's Finnley Coffin (1) makes the catch and runs in for a touchdown against Salem in the ages 8-9 contest.



Mull ages 10-12 head coach Curtis Bristol talks to his players during a timeout.

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Meet the high school student-athletes

Andrew Lord, NCSSM-Morganton boys soccer



Why should others try this sport? I think it's a great way to get a good workout in, to build character, build teamwork with your mates. It's just fun and a great way for physical activity.

Other sports you play: Basketball and tennis

Favorite food: Pizza

Favorite musical artist: Hozier

Favorite school subject: Chemistry

What do you enjoy most about representing your school? Just being able to be a part of the community at NCSSM. It's great people, a very smart community, helps me to be a better person, so I'm proud to represent NCSSM as a whole.

Grade: 12th

Position: Attacking midfielder

How long have you played this sport? I've been playing for almost 15 years now.

Rudy Mendoza, Draughn boys soccer



sport? You can learn much from it. You can learn character development, you can learn how different attitudes on the pitch can affect other people – the environment, the atmosphere, the experience of the game. You can create bonds with teammates, you can settle arguments with good peace. And you can get big legs from it.

Other sports you play: Football

Favorite food: Pizza

Favorite musical genre: Rap

Favorite school subject: History

What do you enjoy most about representing your school? Setting a good example of calmness and peace and maturity.

Grade: 12th

Position: Center back

How long have you played this sport? Twelve years.

Why should others try this

— Compiled by Josh McKinney

Patience will be required in teams turning the corner



PAUL SCHENKEL

EAST BURKE IS 2-0, surging back from a 19-point deficit that has been trimmed to a single point, and attempting a potential go-ahead two-point conversion at rival Draughn on Sept. 1.

I'm not sure if one play has ever before changed the direction of a local high school football season the way that next one did.

The Cavaliers were stopped by the Wildcats, preserving Draughn's slim lead. Draughn scored another touchdown and tacked on the conversion to make it a two-score game and sew up the win. The Wildcats have not lost a game since.

EB drove back down the field, but a turnover ended the threat as they didn't score the rest of that game. The Cavaliers have not won since.

Certainly one thing that's hindered the Cavs is the injury bug. Fourth-year coach Derrick Minor came into the season attempting to two-platoon as much as possible, knowing the team couldn't afford many injuries, particularly not the type that took out a starter on both sides of the ball at once.

Then Caden Buff and Gavon Franklin went down in the first two weeks as the team lost a key starter on both sides of the ball. Then KJ Byrd was lost in the conference opener, a player who was a two-way starter and also placekicker, handled kickoffs, punted, and returned kicks.

This is not to make excuses for EB. They wouldn't want that. Their next-man-up mentality tells us that.

But it is tough to imagine how many games might have gone different ways if EB had gone into its bye week at 3-0 in

nonconference games after wins over both of its two biggest rivals.

Still, even healthy, the Catawba Valley 2A Conference was always going to represent an enormous challenge for EB.

The eight-team league features six teams that would make the NCHSAA 2A state playoffs if the season ended today. Each of those isn't just capable of getting in but also winning a first-round game if given the right matchup. More than one CVAC team almost undoubtedly will make lengthy postseason runs.

The Cavaliers were the one Burke County team not to get hosed geographically in the latest realignment, but they drew the short straw when it came to level of competition. Looking around at most other area 2A conferences, it's easy to see EB finishing in the top half of some, most, or all of them.

But that just wasn't the hand they were dealt. EB has the rest of this season as well as next season to survive the CVAC, then they can hope for a break under the next realignment which is expected to shape the 2025-28 football seasons (though given the NCHSAA's and state lawmakers' ongoing battle, those years are no longer certain).

Realistically, things may get worse before they get better for the Cavs until then. EB loses a slew of senior playmakers this coming offseason, and the majority of this year's CVAC gridiron contenders are very young.

But to hear rumors that EB fans aren't happy with Minor or the coaching staff is hard to fathom. The Cavs have reached the playoffs only two times since their first season sliding down from 4A to 2A when Draughn opened 15-plus years ago. Expectations should be tempered as such ... especially when playing in a league of this caliber. And still, the Cavs aren't getting blown out. They're in every game, even as



JAMES LYNCH JR. / THE PAPER

East Burke's Cannon Morrison tackles a Newton-Conover runner on Sept. 29 in Icard.

a shorthanded version of themselves.

Patience. It's easy to preach but hard to practice, particularly in sports anymore. Minor is doing things the right way, and I truly believe will give EB the winner it wants in football if EB is willing to wait just a couple more years for it.

Similarly, across the county at Freedom, frustration abounds after a 1-5 start and another close loss, the team's third straight by one possession.

But whereas the Cavs might be waiting two years, Freedom shouldn't have longer than a one-year return on investment if fourth-year coach Justin Hawn is given time to bring his squad along. Freedom is young, led by a solid group of sophomores who it sure feels like could finish as high as sec-

ond in the league and win seven or eight games next season.

If Freedom decides a change is needed, however, all bets are off. Would all of the players stay? Would the system remain in place? Or will continuity be disrupted again for a program with six head coaches since 2012, necessitating another learning curve and perhaps disrupting confidence? I just can't see why Freedom should listen to the Monday morning quarterbacks either.

No matter how good the coach, change is hard, and year ones are challenging.

Ryan Goggio is dealing with that this season at Patton, like Joe Glass and Tom Eanes did before him. The late, legendary Tom Brown's first season at EB was a major struggle. Chris Powell's first 12 months in Valdese weren't much fun ei-

ther. Each of those men turned their respective programs around, however, reaching the playoffs by year two.

Just like Goggio deserves time to produce results, so Minor's and Hawn's legacies must also be judged fairly. Both were hired just before COVID hit, meaning basically their whole first year was spent waiting to even get on a practice field, and for much of that time, they couldn't even assemble as a whole. Then in the fall of 2021, their second seasons, much of the county teams' schedules were dismantled and reassembled on the fly amid COVID outbreaks and quarantine shutdowns.

Maybe folks forget, but Hawn - like Goggio - was a state championship defensive coordinator. And Minor turned Foard into a consistent winner before coming to Icard. Foard! Enough said.

If the plug is pulled now at either traditional Burke County high school football program, there's no telling what next year or the year after holds.

What fans must understand - like we all used to before the fast-forward win-now mentality that has invaded over the last quarter-century - is that at most programs, winning big and consistently requires patience on the part of those in support roles.

Hopefully, that's a lesson we teach to our young people who are playing the sport. Believe me, I'm all for giving them the very best chance to succeed. But to me, those setups are already in place, though one can only see that with a proper perspective of the past and potential future.

Logical decisions, not emotional ones, should be made in shaping the future of Burke County high school football.

Paul Schenkel is sports editor at The Paper. He can be reached at 828-445-8595 or paul@thepaper.media.

Mimosa holds parent-child golf tournament



FOR THE PAPER

Bryan and Michael Gates were the overall winners of Mimosa Hills Golf Club's 2023 parent-child tournament, which was held Sept. 24.



Kelly and Grey Snipes (youth ages 14-15) winning team.



Winners Randy and Charlie Walker (youth ages 12-13).



Garrett and Bodie Feduke (youth ages 7 and under) winning team.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Lowman's legacy lives on with naming of Heritage field

By JOSH MCKINNEY
Assistant Sports Editor
THE PAPER

The Heritage Middle School football field now has a new name: Allen Lowman Field.

Prior to Wednesday's game against Liberty, a dedication ceremony was held in honor of the Eagles' former head football coach, who died in March at age 70. Lowman's family members were in attendance, as were friends, former players, and those who coached alongside him.

"It is my pleasure this afternoon on behalf of the Burke County Board of Education and Superintendent Mike Swan to be here with you on this special occasion as we remember the life of Allen Lowman and honor him with the naming of the Heritage Middle School football field after him," Board of Education Chair Wendi Craven said as she addressed the crowd during Wednesday's dedication ceremony.

"... Coach Lowman's memory and legacy will live on not



JASON BAKER, VALDESE SPORTS NETWORK / FOR THE PAPER

Family, friends, and former players of ex-Heritage Middle School football coach Allen Lowman, alongside members of the Burke County Public Schools Board of Education, stand on the newly named Allen Lowman Field during Wednesday afternoon's dedication ceremony in Valdese.

only in the lives of his wife, Rexanna, and sons AJ and Zach, but also in all of the students and student-athletes who will set foot on this field for years to come."

A Valdese native, Lowman was Heritage's head coach from 1999-2011, during which

time his teams compiled an overall record of 83-13 and won seven Foothills Athletic Conference championships.

The Eagles' first conference title under Lowman came in his first season at the helm, and they also won four straight FAC championships from 2001-

04 before adding titles in 2009 and 2011.

In addition to his time at Heritage – which included such accomplishments as coaching the Eagles to shutout victories in every game during the 2001 season and guiding them to an unbeaten mark again in 2009, when they

outscored opponents 266-12 – Lowman also taught and coached at Salem Junior High School, Valdese Junior High School, and East Burke High School.

Those stops were preceded by a stint as an athletic director for the Valdese Recreation Department.

FOOTBALL: Patriots come agonizingly close again in loss

FROM PAGE 1C

called "a great over-the-shoulder catch on a great ball from Eli (Tillery)" got Draughn (6-1, 3-0 Western Highlands 1A/2A Conf.) on the board after Mitchell had nabbed the early lead.

Dula, who lit up Mitchell with five TDs last season in Valdese, padded his season total to 25 rushing TDs this fall, four away from his own school record from last season and 13 away from former Freedom star B.J. Emmons' county-record total from 2014.

Dula is also chasing Emmons on another list, with his latest outburst giving him 1,303 yards for the season and 5,838 yards for his varsity career, 735 yards shy of Emmons' record.

"He's a special talent and a special young man," Powell said. "He's a competitor. He wants the ball in his hands, he wants to be that playmaker and doesn't mind carrying the weight of the offense or the weight of the team on his shoulders. When he touches the ball, anything can happen."

Mitchell pulled ahead again at 13-7 before Tillery's 8-yard TD toss to Jacob Mull gave the guests their first lead of the night. Following Dula's first rushing score, an 83-yard kickoff return TD and two-point conversion allowed the Mountaineers to tie the game at 21-all before Draughn's big Dula-led surge pushed the margin to as much as an insurmountable 50-21.

Powell credited his team's defense at least in part for the big momentum swing.

The Wildcats were led on that side of the ball by Hampton Blackwell (team-high 14 tackles, 11 solo), Shaydon Pino, and Marshall Brinkley (10 tackles each). Brinkley, Ty Matthews, and Will Seagle added a tackle for loss apiece. Connor Pinkerton had an interception, and Brinkley recovered a fumble.

"Our defense in that second quarter, we had an interception early that was ruled out of bounds, and from our angle, it looked like he was clearly in when he caught it," Powell said. "After that, our defense got a chip on its shoulder and wanted to get some more (take-aways). Then we got an interception and scored, forced a fumble and were able to score, then we get a big fourth-down stop (and were) able to score."

"That span of about 7 or 8 minutes, our defense was playing phenomenal. And when our defense is playing great, it gives our offense confidence and vice versa. ... Still gave up too many points. We've got to get some things fixed there, but overall, very proud of our kids' performance."

In addition to Dula's work on the ground, Tillery added 52 rushing yards as Jesus Becerra and Tristan Hines totaled seven pancake blocks between them on the Wildcats' stout left side of the offensive line.

Tillery finished 16 of 25 for 175 yards passing, also regularly locating Pinkerton (team-



JAMES LYNCH JR. / THE PAPER

Freedom quarterback Kaden Davis (left) looks to avoid the Hibriten pass rush on Sept. 29 in Morganton.

high five catches, 48 yards), Radabaugh (three catches, 42 yards), and Mull (four catches, 34 yards) through the air and hitting Dula on a two-point conversion pass.

Draughn's special teams unit was led by the efforts of Pino (four returns, 109 yards) and Rudy Mendoza (7 for 7 on point-after kicks).

The Wildcats' sixth straight win came in a battle of top-10 ranked 1A squads who are the last two conference champions, Mitchell in 2021 and Draughn in 2022, both of whom went on to reach at least the NCHSAA 1A West Regional final in those seasons.

Draughn is now up to No. 5 in this week's Carolina Preps 1A statewide power rankings ahead of home games against Madison and Rosman, who entered Friday's action with a combined 1-12 record while being outscored by a combined 268 points.

"You've got to stay humble and stay hungry. That's been one of our mottos since day one. We can't let the success of some of the things we're doing get to our head," Powell said. "We have to treat every practice, every day, every game like it's for a championship. To do what we did last year, the target is there. We have to understand that we are going to get the absolute best shot that everyone has, so we can't afford to be lackadaisical in our approach."

FREEDOM STILL SEARCHING FOR SUCCESS IN CLOSE GAMES

Following a 42-8 loss to Bunker Hill in the opener, the Patriots entered their Sept. 22 bye having outscored the opposition 108-85 in the four subsequent games but with only one win to show for it.

Freedom returned to action on Sept. 29 looking for a victo-

ry over Hibriten in both teams' Northwestern 3A/4A Conference opener, but instead suffered another tough defeat.

After leading 21-7 in the second quarter and 27-21 late in the fourth, the host Patriots (1-5, 0-1 NWC) ultimately succumbed to the Panthers by a 35-33 final in overtime. The loss was Freedom's third single-score defeat in four games, as they also sandwiched a 27-19 home loss to Forestview on Sept. 1 and a 23-20 loss at Chase on Sept. 15 around a 56-6 home win over Patton on Sept. 8.

According to Freedom coach Justin Hawn, his players this year have "been through more heartbreak in half a season than I've been through in multiple seasons."

"I'm proud of their fight, I'm proud of their effort," he added. "They come to work every single day and I'm so proud of them, but if we want to be successful then we've got to find ways to win these games. Right now we're finding ways to be in a bunch of games, but we're not finding ways to win, we're not coming up with that clutch play, and that's just where we've got to grow as a team, as a coaching staff and as a program."

