



AROUND BURKE

The Monthly Branch meeting of the Burke County NAACP will be held on Thursday July 6, at 6:30 p.m. at the Mountain View Recreation Center, 645 1st St., Morganton. All members are invited to attend the meeting. All COVID-19 protocols will be followed where indicated.

The Glen Alpine Fourth of July parade is set for Tuesday, July 4, at 10 a.m. Those interested in participating may line up at Pollard Avenue in Glen Alpine at 9:15. The parade will move from Pollard Avenue down Linville Street, ending at Catawba Street near the former Green Wave Restaurant.

Drexel is holding a "Spring Clean Up," a town-wide cleaning initiative, July 3-7. Drexel Public Works will be running extra rounds of rough trash pickup. A Shred-It truck will be available in the parking lot of the R. O. Huffman Center on Thursday, July 6. There will also be an area for disposal of used electronics.

A special, family-oriented event will be held at the Captain Charles McDowell House, 119 St. Mary's

See **AROUND**, Page 2A



The Term Paper: Interns offer their perspective on page 11A

a&e

Dragon Boat team

More than a rigorous workout

NC mental health system

Morganton journalist tells the story of shortcomings in the system.

Going keto? Got a sweet tooth?

The Paper Plate can satisfy your cravings.

SEE PAGES 7-12B

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Drinking water, recreation, wildlife — Catawba River is Burke's lifeline

Buckner works to protect precious nature resource



FOR THE PAPER

Northern Basin Watershed Manager Grant Buckner in his "office" on the Catawba River.

AS WATERSHED MANAGER of the Northern Basin of the Catawba River, Grant Buckner has a lot of ground — and water — to cover.

From its headwaters in the hills south of Old Fort to the dam that creates the Lookout Shoals Reservoir, the Catawba and its myriad tributaries constitute 2,673 miles of shoreline, including those of Lake James, Lake Rhodhiss, Lake Hickory, and Lookout Shoals.

Grant works for the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation, a group

born some 26 years ago for the purpose of monitoring the water quality of the Catawba and working to ensure its continued health as a source of drinking water, a place of recreation, and a home to wildlife.

On the late June afternoon that Grant and I meet in his office at 204 Avery Ave. in Morganton, a driving rain has been falling most of the day. Good for the water table and stream flow, he noted, bad for the sediment the heavy precipitation will dump into the local streams.



BILL
POTEAT

A native of Burnsville in the North Carolina mountains, Grant grew up in the outdoors — fly fishing, hiking, and riding on the Blue Ridge Parkway with his family. Mom was an accountant, Dad a high school math teacher and both instilled in their son a love of the natural world.

"The outdoors were really my second home growing up," said Grant, who also played basketball and tennis and ran cross country at Mountain Heritage High School in Burnsville. After graduation, "wanting to stay close to home," he attended

See **RIVER**, Page 6A

Republican chairwoman sees proposed legislation as a threat to public education

By ANGELA KUPER COPELAND
Education Reporter
THE PAPER

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper declared a state of emergency in May. There was no wildfire burning out of control nor was there a hurricane battering the state's coastline. This state of emergency was declared against

what he sees as an attack on public education by the state's General Assembly.

Wendi Craven, a Republican and the Burke County Board of Education chairwoman, does not see eye-to-eye with the Democratic governor on many issues. But the two found common ground on what they both see as an effort to undermine public edu-

cation in the state.

Fellow Republicans have already pushed back against her standing with the governor on what she believes is legislation that will hurt Burke County. She said it boiled down to "right is right and wrong is wrong. We should look at all the facts and make good-sense decisions."

Craven was among those invited to participate in the Governor's Education Roundtable on Tuesday, June 20.

THE ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS WERE:

- Wendi Craven, Chair, Burke County Public Schools Board of Education
- Deanna Kaplan, Chair, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Board of Education
- Skip Alston, Chair, Guilford County Board of Commissioners
- Dr. Kim Morrison, Mount Airy Schools Superintendent



FOR THE PAPER

Wendi Craven is interviewed by a TV reporter about her participation in the Governor's Education Roundtable.

See **ROUNDTABLE**, Page 12A

BCPS's Swan stays focused as he receives contract extension, raise

By ANGELA KUPER COPELAND
Education Reporter
THE PAPER

As each Burke County Board of Education member sang the praises of Dr. Mike Swan, he turned a deeper shade of red. He admitted after the meeting that such adulation makes him uncomfortable.

"I'm a worker," he said. "I don't look for accolades."

The superintendent's contract was the first action item on the June 26 school board agenda.

Board Chairwoman Wendi Craven put a motion on the table to accept the updated contract. The remaining board members quickly seconded the motion. The compliments soon followed.



Swan

See **SWAN**, Page 12A

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THE WEEK AHEAD



SATURDAY

Chance of storms

HIGH: 90°

LOW: 70°



SUNDAY

Chance of showers

HIGH: 94°

LOW: 69°



MONDAY

Partly sunny

HIGH: 92°

LOW: 68°



TUESDAY

Partly sunny

HIGH: 90°

LOW: 67°



WEDNESDAY

Mostly sunny

HIGH: 91°

LOW: 68°



THURSDAY

Sunny

HIGH: 89°

LOW: 68°



FRIDAY

Mostly sunny

HIGH: 89°

LOW: 69°

SOURCE: NOAA

AROUND

FROM PAGE 1A

Church Road today, Saturday July 1, from 1 to 5 p.m. The free event will feature tours of the 1812 house and stories about the people who called it home. Special activities for teens and children will be colonial dancing and colonial games throughout the afternoon. Gift shop selections will be available. For more information, call 828-437-4104.

Burke County has three Rotary Clubs that meet weekly: the Valdese Rotary Club at noon on Tuesdays at the Old Rock School in Valdese, the Morganton Rotary Club which meets at noon on Wednesdays at the Morganton Community House, and the Sunrise Rotary Club which meets on Thursdays at 7 a.m. at Timberwoods. All three clubs welcome guests.

A special program titled "Astronomy for Everyone" will be held Saturday, Aug. 26, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Paddy's Creek Access for Lake James State Park.

The program is a partnership between the state park and the Catawba Valley Astronomy Club. Telescopes will be set up for public viewing, but visitors are welcome to bring their own equipment if they have it.

Those attending are also encouraged to bring bug spray and lawn chairs. In the event of rain or clouds, an indoor presentation will take place inside the new visitor center. Visitors are asked to park in the lower parking lot at Paddy's Creek Access. The event will be set up in the upper lot.

UNC Health Blue Ridge and the Blue Ridge Medical Group are offering Well Child Checks to make sure your child gets off to a healthy start for school!

The well-checks for ages 3 to 18 include vision and hearing screenings, immunization updates, sports or daycare clearances, and forms to fill out if your child needs medication administered during the school day.

The dates are July 31 through Aug. 5. Times vary by location, so an appointment is required.

- Call the practice closest to you for convenience:
- Cahaj's Mountain Medical Associates: (828) 728-8224
 - Drexel Medical Practice: (828) 580-4080
 - Lenoir Family Medicine: (828) 580-4660
 - McDowell Family Practice: (828) 580-1750
 - McDowell Medical Associates Marion: (828) 652-8727
 - McDowell Medical Associates Nebo: (828) 659-9703
 - Table Rock Family Medicine: (828) 580-1400
 - Valdese Medical Associates: (828) 874-4600

THIRD IN A SERIES

Artificial Intelligence to have dramatic impact on public education system

By **KAI HAWKINS**
Staff Writer
THE PAPER

My high school English teacher, Timothy Fossett, told me "Like jazz and writing, you need to learn the rules before you break them."

In dealing with new artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the educational world, this rings especially true.

The academic world, including Burke County, is being directly impacted by the relentless wave of machine learning and emerging AI products. These new developments are expected to change educational strategies drastically, oftentimes for the better.

AI can easily write essays in certain styles, replicate art projects into unique products, and finish math homework in an instant. The educational process can benefit from this, allowing students and teachers to think about their assignments with more creativity.

Teachers will no longer have to assign monotonous tasks, like learning how to write in MLA style. After all, if a robot can do it, is it even worth doing?

Technology has always changed the way education was taught. Taylor Gibson, Dean of Data Science and Interdisciplinary Initiatives at North Carolina School of Science and Math, compares the introduction of AI to electronic calculators.

He said, "If you are in advanced math, you do not ignore advanced calculators." Calculators free up time with more simple mechanics in mathematics, and allow those learning it to focus on more conceptual work.

Gibson said that the school intends to promote discussion through the entire community. "The broad attitude is that we are looking to embrace AI in what we are doing, we are not trying to put up barriers for it," he said. "It is a transformative technology and it is not going anywhere."

The school hosts training in AI through their website ai4teachers.org. "We talk to teachers outside our school, we talk to everyone and anyone," Gibson said. "It's not just art, it's not just for data, it's for everything. We make sure to talk to students, teachers, and anyone who wants to be a part of the conversation."

The school also hosts The Ryden Program in Innovation and Leadership in AI, a program that develops courses and hosts workshops for teachers, oriented to acknowledge the responsible incorporation of AI technology into the



The Paper instructed generative AI program, Midjourney, to create a graphic for this story. FOR THE PAPER

world while keeping ethical concerns in mind.

Dr. Larry Hodes, Chair of Computer Science at NCSSM, said that these AI developments are "not magic, you get out what you put in." The ethics of AI are the same as any tool; it is not unethical itself, but could be misused depending on the user.

He believes that these tools can help, but he wants "the students to understand how to use these tools, but not let them replace human intelligence," he said.

Jane Cantwell, an instructor at NCSSM, said, "Some instructors are going full force and using Chat GPT... they invite it into the classroom rather than acting like it doesn't exist."

Matthew Hilton, a computer science instructor at NCSSM, said he believes that using software like Chat GPT is good for those with "a background in coding and technology," but that students should first learn the basics and practice, before relying on tools like AI. AI allows for more abstract thinking in the same manner.

So far, the Burke County Public Schools have not made administrative-wide decisions on how to approach the subject of AI in the classroom, leaving it up to the teachers to decide how to approach it, administration officials said.

"From here on out, all the things I've learned about it in the last months, teachers are

going to have to talk to students about the authenticity of their work," said Keith Smith, a Freedom High School science teacher

AI-specific plagiarism is emerging rapidly on educators' radar in the light of AI tool development. Smith said he isn't too worried about AI in his own classroom, however. He teaches 9th and 10th grade students and said that if "students try to turn in something that is AI generated, it would look and read well above their knowledge level."

Kelly Baker, a math teacher at Freedom, said that high school math is mostly preparation for exams; most assignments are assigned so the students can practice for midterms and finals. Using AI or other technology for their homework, Baker said "will not prepare students for the tests."

Henry Beall, a student at Freedom, said that there hasn't been much AI-related dialogue between students and teachers. While some teachers believe they can correctly identify AI writing, Beall said "one of my classmates had Chat GPT write an entire paper" for an English class and got a 95% grade on it.

Educators at Western Piedmont Community College are taking a positive approach to AI technology in the classroom.

Coordinator for Digital Effects and Animation Technology and Simulation and Game

Development Jonathan Crumpler said, "we do endorse GPT, one of the things we like to do is prepare people for an industry. And the industry in digital media is going to have updates beyond what you see in the classroom."

"Even if it's to check code, or to make a template so that a student can get a better understanding, there is no real downside to using AI. It is going to be another tool for someone who is producing new media," Crumpler said.

WPCC's Art Coordinator Mark Poteat said that AI technology "seems like one of those things you hear about in the background, and all of a sudden it's here." He is considering using AI, like Midjourney or other AI art producers, in the classroom for his own art classes to help students visualize their art before they begin.

These and other conversations with Burke County's educators paint a consensus of opinion: The Pandora's Box has opened for AI tech and the best thing to do now is prepare students for its use in the world, and that it is crucial for students to learn how to perform basic tasks without AI's assistance, before they familiarize themselves with these tools.

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Obituaries: obits@thepaper.media
News tips: news@thepaper.media
General info: info@thepaper.media
PUBLISHED WEEKLY ON SATURDAY
by Morganton Media Group LLC
© 2023 All Rights Reserved
ISSN 2836-1490

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FOCUS ON THE EDUCATION

NCSSM-Morganton students forge literal and figurative trails to future

By ANGELA KUPER COPELAND
Education Reporter
THE PAPER

A future parasitologist meets a retired virologist. No, that's not the beginning line of a joke but rather a true connection that happened when about two dozen students from the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics-Morganton arrived at Grandfather Mountain to help build and rehab trails.

Rising senior Bobby McAdams, 17, took a few minutes out of picking up limbs and debris to chat with Grandfather Mountain volunteer Stewart Gray, who happens to be a retired professor from Cornell University's School of Plant Sciences with a specialty in virology.

"I want to be a parasitologist ... viruses are similar to parasites," Bobby said. "He has a background in marine biology, which I'm also interested in. I just thought our interests aligned a lot and so I wanted to know more about what he's done. He's very accomplished as well."

While the students' purpose that day was to help with the trails, Gray told the group that he was also available to speak with students about college, graduate school, and any other questions about the next steps in their education and careers. Most of the students at the park expressed an interest in becoming a scientist or engineer.

"Now is the time that you need to begin thinking about graduate school," Gray told the group.

All the students participating in the trail work on Saturday, June 24, are participating in either Summer Research & Innovation Program (SRIP) or Mentorship Program, said Meagan Coneybeer, director of Mentorship and Research at the Morganton campus.

"These service projects provide an opportunity for the students to get outside and explore the region," she said. "The projects also have a touristic component. Today, the students will work in the morning and then have the afternoon to enjoy the park."

Later in July, students will work at Lake James State Park and then enjoy the picnic pavilion and beach area afterward.

Service projects also help



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND / THE PAPER
Grandfather Mountain volunteer Stewart Gray talks to the NCSSM-Morganton students about the trail projects scheduled for the day.

students accumulate the required 60 hours of community service needed to graduate from NCSSM-Morganton.

"Through the summer service projects, students will be able to get almost 40 hours toward that 60," Coneybeer said.

On this visit to Grandfather Mountain, students added natural barriers along the Bridge Trail. Park-goers had created cut-through trails on the switchbacks - something park



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND / THE PAPER
Natural Resource Management Specialist Jacob Morse directs NCSSM-Morganton students as they add natural barriers to keep park visitors from creating unwanted sub-trails along the Bridge Trail.

staff wants to discourage. The group also began work needed to create a new trail near the old Fudge Shop, which sits behind the Wilson Center for Nature Discovery.

The Fudge Shop will be transformed into an education center geared toward ages 5-12. The exhibits inside the center will reflect what can be found on the trail.

"We are going to build a trail that will be an extension of

what they see inside (the education center). We want to re-establish some good soil in here so we can plant some other things," Gray said.

To help in that process, students picked up fallen limbs and other debris and then helped spread mulch where the new plantings will take place. Gray said the hope is to have the center and new trail open by the end of 2024.

A SUMMER DEEP DIVE INTO INTEREST AREAS

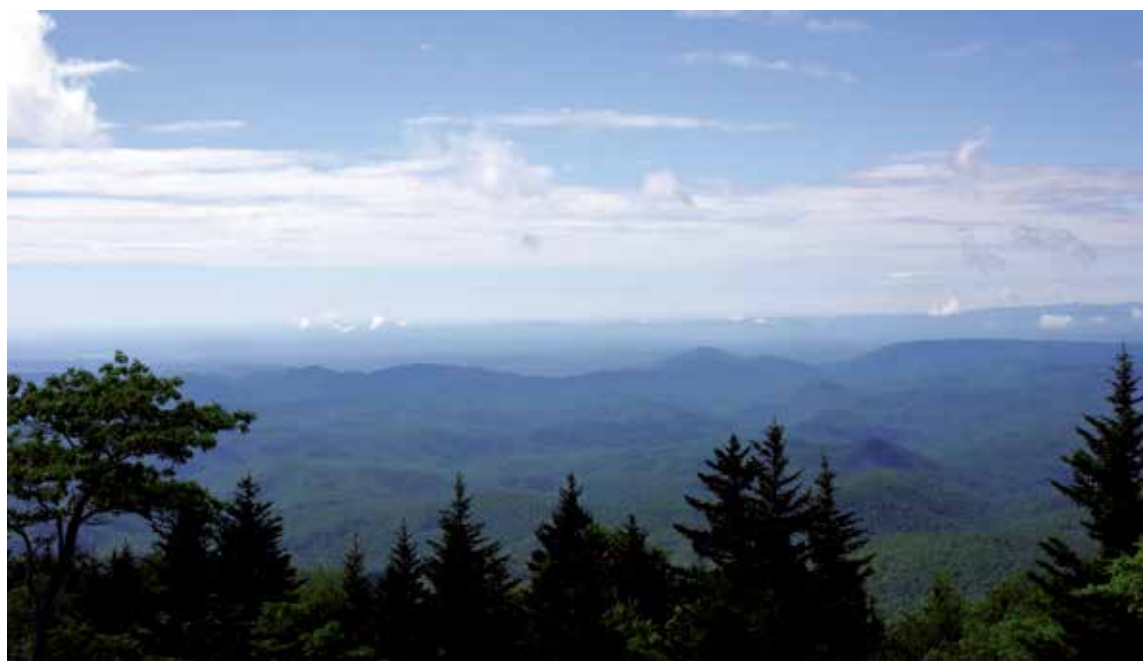
Students accepted to SIRP work with NCSSM faculty on-campus or with volunteer mentors off-campus for full days over two to five weeks of the summer while living at NCSSM at no cost. Students engage in independent or ongoing projects that develop both personal and professional skills that will have a long-lasting impact on their paths to becoming leaders and engaged citizens. The program culminates with student presentations communicating not only their discoveries from their project but also demonstrating the development and growth that is an integral part of this adventure.

The Mentorship Program provides NCSSM instructors for a student to choose the area of interest to pursue as they join a professional and their team in an experience that requires the application of knowledge and skills to address challenges in the world beyond the classroom. Students apply to work with their own mentors, pursue their own goals, and effectively communicate their discoveries from their projects through elevator pitches, project proposals, and presentations to a broad audience.

Bobby appreciates the chance to focus on his research project.

"(NCSSM) allows students to really push themselves in ways people don't typically. Being able to pursue different things, focusing on the research aspect that traditional schools don't really allow. My research is on microplastics. There's not a lot of documentation on them so I'm looking to see how they are transmitted in water and air. The faculty is there for us all the time with expertise and help, offering up their classrooms if you need to pull a late night. It wouldn't be able to happen without them."

Angela Kuper Copeland is the education reporter at The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595, ext. 2003.



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND / THE PAPER
After a week of solid rain, the June 24 weather on Grandfather Mountain was perfect for the students' trail work and enjoyment of the park.



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND / THE PAPER
NCSSM-Morganton students spread mulch in an area that will become a new trail.



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND / THE PAPER
Bobby McAdams, left, discusses his interest in parasitology with Stewart Gary, a retired Cornell University professor and Grandfather Mountain volunteer.

BCPS students won't need lunch money this fall

By ANNABELLA BERNHARDT
Staff Writer
THE PAPER

When public school students return to campus in August, they'll need to remember to bring their notebooks and pencils. One thing they won't need, however, is lunch money.

On Monday, June 26, the Burke County Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt a new meal financing plan called Community Eligibility Program (CEP).

"CEP has essentially no downsides or cons for Burke," said Daniel Wall, BCPS direc-

tor of Food Services and Child Nutrition. "We believe this will help a huge number of students and families."

WHAT IS CEP?

Traditionally, lunch prices vary based on family income. An elementary full-price meal is \$2.60. Secondary students pay \$2.85. Reduced lunch is 40 cents. Some BCPS students pay full price, some pay a reduced rate, and others receive free lunch.

Under CEP, those divisions are erased and every student, regardless of family income,

will receive a free lunch.

CEP is a federal program through the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This non-pricing meal service option is for schools and school districts in low-income areas. Unlike the free/reduced lunch model, parents will not have to file an application to participate. Eligibility is automatic for every student. In the free/reduced lunch model, parents must complete a Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) application to demonstrate their need.

BENEFITS OF CEP

The first benefit of CEP is financial.

School districts are reimbursed a certain amount by the USDA for lunches served. For example, a high school student pays \$2.85 for a full-price lunch. The meal costs \$4.17 to make. The difference is \$1.32. USDA reimburses 82 cents, leaving the district in the red by 50 cents for each meal. Free/reduced lunches are reimbursed at a rate of \$4.43, which helps make up for some but not all of the loss. In the

See LUNCH, Page 13A



Burke County Public Schools and Chartwells K12 will offer free lunch to children in the community all summer long.

Find out more about the program on page 13A



OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Declaration of Independence explains why we celebrate

Just a little reminder of what it is we'll be celebrating on July 4... our Declaration of Independence:

WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from

See **INDEPENDENCE**, Page 5A



FOR THE PAPER

The Statue of Liberty, symbol of American freedom.

Each one of us bears a responsibility to our nation

THREE DECADES OR SO ago, back when I was editor of another newspaper in Morganton, I wrote a sweet and nostalgic column recalling how Independence Day was celebrated in Drexel on July 4, 1965.

On that day, just a few weeks before I turned 10 years old, it seemed the whole town turned out in the late afternoon for an old-fashioned fish fry, the filets of perch and of flounder sizzled up in bubbling vats of hot grease by the town elders.

Baked beans, coleslaw, and homemade ice cream supple-



BILL POTEAT

mented the main dish.

To fill the hours between supper and sunset, softball games were held on the adjacent community center softball diamond, including an oldtimers' game in

which my Old Man played right field for one of the squads — the only athletic endeavor I ever saw him undertake.

Some youngsters — but not this fastidious lad — later scrambled around that field chasing a greased pig that had a five-dollar bill taped to its belly while others attempted to shimmy up a greased light pole that had a five-dollar bill secured at its top.

When twilight finally edged toward full darkness, the town elders proceeded to touch off what

See **POTEAT**, Page 5A

Wherein the Pirates became the Aggies and semi-professional baseball hit Morganton

IT'S SUMMERTIME. The Fourth of July week. Hotdogs, hamburgers, apple pie and baseball. Not that long ago it was also the Morganton Aggies. Here's a look back:

During the Morganton City Council's March 2005 meeting, with a seated audience of, oh, perhaps eight or nine people tops, recreation department head Gary Leonhardt stood at the podium and requested \$10,000 to purchase a minor-league baseball team.



ALLEN VANNOPPEN

The Rowan Pirates were for sale. They were a member of the Southern Collegiate Baseball

League, a minor-league team of off-season ambitious college players. Fifty years earlier, Leonhardt reminded the council, Morganton had a minor-league baseball team in town named the Aggies.

If the council approved the deal, the Pirates would relocate to Morganton, be renamed the Aggies, and bring quality summertime baseball back to Morganton.

In a smooth, swift, transaction, I heard one council member ask, "How much again?" and heard Gary say, "About ten thousand," and within seconds heard another member's motion for approval, which was immediately seconded, and the mayor called for a vote and before you could say "Play Ball!" the deal passed unanimously. Boom. Municipal efficiency. Baseball was back.

During the 1940s and 1950s the Morganton Aggies were a just-below-pro level baseball team that was part of the Western Carolina League. More importantly, the team's baseball was the core of Morganton summertime entertainment.

In 1949, 60,078 people attended local games here, according to a local news story written at the time. The ball field was behind the (now demolished) Morganton



FOR THE PAPER

The above photo is of the 1948 Morganton Aggies team. Bat boy Bob Byrd is on the first row, far right. Boger McGimpsey is on the back row, fourth from right. Recognize anyone else in the photo? Give us a call at 828-445-8595. We'd love to have a more thorough identification.

See **VANNOPPEN**, Page 7A

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Young Republicans' are neither young nor Republican, reader finds

TO THE EDITOR:

Intentionally misleading the media and citizens who watch or read the media is immoral and unethical and should always be exposed, regardless of political affiliation.

In a recent letter to the editor in The Paper, "Stein draws endorsement," I was SHOCKED to see it was submitted by the "Burke County Young Republicans" because Josh Stein has a solid reputation as an alt-left Democratic Attorney General in North Carolina who NO TRUE Conservative or Republican

would ever endorse.

I began to dig in a bit and wanted to share what I found with you.

First — There is only one official "Young Republican" group in Burke County according to the NC Federation of Young Republicans and they are "Catawba Valley Young Republicans."

Both NCFYR and CVYR have issued statements that the group calling themselves Burke County Young Republicans are not official members of NCFYR. (You can read these statements on their Facebook page.)

Second — I have been unable

to find the entity called "Burke County Young Republicans" in the NC Board of Elections Reporting Data Base. (Public Information online)

Again, their group is not recognized by the NC Board of Elections, which would be required for official political groups.

Third — The letter was signed by Tommy Voegeli, President, and Paul Rasmussen, Secretary of "Burke County Young Republicans" (You know, the group that has no official designation).

I have also searched Mr.

See **LETTERS**, Page 8A

Satanic Yellow Jackets and soggy weed trimmers: A love story

I HAVE A LOVE-HATE relationship with yard work; which basically means I love to hate it. This is a shame, in that it's one of the few things I'm pretty good at doing. I relate to you here, dear readers, two incidents where I was not at all "good at it."



FRED SCHUSZLER

I was mowing my lawn many years ago. Picture this idyllic scene: a humid August evening, near dusk, my daughter pushing her baby brother in his stroller on the empty streets of our neighborhood accompanied by a neighbor-friend her age, the birds singing, the sunset a bright reddish-orange afterglow behind Table Rock and Hawksbill mountains, my wife lounging in a lawn chair with a cool glass of lemonade, alternatively reading a magazine and keeping an eye on our children.

I was leisurely cutting the grass in the lot next to my home on a riding mower I had borrowed from my nice neighbors and friends, the Browns. It was the same area I had been mowing all summer. Unfortunately, on this particular occasion it was late in the day and it was late in the season.

I swatted some flying insect away from my face. Then another. Then a veritable dark cloud from the fires of hell engulfed me. And the stinging started. Yellow Jackets!

I had run over a Yellow Jacket nest that had been being built all summer to full capacity and this evening they were all home for the night! I leapt off the mower yelling and yelping in wild gestations that could've been mistaken for the Watusi dance.

I confess that words of distress were exclaimed. Meanwhile, my daughter took off running, pushing her brother's stroller at a reckless speed toward their momma. My wife jumped up to fuss at her for going too fast with the lad, but daughter was yelling "Momma! Come quick! Something is wrong with dad!"

Her friend went running home to her mother, shouting "Mommy! Mommy! Guess what Reverend Schuszler just said!" My wife came running over to the lot to see what was wrong with me. I was nowhere to be found. The lawnmower, still idling, had come to an abrupt stop (thankfully) in a small ditch on the property.

I was nowhere to be found because in my panic I had made a mad dash to the back yard pool. Desperately trying to rescue myself from the stinging stampede of small satanic wasps I jumped off the lawnmower while it was still running and ran (Yellow Jackets stinging me the whole distance) to jump into my pool fully clothed and bedecked with multiple Yellow Jackets within and without my T-shirt.

Even as I sank beneath the cool water in the deepest end of the pool, I could feel the lil demons still stinging me, but after bobbing to the surface several times to the thunder cloud of pain hovering above the water, they finally dispersed.

After I finally emerged to the touching concern of my family, I was in pain from, at one count, 17 stings!

Neighbor/friend Pam Brown arrived with her homemade remedy of putting tobacco juice on each swelling sting. It did little to alleviate my suffering. I just now smelled like my grandfather's spittoon.

I took some over-the-counter allergy medicine, which usually makes one sleepy, but had the op-

posite effect on me. It made me "wired." I paced the house in jittery pain until late into the night. Eventually the medicine wore off and I slipped into a fitful sleep with nightmares of riding that lawn mower through the fires of hell into perpetual baptisms in heavily chlorinated holy water.

On another unfortunate occasion, I needed to trim the weeds from a little gravel area around the too narrow concrete strip around my pool. I asked a friend from church, Alvin Hyder, if I could borrow his weed trimmer.

He was a generous person, but he was very protective of his extensive collection of yard equipment. Even so, he was happy to share his top-of-the-line, John Deere trimmer. (Luckily for me, no one had told him that the rumor was circulating that my house was where good equipment went to die.)