Freedom moved the ball 64 yards in nine plays to begin the contest against Hibriten, capping the drive with an 18-yard touchdown pass from sophomore quarterback Kaden Davis to junior wide receiver Kayden Lytle.

Although the Panthers responded with a 53-yard TD run from DK Mitchell moments later to take a 7-6 lead, the Patriots answered with a 92-yard catch-and-run by sophomore wideout Kobe Johnson at the 5:25 mark of the opening quarter – followed by a two-point conversion pass from Davis to Lytle – before a 2-yard scoring scamper from senior Jaylen

Barnett and the subsequent extra point from fellow 12th grader Jake Kota extended their advantage to 21-7 with 8:16 left until halftime.

A three-and-out by Hibriten gave possession back to the Patriots, who eventually turned the ball over on downs at the Panthers' 45-yard line with 1:59 remaining in the second period. Hibriten then cut the deficit in half thanks to a nine-play, 55-yard drive that ended when Mitchell scored from 4 yards out with 10 seconds left in the half.

After receiving the second-half kickoff, the Panthers held the ball for the entire third quarter and for the first 1:35 of the fourth before Gabe Suddreth capped a 23-play, 81-yard drive with a 2-yard TD run that evened the score at 21-all. Their only pass play of the series saw Avin Crawford hook up with Austin Ballard for a 5-yard gain, while six different ball carriers were used – Suddreth, Crawford, Mitchell, Gerard Felder, Dillan Earp and Dexter Mosley.

Nevertheless, Freedom countered with a nine-play, 61-yard series that ended when Davis found Barnett for a 7-yard TD strike. Davis completed all five of his pass attempts on the drive, also connecting with Lytle twice for a total of 20 yards, Johnson once for 7 yards and Justice Dominguez once for 1 yard.

After Hibriten answered with a 13-yard TD pass from Crawford to Earp on fourth-and-6 with 1:57 to play, pulling even at 27-all in the process, the game ultimately went to overtime. Mitchell scored from 2 yards out on the second play of the extra session and then Freedom jumped offsidelines on the extra-point kick to move the ball inside the 2-yard line, from where Suddreth successfully executed the two-point conversion run.

The Patriots were able to strike back with a 10-yard TD pass from Davis to Barnett on third down of their OT possession. However, the ensuing two-point conversion pass fell incomplete as they lost by a two-point final margin.

"We got them into some tough situations and they capitalized," said Hawn of the Panthers, who controlled the clock in the second half. "Hibriten's a well-coached football team and to our credit, if a team uses the entire quarter you're stopping them, you just can't get them off the field on third down, and that's really what it came down to. We needed to capitalize on the two-minute drill going in (at the end of regulation) and we had a good opportunity there in the end zone to tie it and it just didn't come our way, but it's a tough one for sure, it's definitely a tough one."

Despite the loss, Hawn spoke highly of his players' growth throughout the season.

"They're special people and they're special players, and I'm so proud of the development they've had," he said of Davis and Johnson, who hooked up six times for 126 yards and one of Davis' four TD passes. Overall, Davis completed 19 of 29 passes for 239 yards, with his performance putting him over 1,000 passing yards for the season and making him the first Freedom player to reach that mark since Jayden Birchfield did so three years in a row from 2017-19.

"You can see improvements in our team all the time, and that's also a credit to Kayden Lytle who carries a lot of attention on the other side, and Kaleb Greene who does his job every time, and Tiras Walker and Justice Dominguez," said Hawn. "It's one of those things – it was a great connection tonight, and those two kids (Davis and Johnson) deserve the credit they get. But it's a unit, and I thought as a unit they played well enough to win tonight. We just didn't capitalize when we had to."

In addition to the efforts by Davis and Johnson, Freedom also got five catches for 54 yards from Lytle, four receptions for 34 yards from Barnett, two catches for 13 yards from Dominguez and two receptions for 12 yards from Walker. Barnett was the Patriots' leading rusher as well with 32 yards on 13 carries.

Defensively, Freedom's Julian Castro had a forced fumble and multiple tackles for loss, with Noah Cooper recovering the fumble forced by Castro to set up the Patriots' third scoring drive. Jaiden Belin added a pass breakup.

Hawn said that moving forward, his players need to "come into work like they do every week."

"We're never gonna be the biggest team, but we can be the fastest and we can be the smartest and we can be the most efficient," he continued. "And that's what I thought we did in the first half, we've just got to continue that in the second half."

Real work begins now for history-making Braves



JOSH MCKINNEY

ARE THE 2023 Atlanta Braves the best team in franchise history?

That question has been asked ad nauseam throughout the regular season, and for good reason: the Braves have broken numerous team and individual records this year. But if you ask me, the jury is still out.

Taking into account only the regular season, I think the 2023 Braves are undoubtedly the best team in franchise history. However, in order to officially take that mantle, at least in my eyes, they need to do what the 1914 Boston Braves, the 1957 Milwaukee Braves and the 1995 and 2021 Atlanta Braves did: win the World Series.

Atlanta enters the playoffs having posted a Major League Baseball-best 104-58 record during the regular season. The Braves ran away with the National League East, finishing 14 games ahead of the second-place Philadelphia Phillies and 20 games ahead of the third-

place Miami Marlins, with those clubs facing each other in a best-of-three wild-card series this week to determine who will battle the Braves in the best-of-five Division Series that begins today, Saturday, Oct. 7. In the end, it was the Phillies who earned that opportunity by defeating Miami in two games.

Individually, Braves right fielder Ronald Acuña Jr. is the favorite to win the NL MVP Award – it would be an absolute shame if he didn't – after becoming the first player in MLB history to record both 40 home runs and 70 stolen bases in a single season (he finished with 41 homers and a franchise-record 73 steals, to be exact). He was also the major league leader in hits (217), total bases (383), runs scored (149) and on-base percentage (.416).

Furthermore, Acuña batted .337 (second in MLB) with 80 extra-base hits (tied for third), a .596 slugging percentage (fourth) and 106 RBIs (tied for eighth). He also had nearly as many walks (80) as strikeouts (84).

In any other season, Atlanta first baseman Matt Olson might be the MVP frontrunner. In his second year with the Braves, he became the franchise's all-time leader in single-season homers (54) and RBIs (139) while also recording 367 total bases (second in

MLB), 84 extra-base hits (second), 127 runs scored (third) and a .604 slugging percentage (third). Not only that, but Olson was also one of only four MLB players to appear in all 162 games.

Designated hitter Marcell Ozuna and third baseman Austin Riley added 40 and 37 homers, respectively, for the Braves, who are the first team in MLB history to have four players with at least 35 homers. Ozuna's 40th homer of the year came in the final inning of the regular season, and it was Atlanta's 307th blast of 2023, which ties the single-season record set by the Minnesota Twins in 2019.

Ten different Braves reached double digits in homers, with the aforementioned quartet being joined by second baseman Ozzie Albies (33), catcher Sean Murphy (21), left fielder Eddie Rosario (21), center fielder Michael Harris II (18), shortstop Orlando Arcia (17) and catcher Travis d'Arnaud (11). Those players and others also helped Atlanta become the first team ever to record a slugging percentage of at least .500 (the Braves slugged .501).

On the pitching side of things, Spencer Strider started 32 games, posting a 20-5 record and a 3.86 ERA to go with a franchise-best 281 strikeouts, topping the 276 Ks recorded by

John Smoltz en route to winning the NL Cy Young Award in 1996. Atlanta was 26-6 in games started by Strider, and four of those losses were by three runs or less.

Charlie Morton had 14 wins for the Braves, who also received 12 victories from Bryce Elder and an 8-1 record from Max Fried, the latter of whom only started 14 games due to injury. Closer Raisel Iglesias added 33 saves in 37 opportunities to go with a 5-4 record, a 2.75 ERA and 68 strikeouts in 55 2/3 innings spanning 58 appearances.

I could go on and on about the Braves' accomplishments in 2023, but at the end of the day, no one really remembers who posted the best record in any given season. What matters is who lifts the Commissioner's Trophy at the conclusion of the postseason.

Look no further than two seasons ago, when Atlanta snuck into the playoffs with an 88-73 record – the worst record among postseason qualifiers – and ended up winning its first World Series in 26 years. While you have to make the tournament to win it, whichever team gets hot at the right time is ultimately the one that emerges victorious in the Fall Classic.

The Braves appeared in five World Series in the 1990s and only won one of them. Since MLB was established in 1903,

they have won at least 100 games seven times (not counting this season), failing to reach the World Series on six of those occasions – 1993, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2003 and 2022 – and being swept by the New York Yankees in the 1999 World Series (as an aside, the '99 World Series was the only memory yours truly had of the Braves in the Fall Classic prior to their 2021 title win; I was 9 years old and had only started watching baseball a year earlier).

Winning a division title doesn't guarantee postseason success. Neither does winning 100 games. Often the team with the best record doesn't win it all. But the 2023 Braves have already rewritten so much history, and hopefully they will continue to do so in October (and November, if they need more than four games to win the best-of-seven World Series).

In the early 1930s, Duke Ellington wrote and performed a song that declared, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."

When it comes to the 2023 Braves, I say this: "It don't mean a thing if they don't win that ring."

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PRO

Bock part of Team Europe's Ryder Cup victory

By **PAUL SCHENKEL**
Sports Editor
THE PAPER

Duane Bock had spent nearly two decades caddying for seven professional golfers before he got his chance last weekend to be part of the biggest team event in the sport.

Bock, a Morganton resident of nearly the last 30 years, and pro **Sepp Straka** were part of the European team's 16.5 to 11.5 win over the U.S. squad in the 44th Ryder Cup matches, which were played Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at Marco Simone Golf and Country Club near Rome, Italy.

It was Europe's 10th win in the last 14 Ryder Cups and seventh consecutive win on home soil dating back to 1997 at Valderrama in Spain.

"Thanks to @seppstraka and @rydercupeurope for one of the coolest experiences in my life," Bock posted on social media earlier this week. "Y'all brought me in as family, and I couldn't be more proud of this entire team. We all truly are Fortior Simul (stronger together)."

Straka and Bock played a key role in Europe's hot start on day one of the event. Paired with Shane Lowry in the opening Friday morning foursomes (alternate shot format), the European duo beat Americans Rickie Fowler and Collin Morikawa, 2 and 1, as part of Europe's perfect 4-0 start. Straka and Lowry never trailed in the match, and Europe never trailed for the event.

Straka dropped his final two matches to finish with a 1-2-0 record in his Ryder Cup debut. Playing alongside Lowry in the same format on day two, **Max Homa** and **Brian Harman** claimed a 4 and 2 victory for the U.S.

Straka then pushed his Sunday singles match to the 18th hole but lost 2 down to Justin Thomas.

Still, Bock called the entire experience "by far, the ultimate."

"Trouble even trying to describe that atmosphere," he said. "The passion, excitement, electricity from the crowds, was incredible and then to be right in the middle of it all was an amazing experience."

Bock said Straka is taking the next six weeks off until competing in the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai from Nov. 16-19.

BASEBALL

Thomas homers, D-Backs advance to NLDS



Thomas

Alek Thomas started the Arizona Diamondbacks' Game 2 rally on Wednesday night in a 5-2 victory over the National League Central champion and host Milwaukee Brewers as Arizona claimed the teams' wild-card series, 2-0, to advance to the NL Division Series.

Thomas – who grew up in Morganton, and whose father, Allen, is a Freedom High School graduate who was long-time strength and conditioning coach for the Chicago White Sox – hit a solo home run to put the D-Backs on the board in the top of the fifth inning.

Arizona, who trailed 3-0 before rallying in Game 1 to win 6-3 and who trailed 2-0 in Game 2 before the Thomas homer, then plated four runs an inning later to set the game's final margin.

Thomas' homer came on a pitch up and out over the plate that he yanked inside the right-field foul pole. The left-handed hitting centerfielder batted seventh in the contest, and the hit was his only one of the short series, his first-ever postseason experience in just his second major-league season.

It marked the D-Backs' first playoff series win since 2007 when the team advanced to the NL Championship Series (though they also won a one-game playoff for the wild card in 2017).

Arizona next faces the host Los Angeles Dodgers, their NL West rivals, in Game 1 of the NLDS today, Oct. 7, at 9:20 p.m. (TBS).

FOOTBALL

Shatley set to play most int'l games ever



Shatley

Tyler Shatley, a Valdese native and 2009 East Burke High School graduate, will break the NFL record by playing in a ninth international regular-season game on Sunday when his Jacksonville Jaguars (2-2) face the Buffalo Bills (3-1) at London's Tottenham Hotspur Stadium at 9:30 a.m. (NFL Network).

Shatley, a 6-foot-3, 310-pound offensive lineman whose eight career contests in the United Kingdom are already an all-time league record, made his first start of 2023 and played all 66 snaps on offense (plus five on special teams) in the Jags' 23-7 win over the Atlanta Falcons last weekend in London. Despite the record and his



FOR THE PAPER

Caddie Duane Bock (right) and wife Geraldine hold the Ryder Cup trophy on Sunday night following Europe's 16.5 to 11.5 win over the U.S. squad at Marco Simone Golf and Country Club near Rome, Italy.

current extended stay overseas, Shatley told ESPN last week that he's still not a huge fan of the jet lag, the taxes pulled out for money earned in a different country, or the British cuisine, though he does enjoy his trips across the Atlantic for other reasons.

"It's great scenery," Shatley told ESPN. "When we're out there, out in the country, it's actually quiet. Unlike when you're around (Jacksonville, where) it's hard to find quiet places. ... You're also playing a football

game, but there's a little bit of time where you're like, 'Oh, this is nice. It's quiet.'"

A 32-year-old who's now in his 10th season with the Jaguars as the franchise's current longest-tenured player, he is set to appear in his 127th consecutive game with Jacksonville this weekend. Shatley has a chance to tie the all-time franchise record at 128 straight games next weekend when Jacksonville hosts the Indianapolis Colts.

Adult softball action heating up in Morganton, Drexel leagues



Avalanche shortstop Dakota Young (left) stretches in an attempt to tag out Stidham's Axe Throwing's Chandler Grindstaff during a Morganton Recreation Department adult open league softball contest on Monday night at Shuey Park.



Dream Team's Kaylon Johnson rounds third base during Monday's game against Keystone. Play in both of Morganton's leagues continues over the next few weeks, with church league games (held on Tuesdays and Thursdays) entering the second portion of the regular season on Oct. 17 and the open league (Mondays and Wednesdays) starting the playoffs on Oct. 30.



Express' Travis Cook makes the catch for an out against the Misfits on Wednesday in Drexel. The first-year Drexel league (games each Monday and Wednesday) starts the second half of its regular season on Oct. 9.



Misfits' Nick Medrano makes the catch on the infield for an out during Wednesday's game against Express at the R.O. Huffman Center in the town of Drexel's slow-pitch recreation composite bat adult softball league.

PHOTOS BY JAMES LYNCH JR. / THE PAPER

JOSUE: Family thankful for quick response, community's prayers

FROM PAGE 1C

what's going on because it didn't seem normal. My mom also said his symptoms were the same as my uncle, my mom's brother, because he also had an aneurysm when he was around Josue's age."

Raymundo Lopez first went to UNC Health Blue Ridge Hospital - Valdese, where the diagnosis was indeed a brain aneurysm. After three or four hours there, he was flown to Levine Children's Hospital in Charlotte.

And with just precious moments to spare, the family later found out.

"When we went to the hospital, the doctor told us if we had waited even 20 more minutes to take him, Josue probably wouldn't be here," Melissa said.

Soon after arriving in Charlotte, Raymundo Lopez was prepped for the first of two surgeries he would undergo in a three-day span. The first exploratory surgery lasted around four hours, Melissa said.

"They needed to see what was causing the aneurysm," Melissa said. "They told us in Valdese that it could be something genetic, but the doctors in Charlotte wanted to make sure there was nothing else going on other than the aneurysm."

Melissa said doctors found that the blood vessels in Josue's brain didn't stretch the correct way as he grew but were instead knotted. As such, blood flow to and from the brain was being negatively impacted.

After the first surgery, however, Melissa said that Josue's head was swollen and his speech and memory were limited.

"He couldn't say normal words or sentences, and he couldn't remember who my mom or dad was," she said. "That was the reason they had to do that second surgery. The doctors did another MRI and saw there was blood between the brain and the skull, and in order for him to get better and to prevent any future complications, they needed to do sur-



PATTON PANTHERS SOCCER / FOR THE PAPER

Members of the Patton boys soccer teams spent time with Josue Raymundo Lopez at his house in this Sept. 8 photo. Raymundo Lopez is making progress in his recovery from a recent brain aneurysm and two subsequent surgeries.

gery again."

After that surgery, which was deemed successful, the old Josue started to come back, quickly amazing the doctors who according to Josue's mother, Catarina, had initially told the family that "Josue might not be able to walk because they weren't sure if the one side of his body would function normally again, which would mean his speech could be majorly affected too."

"Right after the second surgery, he remembered who my parents were," Melissa said. "I think that first day, he slept most of the day. But then he started to talk again, remembered a lot of people. He could remember going to work the day before he had his symptoms."

Still Josue wasn't totally in the clear. After more testing, doctors saw that while Josue's eating was normal, he was unable to take fluids in correctly.

"When he was swallowing liquids, it was going into his lungs," Melissa said.

Doctors solved that problem with a honey-like consistency to add and thicken anything Josue wants to drink. He was still using the thickener for weeks after his release from Levine, where he spent one week with his father, German, by his side nearly the whole time.

"The doctor wanted him to stay for another two weeks but saw that Josue could walk on his own and that his whole issue with liquids would get better," Melissa said, "and they

thought it would be better for him to continue to recover at home instead of at the hospital because they thought that could also help him regain his memory, being in a familiar setting like that."

Even back at home, things weren't at all easy for Josue.

"The first two weeks, he struggled a lot with his emotions because he couldn't play soccer or remember certain people or certain things," Melissa said. "He couldn't remember some of the memories we made when we took two trips as a family this past summer."

But Josue has made strides in his recovery since then.

"(About three weeks ago) he was able to regain his voice," Melissa said. "It was a little raspy after surgery. And since then, he's been a whole lot happier. He is able to express himself better, he wants to go outside more. He still can't play sports and do a lot of other activities, but he understands why now."

Patton soccer players – both varsity and JV – visited Josue after he'd been home a couple weeks. That time spent together meant a lot to both parties.

"It was just such a shock when it initially happened. You didn't know and feared for the worst," Patton 17th-year head coach Keith Scott said. "When we went to his house, to see him able to walk and recognize some of us, that really helped ease (the other players') minds, just sitting and talking. ... I think they're seeing the improvements and how he's getting along."

Melissa added: "(Josue) loved it. The ones that stuck out the most for him were Abraham (Miguel), his best friend, and I believe Isai (Jimenez)."

Josue even returned the visit, attending 9-0 mercy-rule home victories over East Rutherford in both JV and varsity action on Sept. 18. It was PHS' first-ever double mercy-rule day.

"After the game and as soon as (the players) spotted him up in the stands coming down, they all started cheering," Scott said. "Then as he made his way onto the track, they got him in the middle of the circle and had a big cheer."

"It was real special. It's been a big inspiration, and they continue to say everything they're doing is '#For-Josue.' It's sort of been a rallying point for the boys this season so far."

Playing with him in their minds and hearts, Patton is now 14-1-3 overall (7-0 in the Mountain Foothills 7 2A Conference) and ranked No. 7 in this week's HighSchoolOT.com 828 area-code rankings (regardless of classification).

As Josue starts back to school much later than he anticipated for his 10th-grade year, he will do so from home and with the help of Patton assistant coach Will Singley, who at least initially will serve as Josue's homebound teacher, Scott said.

Josue may even be able to play soccer again one day, and Melissa said that would mean the world to him.

"He started playing soccer at Hillcrest on the indoor and outdoor teams about age 6," Melissa said. "A lot of boys will play with cars, but not him. His main toy was a soccer ball. Ever since he was little, he loved soccer. He would watch videos of (Lionel) Messi all the time and try to make those moves."

"The doctor said he does expect him to one day be able to play again but that he would have to be more cautious if he did. With a concussion or (other head trauma), there's a chance he could have another aneurysm. With the two surgeries he had, the chances of that are low, but it is something to keep in mind."

Regardless of what the future holds for Josue on the soccer field, his family feels blessed simply to still have him in their lives and fortunate that the aneurysm happened at home where Catarina could realize what was happening.

"We're thankful to God that Josue was able to get through this," Melissa said. "Our family is grateful for all the community's prayers and the prayers that many people did for Josue in Guatemala."

"And we're very grateful my mom saw we needed to take him and for the doctors, who did what they had to do to save his life. He wouldn't be here if it wasn't for God. Josue's a miracle."

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Middle school golfers primed for 1st head-to-head matches



PHOTOS FOR THE PAPER

Members of the Liberty golf team are pictured after Monday's match at Marion Lake Club in Nebo.



Members of the Heritage and East Burke golf teams are pictured after Monday's match.



Members of the Table Rock golf team are pictured after the season-opening match at Silver Creek on Sept. 25.

THE FOOTHILLS ATHLETIC Conference's club co-ed middle school golf season has opened with events at Silver Creek Golf Club on Sept. 25 and at Marion Lake Club on Oct. 2. In the first two events, golfers from East Burke, Heritage, Liberty, and Table Rock, plus East and West McDowell, played in pairings alongside their teammates.

Both Liberty and Table Rock had enough golfers to go out in two separate groups. Knights coach Emma Watson said their "A" team played stroke play and the "B" team played two-man captain's choice in prepa-

ration for the final two matches in which a similar format will be used and schools are expected to keep individual and team totals in competition against each other.

Table Rock is again coached by Kristi Carriker, and Russell Turner is again coaching East Burke and also taking on first-year program Heritage's three golfers this fall as well.

The final two matches are scheduled for Marion Lake Club on Oct. 9 and Silver Creek on Oct. 16, both with 4 p.m. starts.

HIGH SCHOOLS

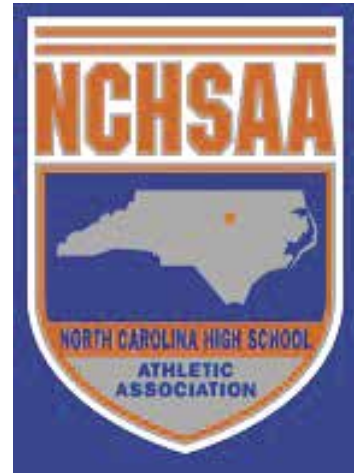
NCHSAA announces fall championship venues

FOR THE PAPER

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) recently announced locations and dates for its 2023 fall sports championships.

The football championships will be held at North Carolina's Kenan Memorial Stadium and N.C. State's Carter-Finley Stadium for the third year in a row. This year's games will take place Dec. 8-9. The determination of which classifications will play at each stadium will be made once the teams are decided.

Also for a third consecutive year, the volleyball championships (Nov. 4) will be held at Reynolds Coliseum on the campus of NCSU. The boys soccer championships (Nov. 17-18) for a second straight season will be contested at MacPherson Stadium at the



Bryan Park Soccer Complex in Greensboro.

Burlington Tennis Center will once again play host to the dual-team girls tennis championship matches (Nov. 4) as well as the 3A individual state tournament. The 1A individual tournament will be

held at the Cary Tennis Center, 2A at Ting Park in Holly Springs and the 4A at Millbrook-Exchange in Raleigh. All of the individual state tournaments will be held Oct. 27-28.

The girls golf championships (Oct. 30-31) will add a new venue this year as the 1A/2A event will be played at Stonebridge Golf Club in Monroe. The 3A championships will be held at Foxfire Golf Club, and the 4A event will be played at Pinehurst No. 6.

The cross county championships (Nov. 4) return to the Ivey Redmon Complex in Kernersville for the 11th year in a row and 14th consecutive time in Kernersville.

And the Cheerleading Invitational (Dec. 2) remains at the Raleigh Convention Center where it has been contested for most of its history.

HIGH SCHOOLS

NCHSAA 'disappointed' as SB 452 expected to become law

FOR THE PAPER

Exactly how high school sports in the state of North Carolina will be governed starting in less than a year is now anyone's guess.

Senate Bill 452 in the early morning hours of Sept. 23 was passed by both the state senate and house, and on Monday, Gov. Roy Cooper announced his intention to allow the bill to become law despite his dissatisfaction with the language in it that pertains to the NCHSAA.

"While the NCHSAA appreciates the statement from the Governor, we are disappointed that he did not choose to utilize his veto power and allow the Association to continue to operate under the current agreement," the NCHSAA said in a statement on Monday.

A separate bill passed in 2021 required the NCHSAA to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Board of Education in order to keep regulating the state's high school sports. The memorandum of understanding was signed in 2022 and was

adopted as a four-year agreement, but will have to be altered now that SB 452 is becoming law.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is expected to take the place of the Board of Education in the new memorandum of understanding, and if unable to reach an agreement with the NCHSAA or another organization, would be tasked with administering the state's high school athletics.

The NCHSAA, which has a 110-year history as the state's chief governing board for high school athletics, expressed its displeasure after the house and senate passed the bill two weeks back.

"The NCHSAA has a dedicated, full-time staff devoted only to the guardianship of interscholastic athletic competition, including several Certified Athletic Administrators and former public school employees," Brandon Moree, the NCHSAA director of communications and media relations, said in a statement.

"With the support of a Board of Directors, which

consists of Superintendents, Principals, Athletic Directors and Coaches from every region and every classification in North Carolina, the NCHSAA believes that it has assembled the best possible team to administer high school sports in our state."

NCHSAA commissioner Que Tucker called the bill "a blindsided tackle" and said the NCHSAA has held up its end of the bargain in the current memo of understanding, which in its opinion, makes further legislation to strip its power unnecessary.

Among the powers now expected to be stripped from the NCHSAA - if it even remains in place at all - by the start of next school year include: retaining a percentage of gate receipts for games other than state tournament games; retaining any portion of receipts collected from ticket sales, concessions, or sale of merchandise by a participating school; and prohibiting or restricting a participating school from scheduling a nonconference game during the regular season.

ROUNDUP

FROM PAGE 6C

season with a 6-1 home loss to West McDowell on Tuesday.

FOOTBALL

Liberty wins again; EB, WJ get 1st wins

The Knights (3-0 FAC) won big on Wednesday at Heritage, 38-12, and coupled with the day's other results, moved into sole possession of first place in the conference.

Trenton Kidd enjoyed a big day passing for Liberty, completing 5 of 7 attempts for 172 yards and two touchdowns while also rushing three times for 25 yards. Jett Chatman (187 total yards of offense, two TDs) hauled in one of Kidd's TD strikes, and Lane Charlet (183 total yards, three TDs) had the other on a 95-yard reception.

Caden Webb, Christian Barnette, and Brad Gadell added two-point conversions for Liberty, which was led on defense by Webb and Charlet's five tackles apiece plus strong efforts from Logan Williams (two tackles for loss), Gadell (tackle for loss), Charlet (interception), and Gunner King (interception).

The host Eagles (2-2) picked up their two TDs on a Henry Cooper 63-yard kickoff return and a 20-yard pass from Lathan McManus to Wyatt Bonorden.

In other action Wednesday, East Burke (1-3, 1-2 FAC) snapped a 10-game losing streak with a 14-6 home tri-

umph versus West McDowell, and Walter Johnson (1-4, 1-3 FAC) pulled the upset of the season so far by downing East McDowell on the road, 32-30.