Now I do not want to give the wrong impression about my pool. Although we loved it and it was great to have during the excruciatingly hot Burke County summer days when the kids were little, it would not be considered top-of-the-line as far as pools go.

In fact, given the number of big frogs I often found in the pool skimmer each morning, my pool was more a haven for promiscuous amphibian frolicking than family recreation.

My neighbors used to tell me they had huge numbers of tiny little frogs in their yards and wondered where they could be coming from. I would dishonestly express dismay.

I wasn't about to confess that my backyard was the sure source of their amphibian infestations. I figured it was a story as old as Moses

and the Bible: holy men of God bringing plagues upon unsuspecting regions.

Anyway, my tedious job in using Mr. Hyder's top-of-the-line trimmer was to trim the weeds around my pool; then shut off the equipment and sweep up the debris before the wind blew it all into the pool.

This starting and stopping got old and jerking the starter cord was making my arm sore. So as I was nearing the end, a big breeze picked up, and instead of turning off the trimmer I just set it down while on idle, and ran around to sweep up the trimmed vegetation before the jungle was deposited in the clear pool water.

To my horror, I looked across the pool to see Hyder's top of the line trimmer vibrating itself into the pool! Like with the Yellow Jacket attack, I let out a yell at the top of my lungs (being the pious soul that I am, I think it was "bless my soul in the bosom of Abraham!") and leapt into the water (fully clothed) to rescue the cherished equipment.

It was at the bottom of the pool before I reached it, but I surfaced with it outstretched in my hand like the nightmare arm arising out of the river in the movie Deliverance. I scrambled and sputtered onto the deck with it.

I immediately called my neighbor/friend David Brown, who, unlike me, was excellent with any technological or mechanical equipment. He fiddled with it (at one point looked like he was giving it mouth-to-carburetor-resuscitation), and got the trimmer going enough that I could take it back to Mr. Hyder without confessing my sin to him.

Somewhat later I confessed it to Mr. Hyder. I was relieved when his response was grace-filled, good-natured laughter! "I wondered why every time I started it after you borrowed it a little stream of water would spew out" he said with a sly smile, "but it gave me a good excuse to explain to my wife why I needed a newer one."

Fred Schuszler is a local columnist for The Paper. He may be reached at fredschuszler@gmail.com.



The Paper columnist Fred Schuszler demonstrates to grandson Braedon his techniques for damaging borrowed equipment.

INDEPENDENCE

FROM PAGE 4A

punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

POTEA

FROM PAGE 4A

was, for a young boy, a magnificent fireworks show — the rockets soaring into the sky and bursting over the backdrop of the nearby peaks of the South Mountains.

In a world in which so much of the news seems so bad — Canada burning, Texas broiling, a dysfunctional Congress, skyrocketing food prices, continuing war in Europe — it is easy and tempting to grow wistful and nostalgic about seemingly more innocent and more gentele times.

But were they? The explosively violent riots in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles were but a few weeks in the future, and before the decade was out the fires of racial violence would flare in cities all across America.

The nation was indeed changing, but here in Burke County those born with black skin could not yet eat in the dining room of a public restaurant, or stay in a hotel, and, if watching a movie at the Mimosa Theater, were consigned to the "colored" balcony.

And no, there were no black faces that evening at Drexel's celebration of America's birthday.

A more peaceful evening is hard to imagine than that of an Independence Day now nearly 58 years in the past, but the world was most definitely not at peace.

In South Vietnam, the number of American armed men with boots on the ground would swell from 23,310 at the beginning of 1965 to 184,314 by year's end.

Americans killed in action in that nasty little war jumped from 216 in 1964 to nearly 2,000

in 1965.

And, because war requires young men to bear its burden, the number of draftees rose from 112,991 in 1964 to 230,991 in 1965.

Fighting intensified in South Vietnam. American bombers rained terror on North Vietnam, and somehow the United States found itself literally blundering blindly into an unwinnable land war in Asia in which nearly 60,000 of its young men would die for absolutely nothing.

The skies were clear and the summer stars shining brightly that July 4 night as the fireworks exploded against that stunning celestial backdrop.

But many furniture factories, textile mills, and coal-fired power plants belched black and noxious fumes into the air constantly, often leaving a dirty cover of soot on cars, front porches, and picture windows, not to mention the

lungs of young and old.

Even more frightening, many industries dumped wastes directly into rivers and streams — the same rivers and streams from which our drinking water was extracted. In those days, McGalliard Falls often ran purple, red, or blue.

Strip away the hazy veil of nostalgia, and the world of 1965 was a dangerous and complicated and exciting place — as is the world of 2023.

Yet men and women of courage worked then, as they are working now, to attain the ancient promise of Isaiah, when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."

Men and women of courage worked then, as they are working now, to ensure that this small, fragile planet remains healthy enough to sustain life,

not just for this century, but for as far into the future as the human mind can imagine.

And, men and women of courage worked then, as they are working now, to ensure that the American promise of liberty and justice for all truly means just that — for all races, all faiths, all economic classes, all sexual orientations.

The "good old days" seem so good mainly because they are so far in the past. But the past is past and the future is now and each of us, as citizens of this great republic, has a responsibility to do our part to continue to make the United States a great, and good, and decent nation.

Happy Independence Day! And more importantly, Happy Birthday America!

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

RIVER: Grant Buckner works to protect precious Burke County resource

FROM PAGE 1A

UNC Asheville.

Grant was graduated summa cum laude from UNCA with a bachelor's degree in biology which included a concentration in ecology and evolution in 2018.

Two years later he earned a master's degree in biology from Appalachian State University with a focus on the use of aquatic insects as a tool to monitor the quality of the water in which they live.

"My professional goal from the beginning was to try to do something that I love," he said, "and certainly working on water quality and water protection is something that I love to do."

In his position as watershed manager for the Northern Basin, Grant works closely with the Lake James Environmental Association and the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina with whom he shares office space on Avery Avenue.

The Catawba basin has a natural advantage over some rivers in the central and eastern part of the state in that one-third of its surrounding watershed is located within the Pisgah National Forest, Grant said.

The flip side of that coin, however, is that continued residential development along Lake James, Lake Rhodhiss, and Lake Hickory, as well clear cutting of timber within the



FOR THE PAPER

Northern Basin Watershed Manager Grant Buckner checks the quality of the water in a Burke County stream.

watershed area, can lead to increased pollutants and sediment being washed into the Catawba and its feeder streams.

"We're looking at short-term and long-term projects that will help protect water quality," Grant explained, noting that the development of the Oak Hill Community Park, just north of Freedom High School,

will serve as a natural buffer for the nearby Catawba.

Grant gets out onto the waters of lakes or into the waters of area streams at least once a week this time of year, checking water quality and reporting on its safety.

In addition, the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation and its members and staff, including Grant, work as advocates

for clean water by:

- Holding polluters accountable
- Commenting on proposed legislative/regulatory actions
- Participating in local development and planning initiatives
- Participating in new rule-making
- Testifying at public hearings
- Organizing community meetings
- Meeting with elected officials
- Reporting illegal activity related to the waterways
- Recognizing companies and individuals who are examples of responsible environmental behavior

Engaging in litigation as a last resort against individuals/entities who willfully harm the environmental integrity of the Catawba-Wataree Basin

"We have a lot of very healthy streams and some that are not so healthy," Grant said. "The trash that is pulled from the lakes during clean-ups can be pretty unbelievable."

Asked how a Burke County resident can help to protect our water, Grant replied, "Get involved. Support Foothills Conservancy. Support the Lake James Environmental Association. Participate in a clean-up. Report violations when you see them."

He also offered an admonition that stuck home with me and my dear friend and boon companion, Bo the Wonder Dog.

"If you take your dog into the woods, or along a stream, pick up their mess," he advised. "Dog poo is not some sort of natural fertilizer. Instead, it contributes to fecal bacteria in nearby water sources."

One might think that Grant's job would lead him to pursue indoor pastimes during his off hours. Instead, just the opposite is true.

"Doing what I do really makes me want to get out more," he said. "Probably my favorite hike in Burke County is to the summit of Hawksbill. But, the truth is, I really like to hike to get to a good fishing spot."

Bill Poteat, who loves to hike but does not have the patience to fish, is editor of The Paper. He may be reached at 828-445-8595 or at bill@thepaper.media.

'If you take your dog into the woods or along a stream, pick up their mess. Dog poo is not some sort of natural fertilizer.'

GRANT BUCKNER, NORTHERN BASIN WATERSHED MANAGER

Burke County Trails Summit a step toward more cooperation

FOR THE PAPER

Staying in your own lane is not conducive for getting a trail on the ground.

With over 200 miles of trail on the ground in Burke County and many more miles planned, the nonprofits, agencies, and local governments that are responsible for our public trails have learned that crossing lanes to collaborate helps to get trails on the ground faster.

As Beth Heile started talking to local governments and trail nonprofits about co-location and intersecting with the Burke River Trail, she knew others were having the same separate conversations regarding different trail alignments.

To make sure everyone in the county was on the same page knowing what is coming down the pike, Heile organized a Burke County Trails Summit for the people planning, building, and overseeing trails.

The morning meeting was a chance to network, share trail timelines, talk strategy, and learn from each other and the NC State Trails staff. Attendees included those responsible for three of the four State Trails in Burke County (Fonta Flora State Trail, Overmountain Victory State Trail, Wilderness Gateway State Trail), the two State Parks (South Mountains State Park, Lake James State Park), the two large multi hundred-acre parks (Oak Hill Park, Valdese Lakeside Park), a regional trail



FOR THE PAPER

Pictured, left to right, starting with front row, Linda Lindsey (OVNCST-Friends), Bryant Lindsey (OVNCST-Friends), Starli McDowell (OVNCST-Friends), Jeffrey Allison (National Park Service), Smith Raynor (NC State Trails), Kat Deutsch (NC State Trails), Stephen Fox (City of Morganton) Shane Prisby (Foothills Conservancy of NC), Amanda Finn (Friends of Fonta Flora State Trail), Nora Coffey (Lake James State Park), Bryan Fish (City of Morganton), Rob Winkler (City of Morganton), David Andersen (Town of Valdese) Sarah Chabaane (Burke County), Bradley Kirkley (Burke County), Mary Griffin (South Mountains State Park), Lynette Hill (Carolina Land and Lakes), Melissa Patton (Carolina Land and Lakes), Alan Glines (Burke County), Beth Heile (Burke River Trail Association, Friends of the Valdese Rec).

(Burke River Trail), and municipal greenways (Morganton and Valdese).

Here are a few examples of how trail partners are working together:

- **Canal Bridge** — This bridge on NC-126 is home to the Fonta Flora State Trail, Overmountain Victory State Trail, and a key connection for Lake James State Park properties. The

bridge is in Burke County's jurisdiction and controlled by NCDOT. The angle of the bridge and speed limit make it unsafe for hikers and bikers. To remedy that, all these groups are working together on a new system that includes a lane shift and sidewalk.

- **Rocky Ford Access** — This parking lot is a trailhead for Fonta Flora State Trail, Burke River

Trail, Overmountain Victory State Trail, the Morganton Greenway, and Foothills Conservancy Mountain Bike trails. All groups involved are looking at how this gravel lot could include restrooms, picnic tables, and a kayak launch for a better user experience.

- **Wilderness Gateway State Trail** — Though mostly a backcountry trail connecting Baker's Moun-

tain to South Mountains to Chimney Rock, Wilderness Gateway does meander to the Burke River Trail at Valdese Lakeside Park and at Henry River Mill Village.

Before you attend the ribbon cutting for a new trail, a lot of work has taken place behind the scenes. Completed elements include a vision for the trail, buy-in and support from the community and local government, a formal study to see if the route is feasible for a longer trail, funding, willing landowners to sign legal agreements, surveys, design, plus contractors and/or volunteers.

With all these dynamics, trail partners being willing to share success stories of landowners welcoming trails onto their property, to name a great contractor that will allow volunteers workers to help save money, or a new funding source is critical.

With Burke County Rep. Hugh Blackwell being the primary sponsor of the 2023 NC Year of the Trail bill, it seems only fitting these partners are working to get more trail on the ground, more ground-breakings and ribbon cuttings and more trail events than any other county in 2023.

If you want to get involved with trails, search out any of these nonprofit organizations for volunteer opportunities: Burke River Trail Association, Foothills Conservancy of NC, Friends of Fonta Flora State Trail, and Friends of the Valdese Rec.

Engel & Volkers opens new facility in Lake James community

By THE PAPER STAFF

The Engel and Volkers Foothills Lake James real estate team recently celebrated the grand opening of a new office space with a ribbon cutting ceremony and reception.

The new location is at 7298 South Mountain Institute Road near the Paddy's Creek section of Lake James State Park and will be known as the Engel and Volkers Foothills Longtown office.

The event welcomed guests with live music, hors d'oeuvres, and beverages for this celebration. The event was attended by guests, staff, clients, the owners, and Engel & Volkers (EV) corporate representatives.

Engel and Volkers has over

300 locations in the United States and has been the longest serving realty firm with an office in the Lake James community, according to Polly Leadbetter, owner of the local franchise.

"We all love to work on the lake. We work the area from Hickory all the way to Old Fort," Leadbetter said.

Leadbetter and her husband, Steve Leadbetter, have been working on this project since they bought the property, which formerly housed a gas station, five years ago.

They had no specific plans for the building when they bought it, but within the year, they started reconfiguring the building in the EV corporate style.

The space will be used as

conference space by agents who want to hold meetings there. It will not be open everyday but can be used for community gatherings. "Community groups can use the space. If they want to use it, message us!" Leadbetter said.

Groups can use the space after hours and on the weekends. Currently the newly reconfigured space hosts board meetings and meetings of a study group.

The Leadbetters' started their real estate firm back in 2002. They have also established Cottonwood Development, which is a construction and development company. This company started off as Lake James Real Estate but has now become part of the



FOR THE PAPER

Shown above are Engel&Volkers staff members at the ribbon-cutting. From left are: Laura Faria, Loralie Clark, Dianne Reihl, Lisa Griffin, Polly Leadbetter, Cory Cody, Monica Wakefield, and Jesse Wilson.

EV franchise. EV Lake James Real Estate will be adding more people to their team. "We are currently

expanding the team we have here, and we will be adding additional brokers," Leadbetter said.

LIBRARY MATTERS

'Overview of Mental Health' program offered

FOR THE PAPER

Adults can attend an educational lunchtime program offered by Vaya on Wednesday, July 5, at noon at the Morganton Public Library. The topic to be discussed is an "Overview of Mental Health."

CEUs are available for participants.

Needlework in the Morning will meet on Friday, July 7, at 10 a.m. at the Valdese Public Library. No registration is required.

All programs are adults only unless otherwise specified. For more information please call Danielle at 828-764-9269, or email danielle.townsend@burkenc.org.

YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMMING

YAS SRP is taking a break this week to celebrate the 4th of July and prepare the final half of Summer Reading Program! Teens can still track their summer reads (and any activity points they might have forgotten to log!) at bcpls.read-squared.com, but there are no programs to attend this week.

This week is a great time to check the YAS SRP calendar of events at bcpls.org and pre-register for any events you might want to attend in July! For more information on any YAS programs contact Lizzie at 828-764-9273 or by email at lizzie.whisnant@burkenc.org.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

There will be no regular storytime meetings the week of July 2-8. This includes Baby Bookworms, Terrific Tots, Preschool Pals, Library Explorers and Cool Kids.

We are excited to announce an exciting new pop-up program at the Morganton Public Library this week! Join us for "Pop-Up Storytimes With A Cop" for the following Fridays in



FOR THE PAPER

On July 4, 1931, the Boncilla Beauty Shop's float won first prize in the Morganton Independence Day Parade. It was estimated that a crowd of 11 to 20 thousand attended the Fourth of July Celebration that began with a morning salute and raising of colors at 6:00 am and ended at 9:30 pm with fireworks at the Morganton High School athletic field on South College Street. The Grand Parade started at 11:00 am. There were decorated cars and over 20 floats. The Honorable Paul C. Whitlock of Charlotte spoke at 12:30 pm. The History Museum of Burke County 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 Burke County Public Library.

July: July 7, 14 and 21 at 3 p.m.

Come hear one of the officers from the Morganton Department of Public Safety share some silly stories and some cool stuff from their jobs. There may even be a K9 officer making some appearances!

Keep logging those minutes reading for the Summer Reading Program, and don't forget to visit any branch to redeem your prizes. After week 2 of Tails and Tales we had 30,938 minutes of reading logged! Keep reading so we can reach our goal of 155,000 minutes this summer!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are needed at the Morganton Public Library to assist with **landscape maintenance**. We need some folks to

help us keep our newly landscaped areas free of weeds and debris. If you would like to help call Library Director Jim Wilson at 764-9276 or email at jwilson@bcpls.org.

LIBRARIES CLOSED

All locations of the Burke County Public Library Board of Trustees will be closed Tuesday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.

EBOOKS @ YOUR LIBRARY

Four thousand, four hundred and twenty-eight Burke County Public Library users have registered to use the library's digital collection available through the e-INC consortium and NC Kids Digital Library. This digital collection in-

cludes eBooks, audiobooks, and streaming video available to Burke County Public Library cardholders.

Apps are available for download for a variety of devices including Kindle, iPhone, and Android phones. Go to <http://omc.overdrive.com> to see the apps.

To access the collection and download items go to <http://e-inc.lib.overdrive.com> and follow the instructions to set up an account. You will need to know your library card number and your PIN. Please contact the library if you need any assistance.

FIND US ON THE WEB

Go to www.bcpls.org for a list of programs and events. Unless noted otherwise, all library programs are free. Some

programs have pre-registration and age requirements. Most Wanted List

Donations of new or gently used copies of any of the Top Ten Titles are most appreciated. To date, the library has received 997 of the "most wanted" books.

CURRENT BCPL TOP TEN HOLDS

- Spare* by Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex — 11 holds
- Cross Down* by James Patterson — 8 holds
- The 23rd Midnight* by James Patterson — 7 holds
- Identity* by Nora Roberts — 6 holds
- Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus — 6 holds
- Counter Attack* by Patricia Bradley — 5 holds
- The Last Sinner* by Lisa Jackson — 5 holds
- Palazzo* by Danielle Steel — 5 holds
- Whispers at Dusk* by Heather Graham — 5 holds
- Private Moscow* by James Patterson — 4 holds

CURRENT NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLERS AND NC CARDINAL CONSORTIUM HOLDS

- The Five-Star Weekend* by Elin Hilderbrand — 491 holds
- Love Theoretically* by Ali Hazelwood — 45 holds
- Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus — 703 holds
- Happy Place* by Emily Henry — 379 holds
- It Ends With Us* by Colleen Hoover — 116 holds
- Fourth Wing* by Rebecca Yarros — 164 holds
- Icebreaker* by Hannah Grace — 18 holds
- It Starts With Us* by Colleen Hoover — 75 holds
- Verity* by Colleen Hoover — 69 holds
- The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid — 39 holds

VANNOPPEN

FROM PAGE 4A

High School. Fans sat on covered polished wooden bleachers. The team closed in the early 1950s.

Over the next four decades the Western Carolina League evolved into the Southern Collegiate Baseball League.

When Leonhardt learned that the Rowan Pirates, a Southern Collegiate franchise, was for sale, he felt the timing couldn't be better: The Catawba Meadow ball field complex was nearing completion, the Morganton All Stars youth team made headlines the previous year during their World Series quest, and there was a recognized local economic benefit to hosting tournament play.

If you're bringing the Pirates to Morganton, Leonard reasoned, you must rename them the Aggies, complete with original uniform colors and logo.

Thanks to the Morganton council's approval, the 2005 Morganton Aggies and its 30-player roster arrived in town May 27.

After a nine-year run the Aggies franchise closed in 2014 due primarily to economic conditions. "It was kind of my baby," said Leonhardt, who attended all 42 Aggies home or road games during each seven-week summer season.

Morgantonian Edward Phifer has been collecting and organizing original Morganton Aggie memorabilia for years. He is compiling it into a book that goes to publishers soon.

"There are plenty of fond memories, great stories, and historic pictures," Phifer told me in 2005 when he was beginning his book project. "When you were a kid and heard that one of the Aggies was downtown somewhere, you'd drop what you were doing. You'd run down there just to see him because an Aggie was Somebody."

It was a big deal to be a bat-boy for the team. Phifer

showed me a 1948 team photograph with the late attorney Bob Byrd as bat boy.

The original Morganton Aggies were founded on Nov. 22, 1947, under the auspices of The Morganton Amusement Company, a corporation owned by Ruth E. Beach, Boger McGimpsey, and Thomas J. Beamon.

Judging from the certificate of incorporation, Morganton Amusement Company had a broad vision. Besides baseball, its purpose was to "exhibit games of ... football, boxing, wrestling, skating and any or all other sporting events; to operate and exhibit dance bands, vaudeville acts, and any or all other types of entertainment, other games, both adult and juvenile of every description, both indoor and outdoor, ... to carry on all or any other business of merchants, generally, without limitations as to the class of products and merchandise, and especially with reference to soft drinks, sport goods, ice cream, sandwiches, candies, cigars, cigarettes, and tobaccos."

I'd say that the certificate covered all bases. It was signed by Thad Eure, NC's secretary of state at the time and notarized by Morganton's Eunice Ervin.

The Aggies were named for Ruth Beach's husband, John Walker Beach, whose nickname was Aggie.

"He was a moving spirit in bringing organized baseball to Morganton after World War II," his son, Johnny Beach, told me in 2005. "The team bears his name. This was a popular undertaking with sports fans."

Recreation Director Leonhardt said, "What people had to do back then compared with what people have to do today, in terms of entertainment, it's a little tougher now to get their time Remember, there were not a lot of recreation amenities here then. Those players were celebrities."

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



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CVMS began in 1998 and is a locally owned company. Tim and Ken Clark are the owners and grew up in the Oak Hill area of Burke County. The owners are invested in the communities which CVMS serves. Tim is a member of the Sunrise Rotary Club and also serves on The Meeting Place Mission and Burke Augustine Literacy Board.

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.1em;">OUR MISSION...</p> <p>Catawba Valley Medical Services is dedicated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing Quality care and promoting healthy and active lifestyles for our partners. ● Creating a relationship with each partner, ensuring highly effective and efficient care. ● Treating our partners with respect and sensitivity. "Your concerns are our priorities." ● Providing education and resources to all CVMS providers. So that effective care is attainable. 	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: red; font-size: 1.1em;">SERVICES WE PROVIDE...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ambulation Assistance ● Meal Preparation ● Bathing Assistance ● Medication Reminders ● Light Housekeeping ● Social Support ● Dressing ● Toileting Assistance ● Child Speech Language Services ● CVMS has a transportation department that transports our partners to doctor appointments and other needs.
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Downtown Development Association holds annual awards ceremony

BY JONELLE SIGMON
For The Paper

Local businesses in downtown Morganton had a reason to celebrate when they were awarded for their hard work at the annual Downtown Development Association Awards on June 20 at Swede's Café.

The objective of the Morganton DDA Downtown Distinguished Awards is to recognize, honor and spotlight the member businesses that have excelled and shined over the course of the year.

To be eligible for the DDA Awards, the business must have been open from July 1, 2022 to March 1, 2023. The business must be a current DDA member.

Kahly Antal at Thistle and Twig won the Picture Perfect Award. This award recognizes excellence in a Morganton DDA member business that consistently creates an attractive, inviting and vibrant presence in our community with unique storefronts, seasonal themes, and welcoming views to those who pass by.

Benjamin Belton with Benjamin and Libba's won the With the Cherry on Top Award. This award recognizes excellence in a Morganton DDA Member Business that reflects and offers a customer service that exceeds the expectation of the customer.



Judy Willis received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Downtown Development Association at its annual awards dinner.

Linda Knollmeyer with The Olive of Morganton won the Breath of Fresh Air Award. This award recognizes excellence in a Morganton DDA Member Business that has offered an event or program open to the public that is innovative, fun and contributes to the vitality of our downtown community.

Last, but not least the Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Judy Willis, who has been a volunteer with the Historic Morganton Festival for many years and is currently the President of the HMF. Willis served on the Main

Street Advisory Committee from its inception in 1995. She also served on the first master plan steering committee that gave the City of Morganton the 1997 Masterplan that helped bring forth many things the city has today.

She is one of the first property owners to invest in renovating a second floor into housing. Ashley Willis Bunner, Judy's niece presented the award to her.

Willis said, "It really meant a lot to me. I grew up in this town and contributed my time to the city to help it grow. It was overwhelming when I received the award. I couldn't hardly say anything. I love this town."

Kasey Goodfellow, community events coordinator for the Main Street Department said, "Judy is and has been a treasure for the Historic Morganton Festival and the entire downtown for many years. Her sense of humor, dedication, determination and willingness to give her all, makes her the type of team member, leader and friend that anyone would want to have!"

Sharon Jablonski, director of Cultural and Creative Development, said "She has always been a cheerleader for all things downtown and has been one whom the Main Street office and myself have leaned on for years. In addition to being a dear friend."



The Downtown Distinguished Awards ceremony was held recently at Swede's Cafe.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 4A

Voegeli and Mr. Rasmussen and have located voter registrations matching those names in Burke County through NC Board of Elections Voter Search. (<https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/Voter-Info/>)

Even though voter registration data is public information, I will not divulge their address but according to their voter registration data, both are registered as "unaffiliated" in Burke County, not "Republican."

Furthermore, from their registration dates, one can determine that they are both much older than the "Young Republican" designation. (NCFYR Constitution states between the ages of 18 and 40.)

Also, both have almost exclusively voted a Democrat ballot throughout their voting history except this past election cycle when many people registered as Unaffiliated to vote in the contentious Republican Sheriff primary.

I suppose in this day of identifying as who and what you want to be, regardless of facts, these two could have formed a group they call Burke County Young Republicans. And perhaps, they have both identified as Republicans although they are registered as Unaffiliated.

And perhaps they even identify as being under the age of 40 although the evidence indicates they are not.

I have never written a letter to the editor before now. I don't enjoy controversy but I love Burke County and I love the United States of America.

The truth is getting harder to discern because of mass lies and disinformation perpetuated mostly through all forms of media.

I urge each of you to research facts and then make your own opinions based on

your personal value system before sharing information that may not be true. God bless you and your family!

Your Burke County neighbor,

BRIAN BARRIER

Cats' Cradle gives thanks for help with 5K

TO THE EDITOR:

This is a "thank you" to everyone who helped at our race this past Saturday to earn funds to support our life-saving work for cats.

Cats' Cradle would like to thank everyone who helped make our 5K Race at Catawba Meadows a success.

First, thank you to Frank Cooper, who has organized this race since 2014 (minus the pandemic years).

Many thanks also to all the runners who turned out to race, and to the volunteers who helped at the race.

Frank says we don't make any money unless we have sponsors, so a shout out to our sponsors:

- Healthy Petz Family Vet
- Law Offices of Jared T. Amos
- Jeff Kincaid Insurance Group
- Chick-fil-A
- THE PAPER
- Appalachian Medical
- Headlines Salon
- Pines Hairstyling
- Shades of Zen Massage & Body Therapy
- Carolina Flooring & Cabinets
- Freedom Insurance Group, Inc.
- Douglas A. Briggs Accounting
- Tire Maxx
- Timmy Mac's Comics & Games

Everyone enjoyed the food donations too, from Morganton Chick-fil-A, Morganton WalMart, and Morganton Panera Bread.

LYNDA GARIBALDI

Director of Cats' Cradle

Have A Story Idea?
Call Bill Poteat at 828-445-8595

Have Entertainment News?
Call Lilly Brown at 828-445-8595
or email lilly@thepaper.media

OBITUARIES



Chris Witherspoon

Chris Witherspoon, 53, of Morganton, N.C., passed away surrounded by his family and

friends on Thursday, June 22, 2023.

He was born on February 15, 1970, in Burke County where he was raised by his loving parents, Odell and Mary Ellen Witherspoon.

He was a member of First United Methodist Church all of his life. Chris had a contagious smile and a personality everyone loved. He was a loyal friend to all and never complained throughout his journey of declining health.

Chris was named Surveyor of the Year multiple times. He

recently was named Distinguished Person of the Year in 2022 by the Morganton Rotary Club.

Chris loved his family dearly and was the best son, husband, dad, brother and father figure to many.