Jusian Perkins accounted for all of the Yellow Jackets' scoring in the stunner in Marion over the previously unbeaten defending champions, totaling four touchdowns - three on passes from Kylan Caldwell - and four two-point conversions.

"(Jusian) showed up really big to lead his team, but it wasn't just him," Jackets head coach Ishmail Berry said. "It was a group effort. These guys have battled and learned how to trust each other, and it is starting to pay off for them. This win ... is about all of us, the time, the effort that we have put in. And to beat a team of that caliber is a big confidence booster for us, and I pray it sends us in the right direction."

EBMS, meanwhile, got touchdowns from Izan Hang (covering 17 yards) and Brayden Sigmon (37 yards) and a two-point conversion from Cash Oyola. The Raider defense was led by Landon Williams (two interceptions) and Easton Wilson (interception).

"The second interception for Landon came on a fourth-down stop late in the fourth quarter which sealed the win for us," Raiders coach Mitchell McGuire said. "Overall it was a great team win."

VOLLEYBALL

Knights sweep pair of opponents

Liberty got out the brooms

this week, not just finishing the first half of FAC play undefeated in all four sports but also specifically on the volleyball court, where the Lady Knights won in straight sets Tuesday at East Burke (25-17, 25-16, 25-16) and again Thursday at home against previously unbeaten West McDowell in a first-place showdown.

The Lady Knights (6-0) were led statistically Tuesday by Soraya Hartman (13 digs, 11 kills, four aces, block), Leah Clark (seven aces, seven digs, kill), and Haven Ledford (three kills, ace), while EBMS (2-4) was led by the defense of Braleigh Carswell, Isabella Reid, Gracie Gladden, and Paisley Hart.

The Raiders were edged by host Table Rock (3-3) in five sets Thursday, two days after the Lady Falcons won at East McDowell in four sets. EB was led offensively in the narrow defeat by Reid, Bella Davis, Delanie Davis, and Ava Bivens and on defense by Carswell, Elaina Curnutte, and Aubrey Smith.

And in the other matches this week, Heritage (4-2) stormed back to win in five sets at home Thursday against East McDowell (25-15, 19-25, 20-25, 25-23, 15-10), and Walter Johnson (0-6) fell in straight sets Tuesday at West McDowell.

To end the week, the Lady Eagles were led by the play of Hayden Moss (six assists, seven kills, four aces, 11 digs), Nadiya Nicholas (five assists, three kills, eight aces), Olivia Miller (six kills, two aces, 12 digs), Isabella Aldridge (three aces, seven digs), and Ansley Comp-ton (nine digs, three kills).

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MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Crawdads first baseman, manager win SAL awards

FOR THE PAPER

The Hickory Crawdads took home two of the High-A South Atlantic League's recently-announced top honors for the 2023 season, with first baseman Abimelec Ortiz named the league's most valuable player and Chad Comer selected as manager of the year. The awards were voted on by SAL managers.

Ortiz, 21, joined the Crawdads in late May and had an instant impact in the lineup. He smacked 26 home runs for the 'Dads, leading all High-A hitters this season. He led the SAL with a .624 slugging percentage, was second in RBIs (88), and tied for fifth in total



bases (181).

Comer returned to the Crawdads for a third season, his first as manager, after serving as a bench coach in 2015 and as the team's hitting coach in 2021. His first season as skipper in the minors was a successful one, leading the Craw-

dads to a 70-55 record and a .560 winning percentage, which was the best in the league. He guided the team to the franchise's longest-ever win streak, reaching 15 games. The 'Dads led the division from the first day of the second half through the end of the regular season, winning the second half Southern Division title and punching a ticket to the post-season.

Also making the SAL All-Star squad in addition to Ortiz was Hickory starting pitcher Josh Stephan.

Stephan, 21, had a masterful first half for the Crawdads, earning a promotion in early July to Double-A. In 12 games (11 starts), he was 6-3 with a

2.17 ERA, racking up 73 strikeouts to just 12 walks in 62 1/3 innings. He held opponents to a .175 batting average and set the Crawdads best-ever mark for WHIP (minimum 50 innings) at 0.80.

Ortiz was also one of three Crawdads to pick up hardware when the parent club, the Texas Rangers, recently revealed their 2023 minor-league organizational award winners.

Ortiz was named the Tom Grieve player of the year, Jose Corniell won the Nolan Ryan pitcher of the year, and Daniel Mateo nabbed the defender of the year award.

Corniell, 20, combined to go 8-3 with a 2.92 ERA across 23 appearances (17 starts) with

Down East and Hickory in 2023. His career-high 119 strikeouts were the second-most among Texas minor leaguers, while his eight wins tied for third in the organization. The right-hander was named SAL pitcher of the month for August, and he recorded a career-high 10 strikeouts in the Crawdads' 3-2 loss in Game 1 of the SAL Divisional Series on Sept. 12 vs. Greenville (S.C.).

Mateo, 22, made 106 starts in center field (104) and right field (two) with Hickory in 2023, committing errors on just two of 255 total chances for a .992 fielding percentage while recording six outfield assists.

BOOSTER: Each local high school looking for greater involvement

FROM PAGE 1C

for families to buy. So those are some of the major things that we've done to try to generate extra funds since I've been a part of the club."

Patton also hosts youth football games involving teams from the county recreational league. This year's championship games will be held there on Nov. 11 as part of an all-day event, and the booster club will be in attendance selling concessions.

"We also partner with some local businesses," said Radford, who mentioned Hot Shots Espresso and Buzze's Creamery as places that "sell things that we don't necessarily sell" during high school football games. "They come in and then they make a donation back to the booster club based on the proceeds that they raise, but it's a way to get the community involved and also provide lots of different things for our folks that come and attend games."

Radford said Patton's booster club doesn't ask parents to work in the concession stand when their children are playing sports "because we want all parents to be able to be in the stands and support their students." However, "we always try to make sure that we have concessions open because not only do we want it available to our families and athletes, but we have a lot of schools that are traveling quite a distance, and so to have concessions available for them too is important."

Radford also pointed out that "our booster money is not appropriated based on who raised it, so all money that comes in through the booster club is held in an account, and then what we do is throughout the year as teams have requests, we generate those funds back out to the team. At the end of the year we keep just enough money to buy things for the startup for the next year, and with the rest of it we write a check back to the athletic fund of the school."

Anyone is welcome to attend Patton's booster club meetings, with Radford imploring "people to come and learn" what being a booster truly entails.

"I don't think folks realize how little funding actually is available for our athletes and how what we receive in funding doesn't even necessarily cover the extensive travel that has to occur for us to play in our conference," said Radford. "... You take in that and the cost of referees, and I don't think people realize how much it costs the school to do those things, and so when you talk about them needing equipment and needing uniforms and things, it forces sports teams to fundraise to meet those needs."

"So if the boosters aren't on board and aren't raising money, then our student-athletes don't necessarily get the full advantage of being able to participate and having all the things they need, especially at the degree that some of our larger schools in the state would have access to."

'WE SUPPORT EVERY SPORTING EVENT IN THE SCHOOL'

At East Burke, Tommy Fraley has been the booster club president since May after serving as vice president for about

five or six years. He said the most rewarding thing about being a member of the booster club "is getting to know the kids and getting to see the difference we can make in their life, that sports in general can make in their life, and just knowing we're part of that."

Fraley said that "we've gotten about 10 or 12 new people this year, but until then we were trying to do this with a very small group of people, and the mission hasn't changed but it is getting a little easier now."

Concessions are a big money maker for the East Burke boosters, but they also hold a meal every year called the "\$100 Dinner for 2," which consists of a steak dinner for two people with sides and drinks included.

"Most of our money's raised through concessions and the \$100 Dinner and then of course our ads in the football program," said Fraley, who called the fall sports season "the busiest" of the year and added that "we can usually host a concession stand in basketball with three or four people easily, but the football games are where we sort of max out our resources."

Fraley said that "typically all of our requests for financial support come from the AD, so the coaches would go to the AD, then he comes to us. That's not always how it works, but that's the typical way it works."

East Burke's boosters also help maintain the playing surfaces at the school, which includes mowing, fertilizing, painting, fencing and more. They fund all of East Burke's athletic banquets as well.

"We help every sport in the school somehow, somehow," said Fraley. "Even if we don't give them anything, they're still getting participation trophies and the meal, all that comes from us. So all the money we raise, I don't want to say it's evenly divided because we have no plan on division, it's as needed. We don't say every year we're giving the football team this amount, the golf team this amount or whatever, it's just as needed. But all the money we raise, we support every sporting event in the school."

Like Patton, East Burke allows youth teams to play on its campus and sells concessions during those contests. The school's booster club also has partnerships with local businesses, with Fraley stating that "we've got some very good support from our community."

"I get up in front at all our banquets and I try to encourage people to come join the booster club," said Fraley. "And we're really the support to the athletic program at the high school, so when the athletic program doesn't have the funds to do what's needed, that's when we come in."

'I ENJOY THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE KIDS'

Freedom's Cynthia Moore is the longest-tenured booster club president in Burke County, having served for more than 10 years. She said that a lack of knowledge about booster clubs keeps people from volunteering.

"It's just surprising that a lot of parents don't get involved," said Moore. "And it's probably because they don't



VIVIAN RADFORD / FOR THE PAPER

Members of the Patton High School athletic booster club, Rebecca Wykle (far right) and Kristin Edwards (near back in red shirt) work the concession stand alongside volunteers from Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church during a recent Panthers' home football game.

know a lot about the boosters, so they don't get involved a lot."

Moore's children played sports at Freedom, so she got involved with the boosters and was ultimately voted in as president. She said there are submission forms available that the school's AD or coaches can fill out.

"If they need something like uniforms or balls or anything like that," said Moore, "then they send us a request for it and we just go from there."

At Freedom, concessions and merchandise bring in the bulk of the money raised by the booster club. Prospective boosters can attend a monthly meeting or "meet us at the ballgames, see us there and provide us with their information, and we'll go from there."

According to Moore, the most rewarding part of being a booster is "seeing the kids develop in something that they love with the sport that they're into, and just kind of seeing them grow from being freshmen to when they actually graduate, and then some go on to college and still play. So I enjoy the development and growth of the kids."

"You're providing a future for the kids, so you're just kind of providing them with what they need in order to develop their skill and get a future set for them," she added of the booster club's purpose.

Freedom previously had a football-only booster organization called the Freedom Touchdown Club, but it is currently on pause. AD Antonio Lyerly said the school is hoping to get it back up and running in the near future.

"Our booster club does a good job," said Lyerly. "They just kind of support and basically boost what teams may need ... and they do a good job of putting things in place to help us there as far as that goes. The Touchdown Club is kind of specifically pertained

to football, and it helps with some different things and some wants and needs that they may have throughout the year and different things like that."

'WE JUST ASK PEOPLE TO SHOW UP ... AND SUPPORT DRAUGHN'

Three years ago, Marc Houston joined Draughn's booster club. He served as president for a year, then stepped down and became a regular member before returning to the role of president in August.

"Three years ago a friend said, 'Hey, come and join us for a meeting,' and it was the election month and they nominated me and everybody voted and I got to be the president," said Houston. "... And then this past year, the booster club has struggled a little bit, really hard work from the individuals that were running it, just couldn't get any participation into helping them. So it was in a little bit of a struggle, and I showed up for two or three meetings in a row to try to see what we could do to help out, and here I am again."

Houston said that Draughn has the athletic booster club, the band boosters and the Draughn Touchdown Club. Each is a separate entity.

"So the way it works is the Touchdown Club is strictly for football," said Houston, who added that Jimmy Lambert is the president of the Touchdown Club. "... But I think they've helped a little bit with other sports for maybe when we make playoffs and pitching in with paying for buses and players and families to go. And then the Draughn booster club, we support every student-athlete and student that's at Draughn High School."

"If it's Science Olympiad, if they need some funding, we'll do the best that we can to support them in every way that we can," he continued. "Then vol-

leyball, football, basketball, baseball, wrestling, swimming, all your other sports, if they come to us with a request, if we've got the funds available we'll figure out a way to make and meet those requests for all student-athletes at Draughn High."

Houston admitted that in the past, Draughn's booster club has been reluctant to do fundraisers in addition to sales of concession and apparel. But this year he got together with the booster club vice president, secretary and treasurer and "set it up in our annual budget that we want to raise \$15,000 for our booster club."

A 50/50 raffle has been ongoing and as of last weekend, Draughn's booster club had raised over \$10,000 this fall with two home football games remaining. Additionally, a steak dinner is in the works for around Valentine's Day and tickets for that are expected to go on sale during basketball season. A silent auction is also planned for the steak dinner, which will consist of steak, a baked potato, salad and drinks.

"Typically right now we don't have necessarily a membership," said Houston. "We just ask people to show up, participate in our meetings, participate in our fundraising activities, and support Draughn."

Houston said that Draughn's bylaws state that once you've attended three consecutive booster club meetings, you become a voting member. He also said that the booster club and Touchdown Club work hand in hand to help one another.

"Football is the most expensive sport out there, and because it was such a strain to make all those things happen, that's the reason the Touchdown Club was formed and basically they solely support the football program," said Houston. "And then if the football program comes to the athletic booster club, there's been times in the past that they may not have had a really good working relationship, but I think right now we've got a really good working relationship across the board and are trying to benefit all the sports at the school."

Houston said that one of Draughn's biggest partnerships right now is with Bimbo Bakeries. Lambert initially reached out to Bimbo and this fall they have been donating all of the bread for concessions, which has been a big help.

"We don't have to spend the money to buy that bread and then we get the profit," said Houston. "Our profit margins are really good this year because of that aspect. Then if you come down on a Friday night and see the banners that are posted on the fence and everything, there's multiple businesses that partner with Draughn."

According to Houston, Draughn's booster club is set up to meet more than just the needs of the high school. The boosters also try to assist such organizations as the Valdese Recreation Center and the R.O. Huffman Center in Drexel.

"Everything that they need," said Houston, "we're supposed to be able to support them in the needs that they have."