He was the Director of the FUMC Wood Ministry and a member of the Morganton Men's Club. He was also involved in several other community ministries.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by his wife, of almost 26 years, Tanya Witherspoon;

children, Carson Witherspoon; Allie Witherspoon; sisters, Leslie Carpenter (Jeremy) and Jamie Sisk (Clay); nieces and nephews, Tucker and Courtney Sisk, Tanner and Abigail Carpenter, and Gavin Johnson; a bonus daughter, Morgan McGhee; many special friends; and his canine companion, Trooper.

He was preceded in death by his biological father, Johnny Black and three sets of grandparents.

The family received friends from 12:30-2 p.m. on Tuesday,

June 27, 2023, in the fellowship hall of First United Methodist Church of Morganton. A memorial service was held at 2 p.m. in the church with Rev. Dana McKim officiating.

Memorial contributions may be made to the FUMC Wood Ministry or Amorem Hospice of Burke County.

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

Condolences may be sent to the family by visiting www.sossomanfh.com.

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Kim R. Guthrie

Kim Renee Guthrie passed away on Monday, June 26, 2023, and as she went over the rainbow and entered the gates of heaven her Lord Jesus and her brother Todd were waiting for her.

Kim was a gift to all she encountered with her big smile and her loving and giving heart. At an early age she gave

her life to the Lord and was a member of East Hickory Baptist Church.

Kim's life's work was devoted to the Burke County School System where she served as a teacher's assistant working one-on-one with special needs children until her retirement in 2021.

"Miss Kim," as she was known by her students and the children she kept at the daycare, loved her and she loved them as her very own.

Kim was born on Nov. 25, 1963, in Catawba County to Margaret Mull and Milton Guthrie. She is survived by her sister Frances Hildebran, Nephew Curtis (Lisa) and their son Luke and a chosen brother Jim Sain (Cynthia) as well as her dog Bryson, and cats Sunny, Bootsie, and Missy. Also surviving are two half-sisters

and a brother.

The family would like to thank her dear friends who helped take care of her during her final days and have loved and supported her through the years. They would also like to thank the medical providers at the Valdese Cancer Center and Hospice (Amorem) for all the care and support they gave her and her family.

The family is honoring "Miss Kim's" wishes and will have a private family memorial at a later date.

Memorials may be made to the Valdese Cancer Center, Amorem, or Burke County Friends for Animals.

Heritage Funeral Service and Crematory in Valdese is assisting the family.

An online obituary and guestbook is available at www.heritagefuneralservices.com.

To submit an obituary, email it to obits@thepaper.media

George Clymer an influential leader in the birth of America

THIS IS AN AMERICAN HISTORY educational moment of those who made a difference during the Revolutionary War era and how they served our country.

George Clymer was born in Philadelphia on March 16, 1739, and was orphaned at seven. He was adopted and educated at home by his aunt and uncle, Hannah and William Coleman. Growing up, George was in socially prominent circles while working in his uncle's business. During this era, he became acquainted with notable political and patriot leaders.



DR. DAVID STREATER

Clymer did not serve in the Revolutionary War. However, he did command a company of voluntary militiamen in the early 1770s, known as the Silk Stockings.

Later, working in politics as the Continental Treasurer, he used his acquired business acumen, leadership, and financial skills. He also served on councils supporting the troops as a member of the Continental Congress during the Revolutionary War (DSDI, 2023).

Questioning British taxes and business restrictions sealed George's prosocial outlook toward independence. George was a member of the Pennsylvania Safety Council and headed a committee that

forced out the overseers of Britain's Tea Act.

While serving in the Continental Congress, Clymer served on committees dealing with commerce, financial, and military affairs. The British announced a reward for his capture because of his expert work in the militia, Congress, and improving the army.

During military hostilities, when Clymer's colleagues were unwilling, he made in-person battlefield evaluations to ensure the soldiers received their needed warfare materials, food, and other supplies.

Because of a bounty being offered for him, Clymer moved his family to relative safety in the countryside. George continued working in Philadelphia with a few colleagues, knowing the British were advancing (NPS, 2004).

Believing Clymer was at home, the British changed course and went to Chester County, Pennsylvania, to apprehend Clymer and his family, and destroy their home.

Surviving the War, George continued in public service until his death in January 1813. Among his positions after the Revolutionary War were president of the Philadelphia Bank, president of the Philadelphia



The U.S.S. George Clymer saw action in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Academy of Arts, and vice-president of the Agricultural Society of Philadelphia.

In addition to being a visionary, George was the quintessential statesman. As a judge, Clymer promoted reform of the penal code, including eliminating the death penalty. He was only one of six Founding Fathers to sign the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

In Clymer's honor, a Navy attack transport ship was named after him. The U.S.S. George

Clymer, APA 27, saw operational campaigns in the Pacific, and Atlantic theaters during World War II, then in Korea and Vietnam. The U.S.S. George Clymer was decommissioned in 1967 and sold for scrap metal.

George Clymer was a fervent patriot. It was said of him that "his dearest wish was for independence."

Please visit your Charters of Freedom settings at the Historic Courthouse, Morganton, and the Education Park, 227 Main Street W., Valdese.

A Charters of Freedom setting consists of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Civil Rights Amendments. They are on permanent display analogous to the Charters of Freedom in the National Archives, Washington, DC.

Visit our website (FoundationForward.com) to learn more about all existing settings. Vance and Mary Jo Patterson are the benefactors of Foundation Forward, 501(c)(3), a non-profit educational organization, and sponsor every setting.

Teachers are encouraged to contact Dr. Streater for information and complementary student education materials to enhance experiential field trips to any Charter of Freedom settings. In addition, everyone is welcome to obtain a personalized legacy paver for placement at their local Charters of Freedom display. Please contact Dr. Streater (david.streater@mymail.barry.edu) for engraved legacy paver information and complementary educational materials.

Dr. David Streater is the director of education for Foundation Forward, 501(c)(3). He is a retired college instructor/administrator and a retired probation and parole officer/administrator. In addition, David is a criminologist with an acute history interest, served in the Navy, and is a resident of Burke County.

Remembering the story of Mister and the Morganton Food Store

By **JUDITH TEELE**
For The Paper

I am a dog lover and readily admit it. I didn't start out that way. In fact, I was once on the cat side of the fence.

I especially love to see dogs riding in cars. Dogs with their heads stuck out of windows or sitting in the front passenger seat. Dogs that love to travel.

My dog Scout recognizes the word "GO" no matter how cleverly we try to bury it in a sentence. Even if the word is spelled out. Such a flimsy disguise. "I am going to G.O. now," I whisper to my family.

Who am I fooling? Scout has already bolted through the back door and is standing next to the car.

There are lots of traveling dogs in my memory, those many loyal souls who wanted nothing more than just to go for a run, a walk, or a car ride. But of all of these, Mister, the dog of my childhood, was the most creative, and the most daring.

Mister was a Feist and Hound mix. Brown fur with dabs of white, soft brown eyes and floppy ears. Handsome enough to be beguiling, but not Walt Disney silly cute.

He wasn't a barker, didn't pick fights with other dogs, and was generally friendly and pleasant. He was also as wily as a fox, with considerable street smarts. Skills that he used when he wandered, through intersections, with speeding cars.

There were no city leash laws in 1955. So, dogs could just roam at will, if so inclined. I suppose there were some fancy dogs that weren't allowed that freedom. Mister could do as he pleased, if he stayed out of trouble.

Mister routinely walked the same route. Several times a month, weather permitting, he would go from our neighborhood behind the First Baptist Church and trot the mile and a half to the Morganton Food Store.



FOR THE PAPER

As no known photos of Mister exist, Teele used an Artificial Intelligence program to create this image of him and his bone.

This was not just an accidental stop over. It was a part of Mister's plan, the real purpose. The Morganton Food Store was a small independent grocery located smack-dab in the middle of main street, at 126 West Union, (where the Mad Book Exchange is today).

There he made a stop for his bone. Well known by the Morganton Food Store staff, he was welcomed in or if not noticed by them he would slip in the double screen doors.

When Mister walked purposefully back to the meat counter, the butchers, "Whis" (Cliff Whisnant) or Roscoe Hendrix would say hello to their regular visitor and slip him a bone.

Then he would turn and walk back out of the store, head held high with his possession, and leave for the Jeter house at 216 Avery Avenue, a half mile away.

The Jeter place had a rambling front porch and a big backyard. It was animal Nirvana. My aunt and grandmother lived there and cared for any and every creature that wandered into their yard. None were denied food and shelter. It was a veritable garden of delight.

Burke County veterinarian,

Dr. Dennis Donahue once said, "If I die and come back to this world as a dog or cat, I sure do hope that I land in the Jeter backyard."

In this magic kingdom, Mister had his very own dog house on the side porch, under roof, replete with water bowl and cozy bedding. In keeping with the Jeter tradition of animal hospitality he was well fed, and left in peace to enjoy his bones.

This was important because he never, ever retraced his steps. Instead he waited for someone at our house to visit and then he would hitch a ride home. If no one showed for a day or two, then he was well stocked.

I can't pretend to know how his routine developed. My best guess is that it might have been because Mister followed my older brother all over town. Or by going occasionally with Mama to the Morganton Food Store and positioning himself outside, patiently waiting for her to shop and come back out. She may have appeared with a handout of scraps from the meat counter.

However, this habit began, it endeared Mister to the grocery store's employees and customers. Shoppers would often greet him by name as he sauntered down the street.

Judith Teele is a local writer who lives in Morganton. Part Two of her story on Morganton Food Store coming soon.



FOR THE PAPER

Tillie's Dress

This now preserved gown was the 1903 wedding dress of Matilda "Tillie" Falls McDowell, wife of Charles Manly McDowell. He grew up at the Captain Charles McDowell House, owned and maintained by Historic Burke Foundation McDowell House, and was the grandson of Charles McDowell, Jr. who was the original owner of the house. His great-grandparents, Charles and Grace Greenlee McDowell, were heroes of the American Revolution.

Judith Teele is a free lance writer who makes her home in Morganton.

FOR THE PAPER



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Blue Ridge HealthCare Foundation awards scholarships

By ANNA WILSON
For The Paper

The Blue Ridge HealthCare Foundation awarded \$11,000 in scholarships Tuesday during a luncheon to honor the recipients at Mimosa Hill Golf Club.

PATRICIA EARLY PUETT SCHOLARSHIP

The Patricia Early Puett Scholarship recipient is **Riley Berry**, a graduate of Patton High School who will be attending Lenoir-Rhyne University to pursue a nursing degree. Riley says she's pursuing a career in nursing because she wants to make a difference by working in healthcare. She recently completed her clinicals at a nursing home where she felt satisfaction in helping others and learned that nursing is her calling.

About the scholarship: Patricia Early Puett was a 1958 graduate of Grace Hospital School of Nursing and specialized in pediatric nursing for most of her career. The scholarship is intended for individuals entering or advancing in the various fields of nursing.

G.T. CORNWELL SCHOLARSHIP

The G.T. Cornwell Scholarship recipients are **Lauren Crump, Jada Houser, Jacey Smith, and Trinitee Stevens**.

Lauren graduated from Western Piedmont Community College in May with her associate degree in nursing. She is attending Appalachian State University in the online RN-to-BSN program. Lauren says she chose nursing because as she grew older, she began to deeply ponder what she wanted to do with her life and how she wanted to leave her mark on the world. She finally concluded that there is no greater satisfaction than knowing her actions directly impacted another individual and helped save a life.

Jada is attending UNC Wilmington, pursuing a nursing degree, and works in the Emergency Department at UNC Health Blue Ridge. When



Scholarship recipients shown here (from left) are Jada Houser, Riley Berry, Jacey Smith, Mallory Evitt, Taylor Dale, Alexis Crump and April James. Recipients not able to attend are Lauren Crump, Trinitee Stevens, Kristen Cline, and Taylor Parsons.

asked why she was pursuing a nursing career, Jada said, "I am pursuing my BSN to help me grow within my passion, open new doors of opportunity at UNC Health Blue Ridge, and to help me better care for my patients."

Jacey is a graduate of Freedom High School and will be attending Western Piedmont Community College this fall to pursue a nursing degree. Jacey said, "I chose nursing because I wanted to do a career that nurtured and helped people, especially children. I hope to be a nurse in Labor and Delivery or a Pediatric department."

Trinitee graduated from Caldwell Early College High School and is pursuing a nursing degree at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute. When asked why she is pursuing a nursing degree, Trinitee stated, "I have a passion for helping others and being an asset to the community I live in."

About the scholarship: G.T. Cornwell's commitment to nursing began in the early 1940s when he served as a nursing administrator at the Grace Hospital School of Nursing. Grace Hospital operated this residential nurse training program for more than 70 years. Mr. Cornwell continued this commitment by establish-

ing this scholarship endowment in July 1997. In addition to instructing nurses, Mr. Cornwell launched and managed the Cornwell Drug Store chain that served a broad market in WNC. This scholarship is intended for individuals entering or advancing in the various fields of nursing.

VANNOPPEN SCHOLARSHIP

The VanNoppen Scholarship recipients are **Kristen Cline, Alexis Crump, Mallory Evitt, and April James**.

Kristen is a student at UNC Greensboro pursuing her Ph.D. in Communication Sciences and Disorders and works at UNC Health Blue Ridge as a speech-language pathologist in the rehabilitation department. Kristen says she is passionate about helping people with dysphagia improve their quality of life and wants to continue her education.

Alexis is a student at Appalachian State University pursuing a Communication Sciences and Disorders/Speech Pathology degree. Alexis said in her application that she "always knew that she wanted a career in the healthcare field. This is because I have a great passion for helping others, and I have many amazing role models in my life who work in the field.

Her great aunt was a Speech Language Pathologist and seeing her touch many lives grew my desire to do the same."

Mallory is a student at Lenoir-Rhyne College of Natural Science and Math pursuing a biology degree. She works at UNC Health Blue Ridge on the Medical Surgical Floor. When asked why she is pursuing a degree in healthcare, Mallory said, "I am fascinated with medicine but also want to give back to the community that shaped me."

April is pursuing her Ph.D. in Education in Health Professions from A.T. Still University. She works at UNC Health Blue Ridge as a Medical Technologist in the lab and as a professor at Western Piedmont Community College. She is pursuing a higher-level degree in healthcare because she hopes to better pass along the information she has gained to future students.

About the scholarship: Elisabeth Fulton VanNoppen and her family established the VanNoppen Scholarship in 1982 following the passing of her husband, Donnell VanNoppen. Mr. VanNoppen served on the Board of Directors at Grace Hospital (now UNC Health Blue Ridge) for 37 years. Mr. and Mrs. VanNoppen believed in the importance of education

and developing people. This scholarship helps individuals seeking a healthcare-related degree.

J. GRAYSON BROTHERS SCHOLARSHIP

The J. Grayson Brothers Scholarship recipients are **Taylor Dale** and **Taylor Parsons**.

Taylor Dale is a graduate of UNC Wilmington and is actively pursuing her Master of Social Work from North Carolina State University. Taylor said she is continuing her healthcare education "to have the ability to give to others what UNC Health has given me - a haven and a miracle. I want to impact people positively."

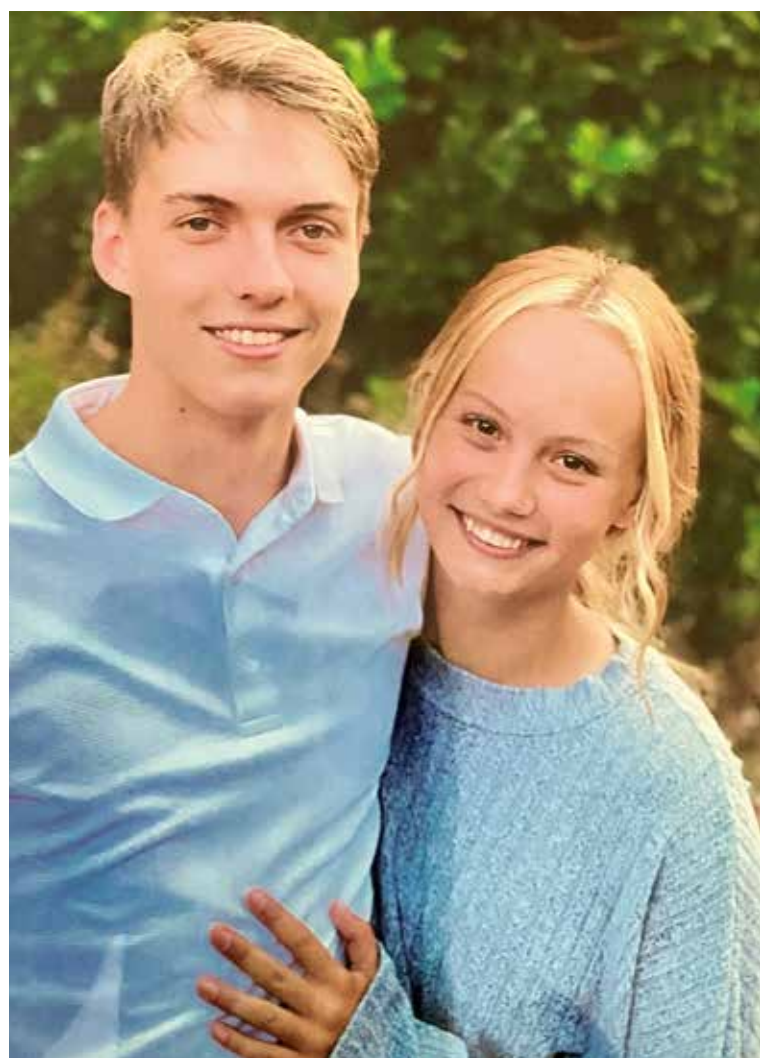
Taylor Parsons is pursuing his Master of Business Administration in Health Care Management from East Carolina University. He works at UNC Health Blue Ridge as an office manager for Hospitalists and Behavioral Health. When asked why he wants to continue his education, Taylor said, "As I've grown professionally within Blue Ridge, I've identified the need for additional healthcare-focused education to continue to grow my skill set. This will not only aid me in my professional development but benefit the organization in my role as a manager."

About the scholarship: J. Grayson Brothers was a hospital administrator at Grace Hospital (now UNC Health Blue Ridge) for 24 years. The scholarship fund was established in 1978 as a memorial to Mr. Brothers by the Grace Hospital Board of Trustees. This scholarship assists individuals seeking a healthcare-related degree.

"I would like to congratulate all of the scholarship recipients," said Traci Riebel, the foundation's Executive Director. "We wish you the best of luck in the upcoming academic year. Thank you for choosing a career path in healthcare and the difference you are making in the lives of others. This is truly a blessing."

For more information on next year's scholarship period, go to brhcfoundation.org/scholarships.

ENGAGEMENT



FOR THE PAPER

Hensley-Schuszler

Christy Carswell of Morganton and Rick Hensley of Hickory are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter,

Nicole Drew Hensley, to Braedon Reece Schuszler, son of Anna Schuszler of Charlotte.

JUANITA CARLTON AND PAT BRASWELL

AMOREM says 'farewell' to two long-time employees

FOR THE PAPER



AMOREM is recognizing two long-time employees, Juanita Carlton, CNAII, CHPA, QDCP, and Pat Braswell for their many years of service in the hospice industry.

During Carlton's 30-year tenure with AMOREM, she received the 2020 Sharon O. Dixon Clinical Excellence Award from the Carolinas Center and was the recipient of the Best of Caldwell 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 awards. Carlton is certified as both a CNAI and CNAII, is a Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Nursing Assistant and is a Qualified Dementia Care Provider.

"Juanita's true gift goes beyond the excellent clinical care that she provides," says Public Relations Coordinator and friend, Lisa Caviness. "She genuinely cares and sees each patient as the individual that they are."

Carlton holds a unique knack for listening to pa-

tients as they share their needs, wishes and desires. She first listens, then acts to create joy wherever it can be found. The small things are most monumental in Carlton's eyes.

"Years ago, during my CNA class, we visited Caldwell Hospice," says Carlton, "the Lord spoke to me as we were walking through the courtyard there and I knew that Caldwell Hospice was where the Lord wanted me to be. Together, we all made a difference one patient at a time."

Braswell provided 16 years of dedicated service to AMOREM in housekeeping where she formed many loving and supportive relationships with team members. Not only did Braswell take care of the staff at AMOREM, but she also offered her assistance to patients and families when they were in need.

"My retirement is very bittersweet," says Braswell, "AMOREM was my home away from home and I enjoyed being a part of this family. I certainly cannot thank my peers enough for their generosity and friendship over the years."

Braswell's peers, though they were saddened by her leaving, collected items to create a gift basket to send her off warmly.

"We collected pampering items," says Jackie Bradshaw, lead customer service specialist, "People donated things like books, gift cards, snacks and anything else that would help Pat relax into retirement."

Both Carlton and Braswell are deeply appreciated and loved by their peers at AMOREM. The organization is sad to see these compassionate individuals go but excited for all the adventures that retirement will bring!

For more information about AMOREM services, visit www.amorem-support.org or call 828.754.0101.

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Patton grad playing rugby for UNC-Chapel Hill

By ANNABELLA BERNHARDT
 Staff Writer
 THE PAPER

Most people perceive participation in college-level sports as an activity that requires years of hard work and dedication, but for Faith Maksoud, joining the women's rugby team at UNC-Chapel Hill had no such prerequisites.

Maksoud, a Morganton native, graduated from Patton High School in 2021 and is currently a rising junior at Chapel Hill. She describes her experience with the rugby team as nothing but positive.

She learned about the team at a club fair event in the early fall of her freshman year, in 2021. After two years on the team, Maksoud hopes to continue rugby after graduation "in some capacity."

Only three of Maksoud's teammates had prior experience with the sport before joining the team her freshman year — women's rugby is not very popular for high schoolers in the United States.

"It's a very, very welcoming team," Maksoud said. She describes the team culture as

"exceedingly positive" and truly loves the community it brings her.

The Chapel Hill women's rugby team practices three days a week for two hours each practice. Their games are typically on Saturdays when they play schools like the University of Virginia, Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, Clemson University, North Carolina State University, and more.

Maksoud offered a rundown of how the sport works, including descriptions of each position, a variety of strategic plans, and an emphasis on how organized the sport truly is.

For starters, a rugby ball "is like a slightly larger and longer football," Maksoud said.

She plays the position of the Flanker on her team and describes it as a "mix between a back and a forward." The Flanker is typically a faster or smaller person who has to do the most running out of all of the team members.

Rugby is very heavy on contact and tackling — it is a true women's contact sport.

Currently, Maksoud plays a different yet equally aggressive



Morganton's Faith Maksoud plays rugby for UNC-Chapel Hill.

sport at Thornwell Books where she is working for the summer: she is tasked with the ruthless demands for iced lattes and scones for the Term Paper interns daily.

Maksoud said that "A lot of

people think that rugby is just like a big, messy dogpile, but it is actually super organized."

In order to keep players safe in the heat of the game, many precautions and preparations are required to ensure that all

players know what they are expected to do in the safest way.

The team at Chapel Hill isn't just recreational: Maksoud's team made it to the National Rugby Competition that was hosted in Houston, Texas in 2022!

Rugby is captivating and fun during play, but off the pitch, the sport is more important than just a game.

"You're against all the other players during the game, but when the game is over, it's like we are all just friends... Making strong bonds with your teammates makes the team better overall... It's such a great sport," Maksoud said fondly.

After games, there are typically social events with members of both teams where all players can mingle. Maksoud expressed how close she feels to her teammates in the sport and her gratitude for how many people she has met from other teams since her freshman year.

For anyone considering joining a rugby team recreationally, intramurally, or at a college level, Maksoud cautioned that "Rugby isn't for everyone, but if you think you might like anything about it, you should absolutely try it."

What we miss about home when we're at school

Memories and places in Burke

By SAYDIE BEAN
 Staff Writer
 THE PAPER

Although I do love the mountains in Cullowhee/Sylva at Western Carolina University, Burke County will always be the place I call home.

I missed the comfort of my own home in Valdese that has the simplest comforts. The way I could just go out to my front porch with a cup of coffee wearing my pajamas rather than being stared at by students as I walk past.

The simple silence of my home compared to the constant hollering of the boys above me who either played golf on the vinyl tiling or broke out their clogs to practice their step dancing.

I yearned for the shores of Lake James where many memories were made with close friends. A place to just enjoy the view and the sun.

I wished for the comfort of the variety of breakfast places like Timberwoods and Silver Creek. Seeing the regulars with their families and knowing that every time I eat there, it will be just as good as the last.

I couldn't wait to come back to the China Buffet across from Walmart where my group of friends would pile into a booth with eyes bigger than our stomachs and chat the evening away.

I missed the mornings of strolling through the Burke County Public Library with my mom, looking for my next stack of books to hold me through the week.

Waking up early on a Saturday morning to walk around the Jamestown Flea And Farmers Market to look for the next best find and to always leave with a powdered sugar donut in hand.

I loved learning the ins and outs of my college small town but there is no place like Burke County.

The Term Paper staff got to thinking the other day about the things they miss when they're away at school — Saydie in Cullowhee, Kai in Washington, D.C., and Annabella in Concord, N.H.

I have to live without Bojangles?

By ANNABELLA BERNHARDT
 Staff Writer
 THE PAPER

When I left for boarding school, I was under the impression that leaving North Carolina would be the easiest goodbye I'd ever have to give.

Of course, this was my mindset in September 2020, when I hadn't eaten anywhere but my house for a month. If you too share this sentiment about leaving North Carolina, you clearly haven't been dining at any Burke County fast food staples in a while.

There are a few things that New England has that North Carolina doesn't: months of snow, gloom, a perception of Southerners as sub-human, and clam chowder. Obviously, not one of those beats what we have here.

The thing I miss the most when I'm away is 100% the food. Anyone who has eaten dining hall food (from a school, my summer camp nutrition was delectable) will agree that nothing makes you long for home like a lukewarm porkchop that's been served 3 days in a row.

My preferred and most longed-for foods from home (Western North Carolina, my parents couldn't cook comfort food if their lives depended on it) would be Cook Out and Bojangles.

When I think of my childhood in North Carolina, I think quite a lot about hushpuppies and I don't think I'm alone in that.

Fried okra, sweet cornbread, and barbecue fall into the category of things I also dream of when I am asleep in my 15'x15' box — I mean dorm room.

Also in that category lies the smell of Southern rain on hot pavement in the summer, winters I can enjoy without narrowly evading hypothermia, and the home I've grown up in with my family.

If you're moving out of Western North Carolina soon, take stock of the things you think you're happy to escape, you'll probably end up wishing they were still just "o'er yonder."

Can't find Mountain Burrito in D.C.

By KAI HAWKINS
 Staff Writer
 THE PAPER

I'm going to school at American University in Washington, D.C., and I have gained access to new opportunities, experiences, and education. However, each time I leave Burke, I find myself missing key things from my hometown.

Some (but not all!) I will list below:

Mountain Burrito: What can I say? I have a bit of employee loyalty, but also, it is hard to find a more reliable meal. Nothing fills me up for the day better than a huge burrito. The workers are friendly, the food is delicious, and it is cheap for a broke university

student like me. It is without fail my first meal each time I come home, and now, the new Mountain Burrito in Valdese serves delicious coffee to battle the much-desired post-burrito nap.

Cook Out: On the same topic of food, nothing beats a late night Cook Out run. There's really nothing quite better. Leaving the drive through with a car full of fries and Cook Out sauce is a night well done.

The skatepark: I have been to California, D.C., and all over North Carolina, but I have yet to find a park better than Morganton Skatepark.

The flow, the people, and the location are all immaculate. Anyone would be hard pressed to find a cooler skate

park, and with the Pop Shop Skateboards at 211 N. Green St. is just around the corner, there's no better time to skate than now.

Cars and traffic: Y'all would not believe the disaster of a city that D.C. can be. The driving there is terrifying, and the people behind the wheel are horrendous at staying in their lane. Burke, on the other hand, offers calm late night drives and open roads. The only exception is the demeaning trials of trying to beat the traffic lights in downtown Morganton, which always adds 15 minutes to any drive.

At the end of the day, American University is an amazing place, but Burke County has a piece of my heart.



LILLY BROWN / THE PAPER

The Term Paper staff, from left, Kai Hawkins, Annabella Bernhardt, and Saydie Bean, working on stories for this week's edition.