Josh McKinney can be reached at 828-445-8595 or josh@thepaper.media.

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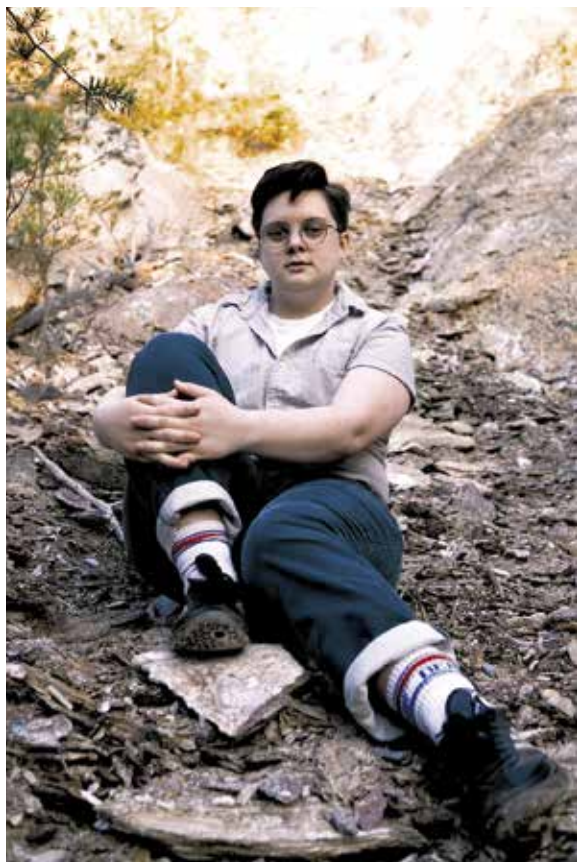


Michaela Pittman and the Mountain Shadows

Hope in the Hills

Fundraiser features talented musicians with personal connections to the cause

By ANGELA KUPER COPELAND
Arts & Entertainment Editor
THE PAPER



Rhodes Baby

A cancer diagnosis forces weighty questions no one wants to ask. Will I survive? What are my treatment options? The medical and emotional uncertainties are the tip of the iceberg. Just getting through daily activities and responsibilities can be overwhelming.

They need hope.

That is the idea behind Hope in the Hills Presented by Fonta Flora Realty, an annual fundraiser for Casting for Hope, a local nonprofit that provides support for women and their families in Western North Carolina who have received a gynecological cancer diagnosis.

The fundraiser is at 6 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 20 at Hidden Hill on Burkemont Mountain, 6572 Burkemont Road.

For the co-founders of Casting for Hope, the mission is personal.

Taylor Sharp had a front-row seat to that struggle when his mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She lost that battle shortly before Christmas in 2010. He was only in high school, but he and his two older brothers — Jacob and Josh — understood the impact of grassroots support.

Within days of losing their mom, Jacob and his band Mipso played a benefit concert for Hope Chest for Women. Not long after that, Taylor and John Zimmerman (then his English teacher at Patton High School who had lost his grandmother to cancer) participated in a fly-fishing

PICKS OF THE WEEK



▶ SATURDAY, OCT. 7

Catching Geocaches

The Friends of the Valdese Rec presents an overview of geocaching followed by practice in finding the more than 15 geocaches that will be hidden at Valdese Lake-side Park. Bring your smart-phone with you because an app is used to help find the hidden treasure boxes in the park. The free event is from noon to 2 p.m. The park is located at 1149 Lake Rhod-hiss Drive NE. Learn more about the organization at friendsofthevaldeserec.org.



▶ SUNDAY, OCT. 8

Goat Yoga

Do you like beer, enjoy yoga, and think goats are the cut-est? You are in luck because you can combine all three during goat yoga at Side-tracked Brewery, 609 S. Green St. in Morganton. Carolina Goat Yoga will lead the sessions at the brewery beginning at 1:30 p.m. The class is \$25 and includes one beer. Yoga mats will be provided. Search Carolina Goat Yoga on eventbrite.com to purchase tickets.



▶ WEDNESDAY, OCT. 11

Fall Cooking Class

Burke Arts Council (506 S. Sterling St.) presents a Festive Fall Flavors cooking class with Chef Lara Hicks of Queens Catering. You will learn to make such cozy delights as butternut squash soup, homemade croutons, and apple pecan sausage balls. Each class lasts two hours and concludes with a sampling of the dishes and wine. Food is provided by Food Matters Market and the wine by The Olive of Morganton. Cost is \$50 for BAC members, \$55 for non-members. Reserve your spot by calling 828-433-7282.



▶ FRIDAY, OCT. 13

Musical Fun

The Old Colony Players presents “Young Frankenstein” at 7:30 p.m. at the Fred B. Cranford Amphitheatre at 401 Church St. NW in Valdese. The production is based on the Mel Brooks film of the same name - only with music and dancing for twice the fun and laughs. The comedy will also be staged on Oct. 14, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, and 28. For tickets or more information, go to old-colonyplayers.com or call 828-522-1150.

THE PAPER
a&e

Celebrating the Colonial spirit at Living History Day

By ANGELA KUPER COPELAND
Arts & Entertainment Editor
THE PAPER

Morganton has a reputation as a quaint town in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains but about 250 years ago, modern-day Morganton was the site of a pivotal turning point in the Revolutionary War.

On Sept. 30, 1780, about 1,400 men from North Carolina, Virginia, and present-day Tennessee camped at Quaker Meadows Plantation, the home of Burke County militia leader Charles McDowell. After eating and getting a night's sleep, the men crossed the Catawba River at Greenlee Ford on the hunt for British General Patrick Ferguson.

Without the rugged determination of the Overmountain Men, the Revolutionary War could have turned out quite differently.

Those historic events as well as everyday Colonial life is celebrated each year at the Annual Living History Day at the Captain Charles McDowell, Jr. House at Quaker Meadows.

"It's fun to transport yourself physically," said Ken Volz, wearing period attire. He is a member of the Historic Burke Foundation and chairman of the House Committee.

"I love honest interpretation," he said. "That's why we call it 'living' history. Each year we do this is a little different because we learn new information."

The event on Sept. 30 was filled with demonstrations and reenactments throughout the day:

- Tours of the McDowell House
- Spinning, knitting, and quilting demonstrations
- Rolling cartridges for black powder muskets
- Food, medicine, and dyes from the kitchen garden
- Colonial toys, games, and dancing

Special presentations included a program by Alan Darveaux on the origins of the Appalachian dulcimer, a historical portrayal of Grace Greenlee McDowell by Becca Heacock, dramatic storytelling of the Overmountain Men by Steve Ricker of the Overmountain



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND PHOTOS / THE PAPER

Overmountain Men reenactors fire their muskets during the Annual Living History Day at the McDowell House.



Beth Spawn, left, and Ken Volz check on the stew cooking over an open fire during the Annual Living History Day at the McDowell House.

tain Victory Trail Association, and a solemn selection of bagpipe music performed by Emma Halliburton.

"This is your history," said Jamie Walden, a reenactor from Dacusville, S.C. "This is celebrating your ancestry. Colonial life was hard, but this is also an escape to a simpler time."

Patrick and Jessica Woods of Hickory brought their sons Colt, 8, and Barrett, 4, to the

event. "We are a homeschool family and this is a field trip," she said. "It is important to learn about the history of our country and how that history still affects us today."

Angela Kuper Copeland is the arts & entertainment editor at The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595.



Steve Ricker, director of interpretation for the Overmountain Victory Trail Association, takes attendees back to 1780 and the hunt for British General Patrick Ferguson.



Reenactor Jordan Lowdermilk slices a pawpaw, a small fruit that commonly grew along the riverbanks in the Colonial era. Lowdermilk is also involved in similar programs at Davidson Fort in Old Fort.

LEFT: Emma Halliburton, 11, played nearly half a dozen songs, including 'Amazing Grace,' on her bagpipes during the observance of the valor of the Overmountain Men.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SATURDAY, OCT. 7

Authentic Unlimited kicks off Bluegrass at the Rock season: Bluegrass at the Rock returns with a performance by Authentic Unlimited. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with the concert beginning at 7:30 p.m. Concessions will be available. Tickets may be purchased at the door. Season tickets for all five shows are also available for \$110 per person. 6:30 p.m. \$30. Old Rock School 400 Main St. W, Valdese.

Coalescifest presented by WNC Sculpture Center: A day-long music festival at the WNC Sculpture Center (Old Patterson School Gym) featuring many Burke County musicians. Acts range from bluegrass, folk, punk, metal, and reggae music. This festival is complete with food trucks, craft vendors, breweries, and activities for kids. - 12 p.m. \$25 for adults Kids 12 and under are FREE. WNC Sculpture Center 4646 Patterson School Drive, Lenoir.

Johnny's Pizza Food Truck at Hillman Beer: From 2 - 10 p.m. 301 S. Sterling St., Morganton.

Live Music with The Happy Enchiladas at Hillman Beer: 6 - 9 p.m. 301 S. Sterling St., Morganton.

SUNDAY, OCT. 8

Sunday Breakfast at The Grind: Enjoy breakfast all day at The Grind Cafe in Morganton. Check out www.thegrind.cafe for more information. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. 136 W. Union St., Morganton.



FEATURED EVENT: SATURDAY, OCT. 7

Authentic Unlimited kicks off Bluegrass at the Rock season: Bluegrass at the Rock returns with a performance by Authentic Unlimited. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with the concert beginning at 7:30 p.m. Concessions will be available. Tickets may be purchased at the door. Season tickets for all five shows are also available for \$110 per person. 6:30 p.m. \$30. Old Rock School 400 Main St. W, Valdese, NC.

Sundays at Swede's Cafe: Swede's Cafe is located on the mezzanine level of Morganton General Store. We serve breakfast, lunch, and supper in a casual atmosphere. We offer a full line of hot and cold coffee drinks and other beverages. Fresh-baked scones, other breakfast must-haves, and a yummy as-

sortment of sandwiches, wraps, soups, salads, combos, and daily specials will satisfy every appetite. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. 116 W. Union St., Morganton.

MONDAY, OCT. 9

\$10 Day Pass at Bigfoot Climbing Gym: Come climb with the com-

munity at Bigfoot. 212 Avery Ave., Morganton.

Dynamic Movement with Breathe Yoga & Pilates: This class is a sweet spot between Pilates, functional movement, and yoga. Join Larisa as she guides you through a free-weight, body-weight, and ground-based workout, focusing on maximum stability, mobility, and balance. From 8:15 - 9 a.m. Classes vary, book classes online at breatheyogawellness.com. Breathe Yoga and Wellness 115 W. Union St., Morganton.

TUESDAY, OCT. 10

Tap Tuesday at Magnolia Room: Come join us at The Magnolia room for \$2 off select beers. From 5 - 10:30 p.m. 400 N. Green St., Morganton.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 11

Ladies Climb Wednesday at Bigfoot Climbing Gym: \$10 every Wednesday after 5 p.m. Grab some friends and come try something new. 5 - 9 p.m. \$10. Bigfoot Climbing Gym 212 Avery Ave., Morganton.

Wine Down Wednesday: Hosted by Treat of Morganton. From 5:30 p.m. 100 W. Union St., Morganton.

THURSDAY, OCT. 12

Brown Mountain Brainiacs Trivia: Join us for trivia every Thursday at 7 p.m. Free. 609 S. Green St., Morganton.

Dynamic Movement with Breathe

Yoga & Pilates: This class is a sweet spot between Pilates, functional movement, and yoga. Join Larisa as she guides you through a free-weight, body-weight, and ground-based workout, focusing on maximum stability, mobility, and balance. From 8:15 - 9 a.m. Classes vary, book classes online at breatheyogawellness.com. Breathe Yoga and Wellness 115 W. Union St., Morganton.

Thursday Night Cornhole Tournament: \$5 Buy-in - Blind Draw - Round Robin - Switcholio Start Time is at 6:30 p.m. Each player is guaranteed four games in a switcholio round-robin style tournament. Players will then be split into two brackets A/B based on their round-robin records. Payouts will be split 70/30 between each bracket winner. 6:30 - 11 p.m. 316 E. Union St., Morganton.

Trivia Night at Hillman Beer: Join us for Trivia at Hillman Beer in Morganton. 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. 301 S. Sterling St., Morganton.

FRIDAY, OCT. 13

Homeschool Climb at Bigfoot Climbing Gym: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Bigfoot Climbing Gym 212 Avery Ave., Morganton.

Find more events or submit yours on our website

Go to ThePaper.media/calendar.



SAVE THE DATE

‘Dancing with the Burke Stars’ returns to CoMMA for 7th year

By ANGELA KUPER COPELAND
Arts & Entertainment Editor
THE PAPER

The annual crowd favorite ‘Dancing with the Burke Stars’ will delight crowds when prominent Burke Countians Foxtrot, Tango, and Waltz, across the CoMMA stage on Saturday, Feb. 10.

“This is such a fun night and tickets sell out every year,” said Travis Stancil, the founder, producer, and director of the one-night-only event.

Stancil began planning for the February event nearly nine months prior, selecting the cast and building a team of professionals to help the local celebrities shine in their moment in the spotlight.

“I only bring in the best people. It’s important to me for the show to be world-class,” he said.

Those familiar with the ABC show know how hard the celebrities work to prepare for showtime. A small team of seasoned professional dancers is brought in to teach the stars



FOR THE PAPER

Travis Stancil

the dance routines. Ten days before the event, additional pros will arrive, be paired with the local stars, and work on perfecting their routines.

“Many of the Burke stars have told me how much they enjoyed being a part of the show,” said Stancil. “For some, it changes their lives.”

As much as Stancil focuses on the details of the show and dancers, he cares deeply about the audience.

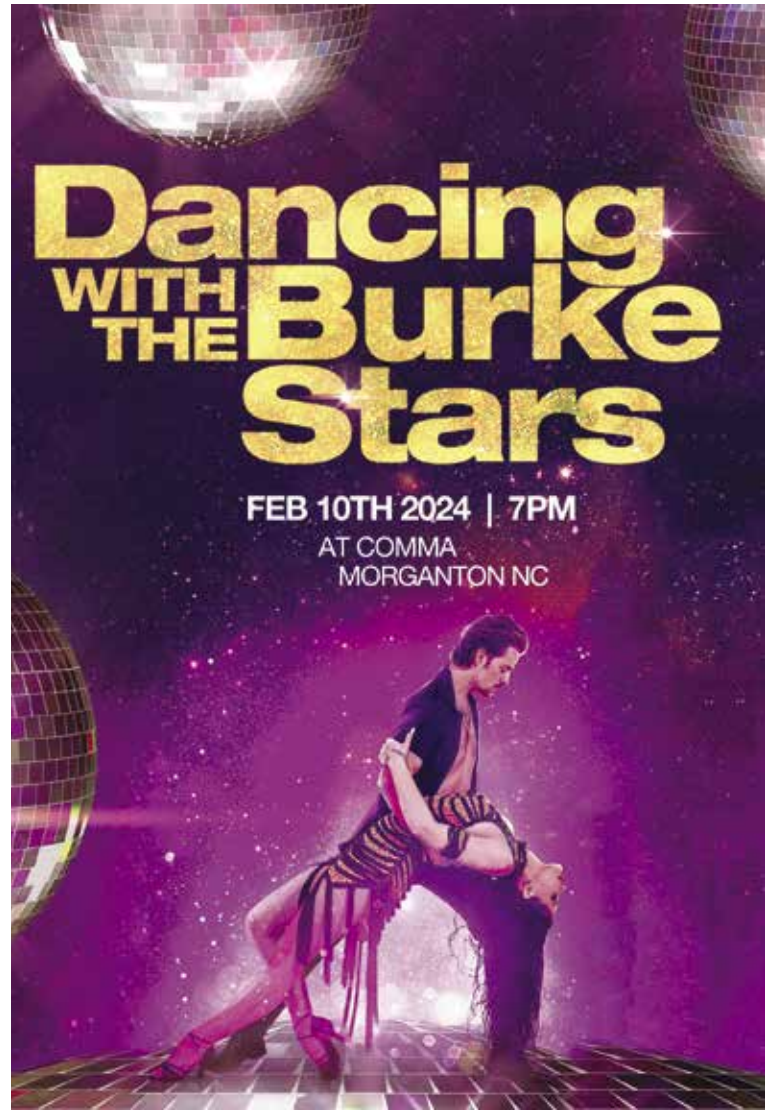
“When I was like 5 or 6, I went to my sister’s dance recital. And I was sitting there bored until I noticed the one boy on the stage. I wanted that. I wanted to be him on that stage,” he said.

That moment changed his life’s trajectory. He told his dad who then brought young Travis to Ballroom dancing classes in Asheville. He dove into the dance and performing arts communities and began working in the industry when he graduated from Patton High School in 2014.

“I want to give other young people an opportunity to see dance and know they can do it, too.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: Make sure to read the Oct. 14 edition of The Paper when we reveal the local celebrities dancing in the 2024 “Dancing with the Burke Stars.”

Angela Kuper Copeland is the arts & entertainment editor at The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595.



HOPE

FROM PAGE 1D

tournament benefiting Casting for Recovery. The idea from Taylor’s high school senior project of create a own non-profit to support women and their families after a gynecological cancer diagnosis became Casting for Hope.

Each year, the organization offers twice-yearly retreats as well as a flagship fly-fishing tournament. Hope in the Hills has raised dollars for the non-profit annually since 2019, not counting the COVID-19 shutdown in 2020.

The benefit features a dinner provided by Countryside Catering, beer from Fonta Flora Brewery, and wine from Craft’d. Three musical acts will also perform, and each has a direct connection to the cause.

RODES BABY

MK Rodenbough (Rodes Baby) lost their mother to breast cancer the summer before their debut album was released in November 2021.

“My mom was my best friend and biggest supporter,” they said. “I feel her presence every day. Some days that is challenging and other days I’m grateful for that.”

Music has been a driving force in their life. MK took violin and piano lessons when they was very young, but it was getting a guitar at the age of 10 that was the big catalyst.

“I started out writing generic imitations of what I heard on Disney or the radio,” they said. “Then my writing tackled the difficult feelings I was hav-

ing as a young adult. Depression. Anxiety. The songs tended to be moody, indie rock but now I am writing songs that are more hopeful. I’m stepping outside the sadness box.”

MK is completing their second album now. Learn more about their music at rodesbabymusic.com.

CHARLY LOWRY

Endometrial cancer took Charly Lowry’s mother in 2017. She was originally diagnosed with the disease in 2013. After remission, the disease returned in 2016 and had metastasized to her liver. Charly served as her mom’s caregiver during the last 18 months of her life.

“I get offered gigs a lot, but this is especially meaningful to me,” she said of Hope in the Hills. “I know with my mother how frustrated I was at the lack of treatment and resources. I was disheartened.”

Charly was only 4 years old when she gave her first musical performance at church. She’s been singing ever since. Through her music, she aims to educate people about indigenous communities in the state and call out “environment and social racism” and medical injustice. Her songs offer messages of empowerment.

“I love music. I love the act of singing. I realize it’s a gift that has been bestowed upon me,” she said.

Learn more about Charly’s music on charlylowry.com.

MICHAELA PITTMAN AND THE MOUNTAIN SHADOWS

Michaela Pittman first became connected to Casting for

Hope in high school when she performed at one of the non-profit’s events as part of her Patton High senior project in 2013.

Since that first concert, Michaela has taken to the stage for Casting for Hope several times.

“I want to give back in some way. My grandmother had breast cancer twice,” she said.

Michaela will be playing with talented bandmates: her father, Tim Pittman, will be on bass; Eric Woody (like an uncle

to her) will play drums and guitar; and Mark Whisnant will be on banjo and electric guitar. Tim also plays in two other bands around town — the Mason Jar Poets and Sweet Revenge.

“We’ll play a little bit of everything from Fleetwood Mac vibes to 90s music,” she said. “We like to add our spin on songs everyone knows. We love to do three-part harmonies.”

When not playing music with family and friends, Michaela is a pediatric occupa-

tional therapist in the Raleigh area.

Tickets for Hope in the Hills are \$75 each and include entertainment, food, and drinks. Buy tickets and learn more about the event at castingforhope.ejoinme.org/hope23.

Angela Kuper Copeland is the arts & entertainment editor at The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595.

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IN MEMORY OF MARK “BUBBA” LAMBERT



Corban Band brings bilingual concert to Morganton's courthouse square

By PAM WALKER
Central Burke Reporter
THE PAPER

As part of their USA Tour, the Corban Band will lead a bilingual praise and worship service on Sunday, Oct. 8 beginning at 6:30 p.m. on the Historic Burke County Courthouse Square in Morganton.

The free concert, hosted by Summit Community Church (SCC), is part of the band's "Vuelve a Casa, Come Home," a worship celebration in English and Spanish.

In case of inclement weather, the concert will move to Summit Community Church at 407 S. Green St. in Morganton.

According to their website, the band's mission is for each presentation to connect the hearts of the people with the heart of God.

Corban Band, SCC, and IncaLink International have a shared vision: to reach the 300 million youth in Latin America living in impoverished, unsafe conditions. Many live in garbage dumps, scavenging for food and resources to survive. Others have families who struggle to provide shelter and food, much less an education.

Through international missions and outreach, SCC's goal is to build an enduring financial and prayer relationship that will support mission projects not only through the partnership with IncaLink but also throughout Burke County, the region, and the world.

Currently, SCC is working in Guatemala through IncaLink's Creación de Dios. Creación de Dios provides young people and children from different areas of Guatemala with nutrition, education, and life skills to enable them to become productive parts of the community and fulfill their potential.

In Costa Rica, SCC is partnering with IncaLink's Los Tucanes Basketball Club, Inca Arte, and Inca Lengua programs.

Through Los Tucanes, children and youth learn basketball skills and teamwork. Why basketball as an outreach? Basketball, an important sport in Costa Rica, is typically learned and played only through paid classes and clubs. A fun sport that is not affordable or accessible for most.

Inca Arte is a mixture of art and discipleship, using traditional scripture to inspire artistic expression.

Inca Lengua gives low-income children, youth, and families the opportunity to learn English. The ability to speak English opens doors for better paying jobs, higher education, and personal growth.

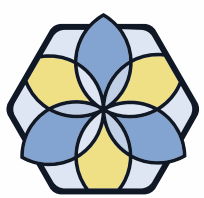
Summit Community Church calls their mission field, "The backyard and beyond." Their motto: "Giving and going. Blessed to be a blessing."

Pam Walker is the Central Burke Reporter at The Paper. She may be reached at pam@thepaper.media or 828-443-6103.



FOR THE PAPER

Corban Band will lead a bilingual praise and worship service on Sunday, Oct. 8 beginning at 6:30 p.m. on the Historic Burke County Courthouse Square in Morganton.



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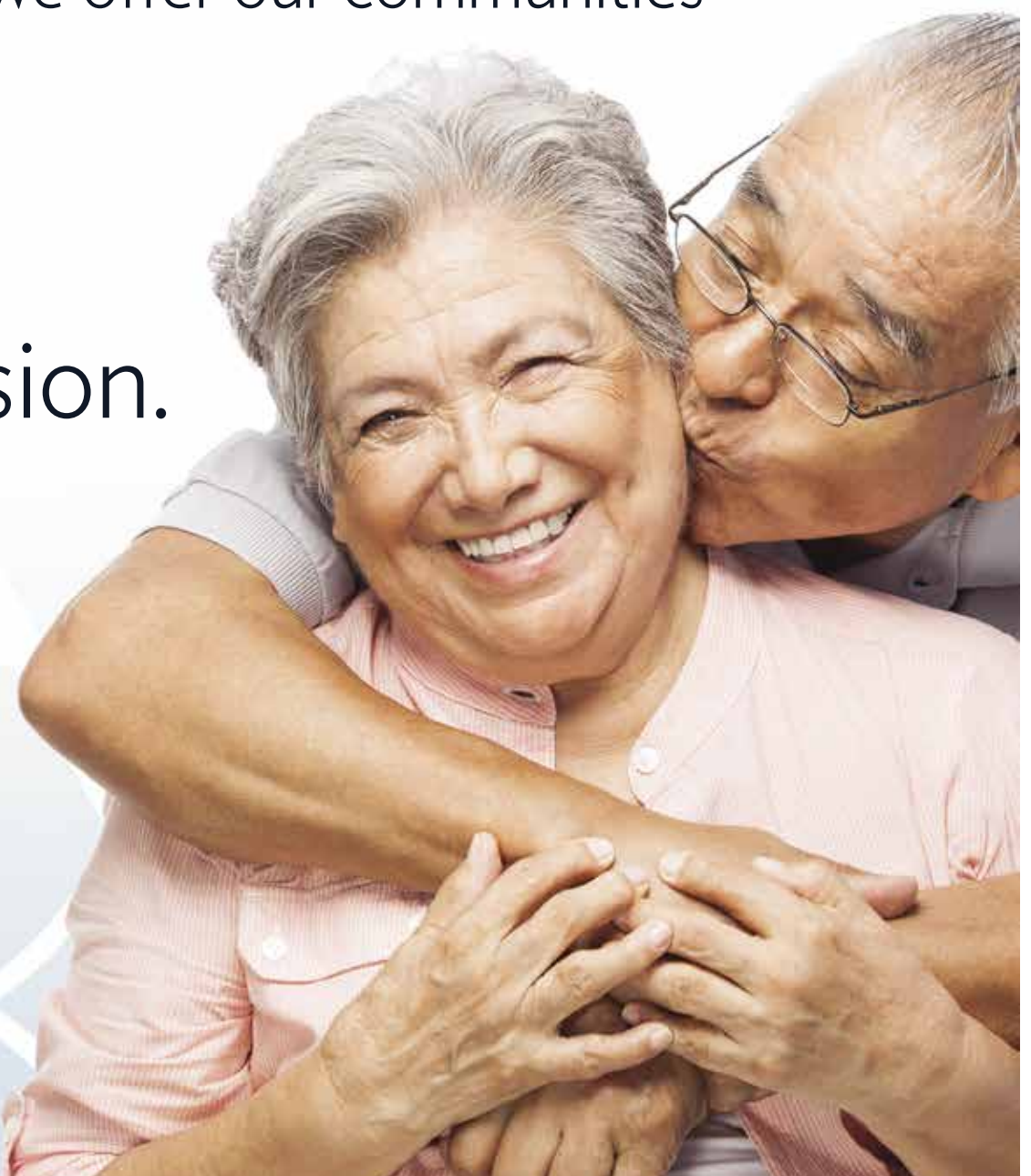
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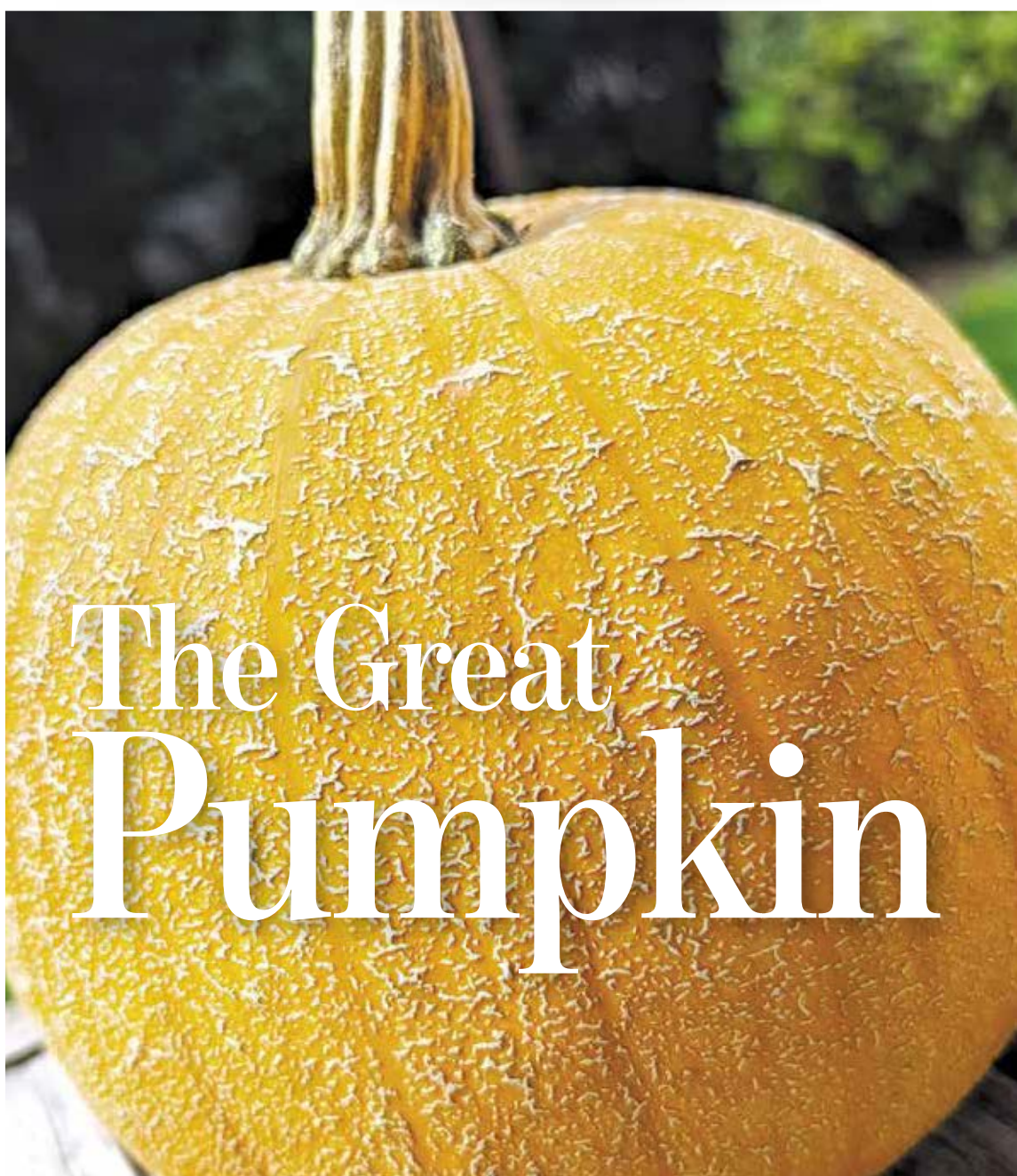
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THE PAPER PLATE