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FOCUS ON EDUCATION

ROUNDTABLE: Proposed legislation harmful to public education

FROM PAGE 1A

- Dr. Whitney Oakley, Guilford County Schools Superintendent
- Tiffany Wynn, 2023 Piedmont-Triad Teacher of the Year from Thomasville City Schools
- Brad Rhew, Governor's Teacher Advisory Committee Member from Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
- Alan Duncan, Vice Chair, State Board of Education

The group gathered at Western Guilford Middle School in Guilford County.

"It's clear that the Republican legislature is aiming to choke the life out of public education. I'm declaring this a state of emergency because you need to know what's happening. If you care about public schools in North Carolina, it's time to take immediate action and tell them to stop the damage that will set back our schools for a generation," Cooper said.

Among the bills that some say will hurt public education is House Bill 823 (HB 823). The legislation, if it becomes law, would expand the Opportunity Scholarship program to all K-12 students in North Carolina with grant amounts based on household income.

Craven referred to herself as a Lincoln Republican, saying her position reflects what the party used to believe – that public money (taxes) should not be used to support educational institutions with a religious affiliation.

QUICK HISTORY LESSON:

In an 1875 speech, President Ulysses S. Grant called for a Constitutional amendment that would require free public schools and prohibit public funds from going to sectarian schools. He said that church and state should be completely separate. The Blaine Amendment (proposed by Republican Congressman James G. Blaine) passed the U.S. House of Representatives 180 to 7 but did not get the two-thirds majority needed in the U.S. Senate.

Despite the amendment not becoming law, Craven still believes the stance has merit.

"The reason I feel passionately about it is because (the proposed legislation) will take money from our schools. But



FOR THE PAPER

Burke County School Board Chairwoman Wendi Craven, second from the left at top, participates in the Governor's Education Roundtable on June 20.

just as importantly, private schools don't have to follow the same standards as public schools. They can be selective. They can pick and choose who they enroll. They can discriminate and still get (public) money," she said. "The General Assembly isn't funding Leandro. EC (Exceptional Children) is not funded as it should be."

THE LEANDRO CASE

Leandro v The State of North Carolina (the Leandro case) is a 1994 lawsuit filed by parents, students, and school districts in five low-wealth, rural N.C. counties. The lawsuit alleged that students in these counties were denied their right to a sound basic education under the state's Constitution.

Commonly known as the Leandro case, Leandro v State affirmed that inequitable and inadequate school funding bars access to a sound, basic public education and that this right was denied, particularly for students of color and low-income families. Earlier this spring, the judge overseeing the case says the state must spend an additional \$677 million to cover items in a court-endorsed plan.

"We need to properly fund education, our public schools,

and take care of our students," she said. "I support parental choice. Parents should be able to send their children to the school right for them. But our tax dollars should not be used to pay for personal decisions."

INADEQUATE MONITORING OF PUBLIC DOLLARS

She also worries that HB 823 could lead to more instances of fraud. In an article published by the North Carolina Justice Center, Senior Policy Analyst Kris Nordstrom found 62 times when a private school received more North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship vouchers than they had students.

"Opportunity Scholarships are inadequately monitored. Some of our schools are double-dipping," she said.

The underlying reasons she opposes HB 823 are the same reasons she's against President Joe Biden's plan to forgive student loan debt. She says it is hypocritical for someone to oppose student loan forgiveness on one hand and support expanding public dollars in private schools on the other.

Most Burke County Board of Education members agree with Craven that current legislation would negatively impact the school district and its ability

to properly serve the needs of the county's students.

In a special meeting on June 7, the school board passed a resolution that opposes the expansion of Opportunity Scholarships. Board member Tiana Beachler, who has three children attending BCPS, was the only one to vote against the resolution.



Beachler

"I'll be the first to say that Burke County Public Schools works hard. The teachers, the administrators, and the staff are the most compassionate and professional educators this side of the Mississippi. However, with all of my Burke County Public Schools pride, I do not feel it right to stand in the way of an opportunity for someone else's family or child," Beachler said in the meeting.

Her stance has not changed. "Instead of reading opinion pieces about the bill, I decided to read it for myself. I wanted to see exactly where the money was coming from and how (the bill) would affect Burke County," she said.

She also talked to legislators and asked if "a single red cent" currently allocated to the

school district would be pulled. The answer is no.

"The only impact would be if a student leaves the district. But that's no different than when a child leaves because they move to another county, state, or country," she said. "And everything is theoretical at this point. We might not have a single student leave the district (because of expanded vouchers)."

"I think we should continue to focus on what we do best - providing our children with a good education and preparing them to become productive citizens," Beachler added. "We do a good job in Burke County but I can't say that's true across the state. If I say no, it's like saying no to every family in the state. We need to look at this holistically."

Like Beachler, Craven stands firm in her beliefs.

"If we continue to dismantle public education, our nation will fail," Craven said. "All I can hope is that legislators will listen and that they understand it's an unfair system they are setting up."

Angela Kuper Copeland is the education reporter at The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595, ext. 2003.

SWAN

FROM PAGE 1A

Jane Sohovich called Swan "honest" and "diligent" and someone "who cares very deeply about children and employees."

Seth Hunt praised Swan's ability to "assemble a capable staff" and how he handles problems in "an open, forthright manner."

Aaron Johnson remarked on the personal and professional investment - 25 years - that Swan has given the school district.

Leslie Ritchie Taylor spoke to the superintendent's excellent "customer service" and skill in "building relationships."

Tiana Beachler appreciated Swan's availability "from the time we wake up until late into the night."

Don Hemstreet said that despite the challenging times for public education, Swan has been instrumental in helping "the board come together, and the staff come together."

And, finally, Craven talked of his loyalty and that based on what she hears from her counterparts around the state, other districts "don't have the leadership we have at Burke County Public Schools."

The board members, unsurprisingly, voted unanimously to approve a revised contract. Swan was provided a 15% raise (from \$165,800 to \$190,762 annually). He was also given five personal leave days each year that do not carry over nor are paid out at any time. The con-

tract was extended one year, through June 30, 2027.

The amended contract comes after the school board engaged in a mid-year review and end-of-year evaluation. The State Board of Education has seven standards by which superintendents are graded: strategic leadership, instructional leadership, cultural leadership, human resource leadership, managerial leadership, external development leadership, and micropolitical leadership. Throughout the year, Swan collects evidence of how he is performing in these and other areas. The Board and Swan discuss his strengths and weaknesses in a closed session during his evaluation.

AN UNPLANNED PATH TO SUPERINTENDENT

When Swan graduated from high school in West Virginia in 1990, he did not have his sights set on education or one day becoming the leader of a school district. He initially thought he would work at a steel mill where his dad had worked. But by 1990, the steel mill was laying off workers. So he became a deckhand on the Ohio River.

"I had some friends in education, and I heard them talk about what they were doing," he said. When he graduated on Mother's Day in 1998, education jobs in the area were



BCPS / FOR THE PAPER

Superintendent Dr. Mike Swan says being in the schools is a 'huge, fun part' of his job.

scarce.

"I had no intention of leaving the state. In the northern panhandle, I had West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania all to choose from. Education jobs were nowhere to be found," he said.

He decided to give North Carolina a try.

"I had interviews on seven campuses and seven offers. I chose a position at Chesterfield Elementary," he said. He taught fifth grade. Chesterfield Elementary closed in 2021 with those students being rezoned to the new Mountain View Elementary School.

Over the next two decades, Swan served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal before coming to the district's central office. He also taught at Ray Childers El-

ementary School and served as assistant principal at Liberty Middle School, Heritage Middle School, and Freedom High School before becoming principal at Heritage and later at Freedom. In 2016, he was named the district's first Director of Student Services. In December 2020, he was named assistant superintendent and in April of 2021, he was named interim superintendent.

He recalled how the kindergartners he knew at Chesterfield Elementary were seniors when he became assistant principal at Freedom High School. Years later, the now-closed elementary school has a special place in his memories.

"We still do law enforcement trainings out there (Chesterfield Elementary). When I got there I always point out,

'That's my classroom, first door on the right' so I still remember."

Contrary to what some may think, being a superintendent does not mean he is removed from what happens on a daily basis in the schools.

"They don't see me very often in the office. I'm out in the schools. Just being in the classroom. That's one huge, fun part of my job. I get to see the kids. If you're having a bad day, you can sit down on the floor and play coffee shop with kindergartners. Not many careers do you have that flexibility."

He's not the only educator in the house. His wife, Sara, is an instructional coach at Mountain View Elementary School. They have an 8-year-old daughter, Hadley, who is in the Global Immersion Program at Mountain View Elementary. His 22-year-old son, Walt, just moved to Tulsa for his new job at an aerostructures company.

With 900 certified and 600 non-certified employees, Burke County Public Schools is the second-largest employer in the county, behind only UNC Health Blue Ridge. He hopes to stay on the job for a long time.

"I'm blessed to be in the position I am in and the support that I have around me," he said. "I don't want someone to tell me it's time to go. But also, I'm going to stick around until I feel I can't move the district forward."

Angela Kuper Copeland is the education reporter at The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595, ext. 2003.

'I'm blessed to be in the position I am in and the support that I have around me.'

DR. MIKE SWAN, BCPS SUPERINTENDENT

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

LUNCH

FROM PAGE 3A

last school year, 69% of meals were reimbursed at the free/reduced rate.

CEP will change the reimbursement rate and improve the Child Nutrition Program's bottom line. For the 2023-2024 school year, CEP will reimburse BCPS at the higher free/reduced rate for 91% of the meals served. The remaining 9% will be reduced at the lower full-price rate. Ideally, there will be total reimbursement from the USDA and the schools will have no lunch debt whatsoever, but the school will not find out their USDA reimbursement rates until late July, Wall said.

As long as the rate of reimbursement from the USDA pays BCPS for at least half of the price that any lunch costs to make, BCPS will be financially better off with CEP than they were with the previous FRL system, which only helped a minority of students and left out some students in need, he said.

Wall estimates that the traditional FRL model would leave Child Nutrition Program in the red by more than \$390,000. With CEP, the district's deficit would be reduced to less than \$100,000.

The second benefit of CEP helps the families of BCPS students.

Each household will receive a \$30 credit on their internet bill monthly as well as \$40 on an EBT card monthly to help

purchase food for home.



BETHANY COLLIER/ BCPS FOR THE PAPER

Children enjoy free lunch this summer at Mountain View Elementary School. Lunches will be free for all students in the 2023-24 school year after the Burke County Board of Education approved the district's participation in the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) on June 26.

CEP also eliminates the complicated and tedious process families underwent to apply under the Free and Reduced Lunch program.

Before the adoption of CEP, students and their families were either certified through SNAP/Medicaid or had to fill out the form with the federal government registering for FRL.

Eliminating FRL and introducing CEP provide more than free lunches for all.

"Students won't feel any stigma with free lunches, and it won't feel bad to show proof of registration in the FRL program," he said.

CEP also eliminates a large amount of stress and work for principals at each school. Students who pay full price or re-

duced rates are never denied lunch if they forget their lunch money. That debt is tracked and school staff reach out to parents to satisfy any outstanding debt.

"It's an issue for principals to collect all of the student debt," Wall said. Since meals are free with CEP, no student will accumulate food-related debt.

WHY ADOPT CEP NOW?

If CEP is so beneficial, why hasn't BCPS adopted it sooner?

According to Wall, this is the first year that the reimbursement rates from the USDA accurately and generously reflect the number of students in SNAP or Medicaid. COVID-19 hurt many families and incomes in Burke County, and

"far more people are qualifying for food stamps right now than pre-2020," he explained.

With more families qualifying for SNAP, there is a greater need for FRL, which is tedious to apply for, difficult for school principals to manage, and can feel isolating for the students involved.

"More people qualify in [direct certification programs], which makes our reimbursement rates higher," said Wall. This means that the transition into CEP will be more seamless and that right now is the most convenient and beneficial time to make the switch.

Annabella Bernhardt is a summer intern for The Paper. She may be reached at 828-445-8595 or annabella@thepaper.media.

BCPS Summer Meal Program

Burke County Public Schools and Chartwells K12 will offer free lunch to children in the community all summer long.

The BCPS Summer Meal program serves lunch Monday through Thursday each week at the Valdese Elementary School cafeteria and the Mountain View Elementary School cafeteria from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Any child 18 years and younger can get a free lunch at one of the locations. Children do not have to attend BCPS to receive a free meal. Each lunch includes a choice of a delicious entree and a variety of healthy fruits and veggies to make a complete meal. Entree options include toasty cheese sandwiches, chicken nuggets, barbecue sandwiches, cheese pizza, and more.

Parents or siblings older than 18 can enjoy lunch for just \$3.75. Lunch must be eaten in the cafeteria and food is not available for takeout.

DATES

Summer meals will be served through Thursday, Aug. 17. Lunch service is closed every Friday and July 3 through July 7.

LOCATION

Valdese Elementary School is located at 298 Praley St. NW in Valdese. Mountain View Elementary School is located at 805 Bouchelle St. in Morganton. Additionally, the M.E.A.L. Mobile, BCPS' food truck, will be out in the community serving free lunches Monday through Thursday starting July 10. More information to come regarding locations and times.

Cleared to Compete checks 332 athletes as ready to play

FOR THE PAPER

UNC Health Blue Ridge checked 332 student-athletes on June 3 during its Cleared to Compete event. These young athletes received free sports participation physicals and rising 6th, 9th, and 11th graders received EKGs to check for abnormal heart rhythms.

"We had a great turnout this past Saturday for our Cleared to Compete," said Jonathan Williams, DPT, Director of Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine. "This is the second one we've done since COVID. We're so glad to be able to offer these services to the student-athletes in our community. We even had folks come in from other counties to take part because they know this is such a great event."

UNC Health Blue Ridge started offering free pre-participation physicals (previously called "Athlete at Heart") in 2010 and averaged screening about 700 students each year before COVID. Last year, close to 300 athletes were screened.

At Cleared to Compete, each athlete had medical history review, height/weight check, vision check, strength and range of motion assessment, and medical physical that included



PHOTOS FOR THE PAPER

Cardiologist Steven Isserman, MD, checked EKGs for heart abnormalities.

a blood pressure check, lung function, and heartbeat assessment.