The Great Pumpkin

JOHN SETZLER / FOR THE PAPER

Fall's favorite gourd is for much more than carving



JOHN SETZLER

TWO OF THE THINGS I look forward to most in October each year are cooler temperatures and the shifting of gears in my kitchen toward autumn and winter ingredients. With Thanksgiving and Christmas looming large on the calendar, I tend to start cooking more with the flavors of the season.

Pumpkin is one of those flavors that rears its head every year around this time. This year my wife and I decided we would try our hand at growing some pumpkins. One of the varieties we planted was a highly regarded pie pumpkin. Pumpkins used for cooking are a different variety than the standard jack-o-lantern variety.

You may see them identified as pie or sugar pumpkins. The pie pumpkin varieties are usually smaller and have a sweeter flavor. They also typically have thicker flesh than a carving pumpkin which makes them better suited for cooking. Our pumpkin farming project yielded quite a few beautiful pumpkins along with some lessons that we will bring forward for next year's attempts.

Pumpkins are super easy to grow. They will also take over the space in which you plant them. After my harvest, my main goal was to make a stash of homemade pumpkin puree that I could use in several

cooking projects this fall. For me, the effort to make this from scratch is worth the time. The flavor of the resulting puree is just off the hook compared to anything you may find in a can at the local market.

You may also be surprised to find out that most canned pumpkin puree is not made from typical pumpkin. It is usually made from a variety of winter squash instead of actual pumpkins. But since pumpkins and squash come from the same family, the US Department of Agriculture says that the term pumpkin can apply to several different types of pumpkins and squash. This allows the makers of canned puree to use the "100% pumpkin" statement in their ingredients listings.

I have nothing against canned pumpkin puree. I have used it many times. It's convenient, inexpensive, and readily available with a trip to the supermarket. I just like the flavor of the homemade version much better.

If you aren't interested in growing pumpkins, you are still in luck if you want to try making puree from scratch. Finding sugar pumpkins in the local markets is quite easy. The process is also much easier than you might imagine.

The first step in the process is to slice off the top of the pumpkin where the stem is attached. Slice it off about an inch below the base of the stem. Flip the pumpkin with that flat side down and use a large chef's knife to slice the pumpkin in half. Scoop out the seeds and the pulp and save the seeds for roasting. Sepa-

rate the seeds from the pulp and rinse them clean and just set them aside to dry.

Place a sheet of parchment paper on a half-sheet pan. Place your cleaned out pumpkin halves face down on the parchment paper. Place the pan in a preheated 400-degree oven for 50 minutes to an hour until those pumpkins are super soft. Remove the pan from the oven and let the pumpkins cool for 15 minutes or so.

While they are still hot, peel the skin off. The skin will come off very easily and often in one piece. Place the pumpkin flesh in a large blender or food processor and puree until it is nice and smooth. The puree will be really wet at this stage. Remove the puree to a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth-lined colander and let it drain for four to six hours in a sink or over a stock pot.

Once the puree has drained, place it in zip lock or vacuum-sealed bags and toss it in the freezer until you are ready to use it. I like to package mine in one- and two-cup packages. A typical can of pumpkin puree from the supermarket is about 2 cups in volume. This pumpkin puree freezes very well.

I have kept it in my freezer for six to eight months without any issues. This month, I'd like to share a few of my favorite recipes where I use pumpkin as a primary flavor or ingredient.

John Setzler enjoys practicing his cooking skills over live fire with various grills and smokers. Smoke is his favorite seasoning. You can follow his cooking shenanigans on facebook.com/mancavemeals.

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

INGREDIENTS

2 cups of pumpkin seeds
3 tablespoons melted butter

INSTRUCTIONS

If you saved some of the seeds from the pumpkins when you made your homemade puree, this is a perfect way to make good use of them. Wash and dry the seeds thoroughly. Toss the seeds in the butter, Worcestershire sauce, and salt. Spread

1 teaspoon Worcestershire
1 teaspoon kosher salt

them evenly on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Place them in a 350-degree oven for 12 to 15 minutes until they are golden brown in color. Remove from the oven, cool, and enjoy!



Pumpkin Pound Cake

INGREDIENTS

3 cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
1 stick of unsalted butter

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
3 cups sugar
5 eggs
¾ cup whole milk
¾ cup pumpkin puree
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and prep a Bundt pan with butter and flour.

In a mixing bowl, combine all dry ingredients except sugar and whisk together.

Cream butter, cream cheese, and sugar in your mixer. Add eggs one at a time with the mixer on low speed. Add milk and pumpkin and

mix just until combined. Add flour mixture slowly until it's all combined.

Pour batter into bundt pan and cook for 55-65 minutes or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.

Let cool in pan for 10 minutes before removing to cooling rack to cool completely.



Cream Cheese Pumpkin Pie with Bourbon Whipped Cream

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PIE

1 pre-made pie crust
1 8-ounce package of cream cheese, softened
1 cup sugar
2 cups pumpkin puree
1 cup of half and half
1 egg and 2 egg yolks, lightly beaten
¼ cup melted butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon salt

WHIPPED CREAM

1 cup heavy cream
¼ cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon pumpkin spice
1 teaspoon bourbon (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Cream the cream cheese and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer. Add in the rest of the ingredients and mix slowly until it comes together. Raise the mixer speed until you have a smooth consistency with no lumps. (This will be very loose.)

Pour the mixture into your pie crust. You may have a tad too much filling so hold some back if needed. Bake at

350 degrees for 50-60 minutes until the pie is set.

While the pie is baking, add your whipped cream ingredients to a mixing bowl and whisk vigorously until stiff peaks form. Set aside and refrigerate if necessary. This can be made in advance. Let the pie cool completely at room temp before slicing and topping with a dollop of whipped cream.



Mom's Pumpkin Bread

INGREDIENTS

2 eggs, beaten
½ cup vegetable oil
2 cups pumpkin puree
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ cups sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground clove
½ cup nuts (optional)
½ cup raisins (optional)
Whiskey or bourbon for marinating raisins (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

If you would like to marinate your raisins in bourbon, place the raisins in a jar and cover them with bourbon for 8 to 12 hours or overnight.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Grease two loaf pans. In a mixing bowl, combine your dry ingredients and whisk together. In the bowl of your stand mixer, add the wet ingredients and mix until combined. Slowly mix in the dry ingredients and mix

for a minute or two or until smooth.

Add the optional raisins and nuts and stir just until combined. Divide your batter equally between two loaf pans. Place in the oven for 60-70 minutes or until an inserted toothpick comes out cleanly. Remove from the oven and let cool for 15 minutes before removing the loaves from the pans to cool completely.

THE PAPER PLATE



RESTAURANT REVIEW

Happy Taco doesn't skimp on grilled meat or fresh veggies

By ANGELA KUPER COPELAND
Arts & Entertainment Editor
THE PAPER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reviews are based on a single, unannounced, and anonymous visit. Your experience may differ from what is presented here.

Ever since renovations began on the former Twin Circle Grill, I regularly drove by to view the progress. Word eventually got out that the new spot would be called Happy Taco and the reaction on social media was swift. Many said Morganton didn't need another Mexican restaurant.

I looked forward to giving it a try, hoping the menu would offer regional Mexican dishes I enjoyed when I lived in Texas and Colorado.

After giving the staff and owners a few weeks to work out initial kinks, my husband and I walked into the restaurant shortly after 5 p.m. last Saturday. Editor Bill Poteat had wanted to pick up tacos after work a few days earlier but changed his mind when he saw the crowd. We had the opposite experience. There was only one car in the small parking lot. We walked inside to order a super late lunch/early dinner.



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND PHOTOS / THE PAPER

Happy Taco offers daily specials in addition to the regular menu.

ATMOSPHERE

Happy Taco is small with eight tables, each best suited for two adults. You walk up to a counter to order, whether eating in or taking out. (There is also an outside walk-up window for to-go and pick-up orders.)

We ordered our takeout meals at the counter inside. The "happy" in the name is appropriate. The bright colors used in the decor could shift a sour mood. Everything is clean and orderly, but space is tight. There is no division between where to stand to wait for to-go orders and the tables for onsite dining.

OUR ORDER

Laminated menus are on the counter providing a simple list with few descriptions. The most expensive items are plates served with rice and beans. For \$12.99, plate choices include carne asada, carnitas, barbacoa, and chorizo chicken (choripollo). Burritos, quesadillas, and enchiladas are \$8.99, ACPs range from \$8.99 to \$10.99, and street tacos (three per order) are \$7.99.

Above the counter is a blackboard listing the daily specials. I ordered the \$9.99 burrito loco (grilled chicken, mushrooms, spinach, pico de gallo, beans, and sour cream stuffed in a flour tortilla and topped with white queso). The burrito was served with rice. Also \$9.99, Marshall ordered a steak chimichanga, a fried flour tortilla filled with cheese and meat (other choices were chicken, ground beef, or veggies) and topped with white queso. His meal came with refried beans and rice. A small bag of tortilla chips was included.

We also took advantage of the salsa bar, which has a variety of salsas ranging from mild to very spicy.

Fountain drinks are served from behind the counter, but we chose two Jarritos sodas (mandarin and grapefruit) from the beverage cooler. Marshall had wanted a beer but that wasn't an option. Happy Taco does not serve alcohol.

OUR WAIT

When we walked in, one person was ordering at the counter. As we awaited our turn, more people began to file in. I remarked how fortunate we were to arrive when we did.

We enjoyed our bottled beverages and watched the three people in the kitchen cooking the orders as they came in. With each passing minute, we got squeezed a bit more. I felt there was no place to stand where I wasn't in the way.

Minutes ticked away, passing the 15-minute mark we were originally given when we placed our order. No big deal at first, but we then noticed people in line after us were getting their food. Marshall asked for an update only to find out that our food was there, sitting at the walk-up window. They had clearly called out "Maria" when they bagged our order. Seeing that neither of us is Maria, we didn't come forward. We weren't miffed about it. We chalked it up to a miscommu-



Our order from Happy Taco included a steak chimichanga, top, and the burrito loco with chicken.

Happy Taco

Location: 1016 E. Union St. in Morganton

Phone: 828-475-6659

Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

Dine in and takeout

No alcohol service

nication, took our food, and drove home.

THE VERDICT

Upon our arrival home, I immediately unpacked our food. Everything was still somewhat warm despite the wait and nearly 20-minute drive back home. My burrito loco was packed in a round, aluminum container with a cardboard lid. The chimichanga was in a foam container.

Everything looked similar to the Mexican food I've ordered in the past. The rice and refried beans were standard but tasty. I have had Mexican rice that is crunchy from sitting around but that was not the case here. The refried beans were just the right consistency to use as a dip for the chips (something we like to do) but not soupy. The bag of chips was an appropriate amount for the two of us.

The real standout here was the amount of meat stuffed inside the tortillas. The chimichanga was loaded with grilled steak cut into bite-sized pieces. I had very little filler in my burrito. Chicken was ingredient No. 1 followed by plenty of fresh spinach and mushrooms.

I appreciate how they placed a small container of queso inside the foam container instead of on top of the chimichanga. Doing that kept the fried tortilla from becoming soggy on the drive home. The burrito was served with the cheese sauce on top.

My burrito was big enough to be two meals for me. Marshall ate the chimichanga and refried beans in one sitting but did not eat all of the rice.

Will I go back? Absolutely. Next time, I'll dive into the street tacos. I'll still order my food to go because the dining area felt too cramped for me to enjoy a meal.

I give Happy Taco mostly positive marks; however, my hunt for chiles en nogada continues.

Angela Kuper Copeland is the arts & entertainment editor at The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595.

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Fonta Flora

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LUNCH MENU: NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

MONDAY Oct. 9	TUESDAY Oct. 10	WEDNESDAY Oct. 11	THURSDAY Oct. 12	FRIDAY Oct. 13
Cheeseburger Cheese Ravioli Turkey and Cheese Sub	Superstar Beef Nachos BBQ Sandwich Crispy Chicken Salad	Cheese Pizza Toasty Cheese Sandwich Ham and Cheese Sandwich	PACMAN (Popcorn) Chicken and Waffles Sloppy Joe Muffin, Yogurt, Cheese Fun Lunch	Chicken Fried Chicken Mini Corn Dogs Crispy Chicken Salad

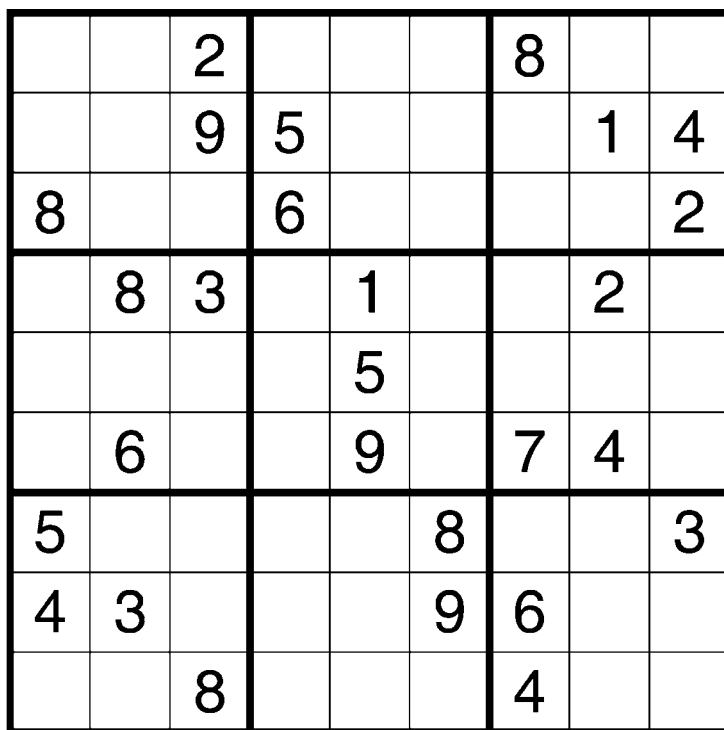
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

MONDAY Oct. 9	TUESDAY Oct. 10	WEDNESDAY Oct. 11	THURSDAY, Oct. 12	FRIDAY, Oct. 13
MS: Cheese Ravioli with Marinara Sauce HS: Mozzarella and Pepperoni Panini Cheese Pizza Pepperoni Pizza BBQ Sandwich Cheeseburger Buffalo Chicken Salad Wrap	MS: Superstar Beef Nachos HS: Cheese Ravioli with Marinara Cheese Pizza Meat Lovers Pizza Mini Corn Dogs Chicken Sandwich Chicken Taco Salad	MS: Meatball Sub HS: Cheesy Chicken and Rice Casserole Cheese Pizza Pepperoni Pizza Hot Dog Cheeseburger Buffalo Chicken Wrap	Middle Schools: PACMAN Chicken and Waffles Cheese Pizza Meat Lovers Pizza Toasted Ham and Cheese Chicken Sandwich Chicken Taco Salad High Schools: Meatball Sub Cheese Pizza Chicken Bacon Ranch Pizza Fish Sticks Chicken Sandwich Chicken Taco Salad	BBQ Chicken Sandwich HS: Buffalo Chicken Wings Cheese Pizza Pepperoni Pizza Cheese-Stuffed Breadsticks Cheeseburger Buffalo Chicken Salad Wrap

Note: In addition to the menu items listed, high schools will feature a Bok Choy Bar

Sudoku | SOLUTION BELOW

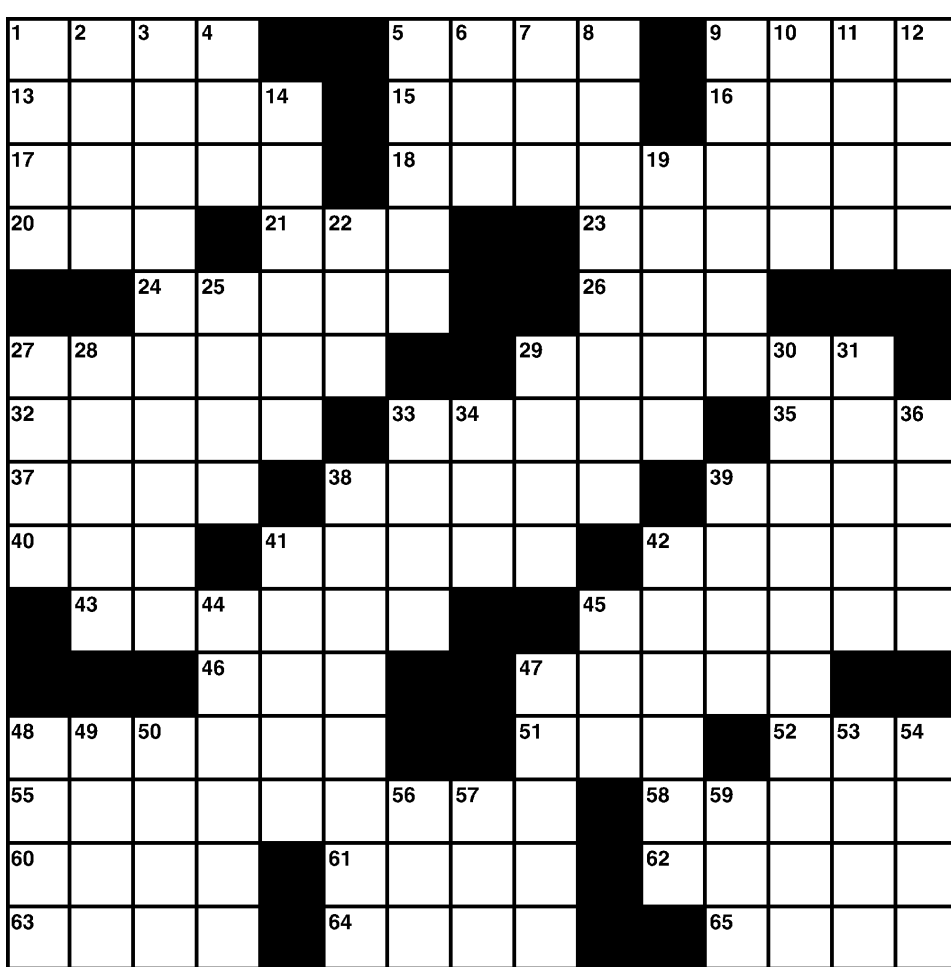
Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and 3x3 block.



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Crossword | JACQUELINE E. MATHEWS | SOLUTION BELOW

- ACROSS**
- 1 Nervous
 - 5 "A miss is as good as a ..."
 - 9 Cornfield pest
 - 13 Mah-jongg pieces
 - 15 Eiffel Tower's material
 - 16 Lariat
 - 17 Like new dollar bills
 - 18 Moved
 - 20 ___ and haw; hesitate
 - 21 Word attached to meal or cake
 - 23 Baltimore team
 - 24 Have a snack
 - 26 ___ Farrow
 - 27 Come into view
 - 29 1970s Ford subcompacts
 - 32 Freight boat
 - 33 Hotel booking
 - 35 Big kahuna, for short
 - 37 Soft cheese
 - 38 Walk leisurely
 - 39 Foot part
 - 40 Moral wrong
 - 41 TV's Morley
 - 42 Crates shipped
 - 43 Writer Christie
 - 45 Sent an invoice to
 - 46 Colorful pond fish
 - 47 Hurried toward
 - 48 Feeble
 - 51 Five fifths
 - 52 Four-___-kind; full house beater
 - 55 Dorm sharers
 - 58 Creator
 - 60 Door handle
 - 61 Bee's home
 - 62 GEICO employee
 - 63 Fly alone
 - 64 Works on a cake
 - 65 ___-on favorite; likely winner
- DOWN**
- 1 Carve in glass
 - 2 Urgent
 - 3 Sparkling
 - 4 Simple reply
 - 5 Cheeriness
 - 6 Rage
 - 7 "Very funny," for short
 - 8 Hugeness
 - 9 Man's neckerchief
 - 10 Learn by ___; repeat & repeat
 - 11 Daytime shop sign
 - 12 Takes a bride
 - 14 Moocher
 - 19 Actor Michael
 - 22 Big heart
 - 25 Craving
 - 27 Recedes
 - 28 "Ave ___"
 - 29 Wharf
 - 30 Failed to notice
 - 31 Blockade
 - 33 Couch
 - 34 Take advantage of
 - 36 Trudge
 - 38 Fish at a luau
 - 39 Sentry's cry
 - 41 Wild weather
 - 42 Theater
 - 44 With hands on hips
 - 45 Deodorant brand
 - 47 Mother's Day gift, perhaps
 - 48 Aggravates
 - 49 Forbidden thing
 - 50 Nitwit
 - 53 ___ off; repel
 - 54 Bachelor of ___
 - 56 ___-tac-toe
 - 57 12/24, for one
 - 59 Give it ___; try



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Bridge Club | FRANK STEWART

Imperfect days

THE STORY — Cy the Cynic says (in a sentiment typical of him) that when you come to the end of a perfect day ... you need to check back over it carefully. Cy played at today's 3NT, and West, who had overcalled in spades, led the queen. Cy won, led a club to dummy's queen and played low from his hand on the next club. When West had to take the ace, Cy had four club tricks and 10 in all. Eventually, he end-played West with a spade to lead from the king of hearts. "Making five," the Cynic said. "Next deal."

RETROSPECT

I doubt that Cy retrospected this deal, but he misplayed. If West's clubs had been A-J-8, he would win the second club with the jack and set up his spades with the ace of clubs as an entry. Cy should duck the first spade, win the second and lead a club. When West plays the eight, dummy should put in the nine. East wins but has no more spades. If he leads a heart, Cy can rise with the ace and lead a second club. He wins three clubs, two spades, a heart and three diamonds.

DAILY QUESTION

YOU HOLD: ♠ A K 5 ♥ A 10 4 ♦ A 7 ♣ K 6 5 3 2. Your partner opens one diamond, you respond two clubs and he

bids 2NT. What do you say?
ANSWER: As most partnerships agree, your partner promises balanced distribution with at most 14 high-card points. (With a balanced 15 points, he would open 1NT.) Slam is possible; he might hold a hand such as Q64,K76,KQ1084,A4. Raise to 4NT, not ace-asking but a "quantitative" try for 6NT. Let your partner decide.

SOUTH DEALER

N-S vulnerable

- NORTH**
- ♠ 7 3 2
 - ♥ Q 9 5
 - ♦ K Q 8 3
 - ♣ Q 9 4

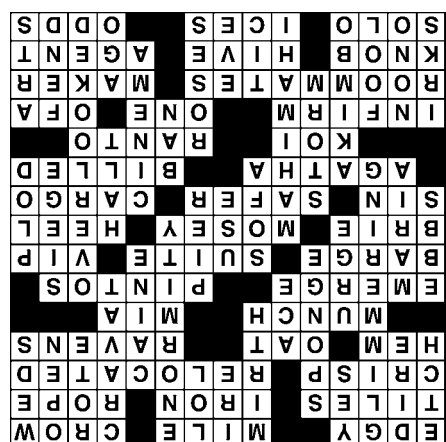
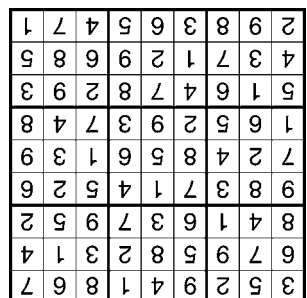
- WEST**
- ♠ Q J 10 9 6
 - ♥ K J 3
 - ♦ 5 4 2
 - ♣ A 8
- EAST**
- ♠ 8 4
 - ♥ 8 7 6 2
 - ♦ J 10 9 6
 - ♣ J 10 7

- SOUTH**
- ♠ A K 5
 - ♥ A 10 4
 - ♦ A 7
 - ♣ K 6 5 3 2

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	1 ♠	Pass	Pass
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

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Puzzle solutions



PETS OF THE WEEK | BURKE ANIMAL SERVICES



Blanche

Blanche is ready for her forever home

This stunning girl is good with other dogs and loves people. Blanche enjoys going for walks, toys and of course treats. Blanche is 1-2 years old.

BURKE ANIMAL SERVICES / FOR THE PAPER

BURKE ANIMAL SERVICES is located at 425 Kirksey Drive, Morganton. The shelter is closed on Sundays and Mondays, and open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays, and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The phone number is

828-764-9588.

All cat and kitten adoptions are \$20, and include spay/neuter, a 1-year rabies vaccine (if age-appropriate), standard core preventative vaccines (FVRCP), a monthly flea preventative, and dewormer as needed.

All dog and puppy adoptions are \$40, and include spay/neuter, a 1-year rabies vaccine (if age-appropriate), standard core preventative vaccines (DHPP & Bordetella), a monthly flea preventative, and dewormer as needed.



Queenie: This elegant lady is worthy of her name Queenie! She is great with other dogs, cats and all people. She loves attention, snuggles, treats and going for walks. She is 1-2 years old.



Popeye and Bluto: These adorable brothers are so excited to find their forever home! They can go together or separate. These cuties love to play and are silly and fun to watch. They love attention and treats. Popeye and Bluto are about 3 months old.