"Fortunately, we did not find any abnormalities in the EKGs," Williams said. "In fact, we had less than a handful of athletes who did not pass their physical and may need further follow-up."

Abnormal results are followed up with advice for more testing. Since 2010, four young men were found to have serious but fixable heart issues that could have ended tragically if left untreated.

"We had several parents

compliment the event and how it was such a positive one for the community," said Jon Mercer, Chief Operating Officer at UNC Health Blue Ridge, who also pointed out that Blue Ridge provides certified athletic trainers at the schools to prevent injuries and to help those athletes recover from injury. "We wish all our student-athletes the best for the coming year and we look forward to seeing you guys next year," Mercer said.

A young athlete getting weighed.



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GOLF

Cornelison shows age is just a number

Mimosa member posts round 12 strokes under his age

By ALLEN VANNOPPEN
Publisher
THE PAPER

Jim Cornelison, no stranger to the challenges of Mimosa Hills Golf and Country Club (an understatement if there ever was one), felt his pulse start racing on the par 3 13th hole during a round with buddies on June 26.

Cornelison, 81, birdied that hole. It was his fifth birdie of the day. He was on fire. He started doing some math.

He shot 32 on the par-36 front. That by itself was extraordinary by any standard. And after the birdie on 13 he was 1-under for the back. If he could hang on, could keep the streak going, he thought, he'd shoot a score below his age (81 as a reminder).

Shooting below your age is a big deal. It's a thing that gets bragged about and talked about long after the round, long after the celebratory beverages are drained. It's a thing your grandchildren talk about. At least Cornelison's grandchildren will be talking about it.

If you shoot par at Mimosa, you'd score 72. Suffice it to say, not many people shoot par golf. That's what you call a scratch golfer.

And those who know Cornelison know that he's not a scratch golfer (just saying). But on June 26, during the round with pals Chip Black, Chris Rock, and Gary Julien, he put on a clinic.

It's not hard to imagine those guys standing on the 13th green jawboning about Cornelison's score.

You can just hear one of them say, "How many damn bowls o' Wheaties you eat this morning, Cornelison? You using regulation clubs?"

Remember, his age is 81 years old. If he shot 8-over par, an 80, he'd post a score below his age. And here he is on track for a score 10 shots lower.

Standing on that 13th green, Cornelison feels that something special is within reach if

See CORNELISON, Page 7B



FOR THE PAPER

Jim Cornelison is all smiles after a recent round of 69, 12 strokes under his age, at Mimosa Hills Golf Club.

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Post 21 playoff time



JAMES LYNCH JR. PHOTOS/ THE PAPER

Post 21's Eli Elliott rounds third base during Sunday's home game at Shuey Field.



JAMES LYNCH JR. / THE PAPER

Burke County Post 21's Carson Dyson (2) greets teammate Braxton Hensley (7) at home plate during Sunday's home win over Caldwell County Post 29.

Burke finishes regular season at .500 after five-day flurry

FOR THE PAPER

The Burke County Post 21 American Legion baseball team played the first half of its 12-game N.C. Area IV Western Division schedule over the course of 34 days spanning May 21 to June 23.

The second half of the team's division schedule was compressed into considerably less time.

Post 21 played six division games in five days from this past Saturday (June 24) until Wednesday afternoon, going 2-4 in those contests to finish the regular season at .500 both in the division (6-6) and overall (7-7).

Like the schedule, the team's success rate was unbalanced.

At its best, Post 21 was good enough to start 5-0, have a chance as late as Tuesday's doubleheader with Cleveland County Post 82-155 to move back into at least a first-place tie in the division, and take one of those two games versus Cleveland, the division leader through Wednesday.

At its worst, Post 21 dropped four straight and seven of its last nine, and gave last-place Hickory Post 48 just its second division victory the night before toppling Cleveland once.

The team's sprint to the finish started Saturday with a 10-1 road loss to Asheville Post 70, and continued with an 11-4 home win over Caldwell County Post 29 on Sunday, a 4-3 loss at Hickory on Monday, and Tuesday's split at Cleveland (10-0 loss, 4-3 win), culminating with a 7-4 loss at Cherryville Post 100 on Wednesday.

Post 21 took a 1-0 lead on Cherryville before a host's six-spot in the bottom of the third spelled doom. **Hollan Cline** (double) and **Jagger Bailey** (walk) each drove in two

See POST 21 Page 2B

BASKETBALL

All eyes on Morganton's Brayden Crump at Peach Jam

By PAUL SCHENKEL
Sports Editor
THE PAPER

Remember Brayden Crump? College basketball recruiters certainly do.

And this coming week, they'll get an up-close look at the 6-foot-9, 215-pound Morganton native at the Nike Elite Youth Basketball League's Peach Jam tournament. The top-notch prep hoops event runs from July 2-9 in North Augusta, S.C.

Crump's Team United faces

AZ Unity in a play-in game to open the tournament on July 2 at 5 p.m. (More information on the event and a live stream for the games is available at nikeyb.com/peach-jam.)

Injuries have limited what Crump could do at the high-school level, and he knows this is a big chance to turn what's currently a large number of NCAA Division I college programs that have expressed interest in him into a large number that are offering him basketball scholarships.

"It's the time to show every-

one what you're made of," Crump said. "There's going to be 300 coaches on the baseline. I've been working for this. It's too late to get ready, you've got to be ready."

"It's the biggest AAU event around, the biggest AAU event you can really get in. It's pretty exciting."

Crump says he has been with Team United since his ninth-grade summer following his time with several other travel squads, including the

See CRUMP, Page 3B



Morganton native Brayden Crump appears to be an NCAA Division I basketball recruit heading into his senior season at Winston-Salem Christian School.

FOR THE PAPER

STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

N.C. Area IV standings
Through June 28

WESTERN DIVISION			EASTERN DIVISION		
DIV.	ALL W-L	W-L	DIV.	ALL W-L	W-L
Cleveland Co. Post 82-155	8-3	16-7	Queen City	8-2	12-6
Asheville Post 70	7-4	9-5	Mint Hill Post 555	6-3	7-4
Cherryville Post 100	6-5	12-11	Gaston Post 144-266	6-4	9-6
Rutherford Co. Post 423	6-6	6-6	Matthews Post 235	6-4	8-10
Burke County Post 21	6-6	7-7	Lincoln County Post 455	3-7	4-9
Caldwell County Post 29	5-7	6-10	Gastonia Post 23	0-9	2-13
Hickory Post 48	2-9	4-12			

NOTE: Standings courtesy of Richard Walker, CarolinasSportsHub.com.

Projected Playoff Glance

(NOTE: Projections only; subject to change)

FIRST ROUND (best-of-5 series)	OTHER PLAYOFF DATES
EAST No. 1 Queen City - BYE	JULY 6-11 Second round N.C. Area IV playoffs (best of 5)
WEST No. 4 Rutherford County Post 423 vs. EAST No. 5 Lincoln County Post 455	JULY 12-19 N.C. Area IV semifinals (best of 7)
EAST No. 3 Mint Hill Post 555 vs. WEST No. 6 Caldwell County Post 29	JULY 20-22 N.C. Area IV finals (best of 3)
WEST No. 2 Asheville Post 70 - BYE	JULY 24-29 N.C. state tournament (at Campbell Univ.)
WEST No. 1 Cleveland Co. Post 82-155 - BYE	AUG. 2-6 Southeast Regional tournament (in Asheboro)
EAST No. 4 Gaston Post 144-266 vs. WEST No. 5 Burke County Post 21	AUG. 10-15 World Series (in Shelby)
WEST No. 3 Cherryville Post 100 vs. EAST No. 6 Gastonia Post 23	
EAST No. 2 Matthews Post 235 vs. WEST No. 7 Hickory Post 48	

ADULT SOFTBALL PLAYOFF GLANCE

City of Morganton Recreation Department
Double elimination

OPEN/INDUSTRIAL LEAGUES

DIVISION A	DIVISION B
(all games at Shuey Park, Field No. 1)	(all games at Shuey Park, Field No. 2)
JUNE 26 Anchor Plumbing vs. Stidham's Axe POW vs. Bros Before Throws	JUNE 26 Comets vs. East Coast Grading Dream Team vs. Siegwerk
JUNE 28 Anchor Plumbing-Stidham's Axe loser vs. POW-Bros Before Throws loser Contour vs. Anchor Plumbing-Stidham's Axe winner	JUNE 28 Comets-East Coast Grading loser vs. Dream Team-Siegwerk loser Misfits vs. Comets-East Coast Grading winner
JULY 5 Semifinals, consolation second round	JULY 5 Semifinals, consolation second round
JULY 10 Consolation finals, championship game(s)	JULY 10 Consolation finals, championship game(s)

CHURCH LEAGUE

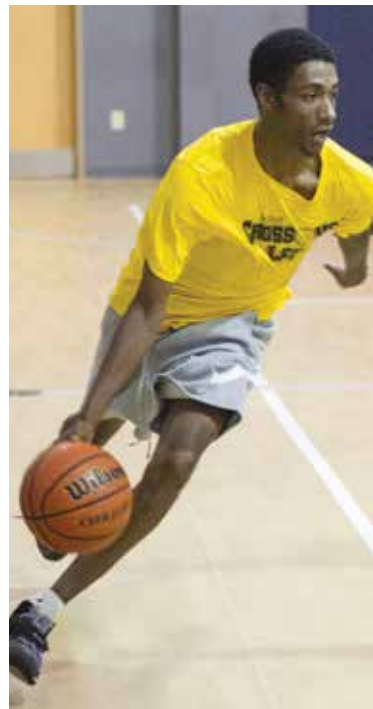
DIVISION A	DIVISION B
(all games at Shuey Park, Field No. 1)	(all games at Shuey Park, Field No. 2)
JUNE 29 Grace vs. El Bethel Tabernacle vs. Elite Disciples	JUNE 29 Missionary Ridge vs. Pleasant Ridge Warlick's vs. Amherst
JULY 6 Grace-El Bethel loser vs. Tabernacle-Elite Disciples loser Hopewell vs. Grace-El Bethel winner Consolation second round (matchup TBD)	JULY 6 Missionary Ridge-Pleasant Ridge loser vs. Warlick's-Amherst loser East Valdese vs. Missionary Ridge-Pleasant Ridge winner Consolation second round (matchup TBD)
JULY 11, 13 Consolation finals, semifinals, championship game(s) Division B (all games at Shuey Park, Field No. 2)	JULY 11, 13 Consolation finals, semifinals, championship game(s)



PHOTOS BY JAMES LYNCH JR. / THE PAPER

Green team's Kaidence Johnson shoots against the Pink team in one of Monday night's four Crossover League men's basketball games at the New Day Christian Church gymnasium in Morganton. It was the fourth week of men's regular-season play in the eight-team league, which was founded in 2016 and now also offers a women's league. The league's playoffs are typically held in early August.

Crossover League back with summer hoops



Left: Yellow team's Jakari Dula, a former Burke County player of the year at Freedom High School, drives the baseline.



Right: Pink team's Will Swabba goes in for a layup.

Below: Yellow team's Tobias Kanipe, a former Freedom High School and Montreat College player, eyes up the White team defense.



POST 21

FROM PAGE 1B

runs for Post 21, and **Jacob Davis** (single, two walks) scored twice. **Brayson Buff** (2¹/₃ IP, 5 ER, 2 K) and **Eli Elliott** (3¹/₃ IP, ER, 2 K) pitched against Cherryville.

In Tuesday's win in game two of the twinbill at Cleveland, Post 21 served as the home team. Post 21 allowed two runs in the top of the sixth to face its first deficit of the contest, 3-2, but responded with two runs of its own to retake the lead for good.

Bailey (double, stolen base) and Hunter Byerly each had two hits and scored twice, Elliott singled twice and had two RBIs, and Buff singled and walked, also driving in a pair.

Will Weidner started on the mound and earned the win, allowing five hits, four walks, and three earned runs with one strikeout in six innings before Byerly struck out two in a perfect seventh to slam the door shut for the save.

In the day's opener, which lasted just five innings, Post 21 drew four walks but posted just one hit as a team, coming via starting pitcher **Carson Dyson**.

On Monday at Hickory, Post 21 scored a run apiece in the third and fourth for a 2-0 lead and never trailed until Hickory walked off with a pair of runs in the bottom of the seventh.

Buff (2 for 2, double, walk, two runs) and Dyson (2 for 2, walk, run, RBI) led the Post 21 lineup, with Braxton Hensley notching a single, stolen base, and RBI, and Davis reaching via a single and walk.

Colin Eckard (6 IP, 4 H, 3 BB, 4 ER, 2 K) gave Post 21 a solid pitching start in defeat. Post 21 outhit Hickory by a 6-5 margin, and both teams committed two errors.

In the regular-season home finale Sunday, Post 21 finished a sweep of Caldwell thanks in large part to nine second-inning runs.

Offensive leaders included Cline (triple, four RBIs), Byerly (2 for 3, three RBIs), Bailey (2 for 3, two runs), and Hensley (2 for 4, two runs, RBI) as eight of nine starters scored at least one run for Post 21. Davis was brilliant over six innings, striking out four and allowing two hits, one walk and one run to take the decision.

And to open the busy five-day stretch, Elliott had two of

Post 21's four hits and drove in the lone run at Asheville. Nick McGee (5 IP, 5 H, 7 BB, 5 ER, 4 K) started and took the loss.

Post 21 opens the Area IV playoffs today (July 1). The team's seed and opponent for the best-of-five first-round series, plus the site and start time for Game 1 were not finalized at press time.

Through Wednesday's action, Post 21's scenarios in the bunched Western Division included finishing as the Nos. 3, 4, or 5 seed. Earning the 3 or 4 seed would give Post 21 home-field advantage for the series and most likely keep the team home for today's Game 1. If it slipped to the 5 seed, Post 21 is likely open on the road today.

Post 21's potential first-round opponents include the Eastern Division's No. 4 seed, either Matthews Post 235 or Gaston Post 144-266, No. 5 seed Lincoln County Post 455, or No. 6 seed Gastonia Post 23. Post 21 played two of those squads once apiece in non-division contests this summer, defeating Lincoln and losing on a walk-off against Gaston.

The second round of the playoffs, also played as best-of-five series, is scheduled to run July 6-11.

WEEKLY SPORTS CALENDAR

SATURDAY, JULY 1 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL Burke County Post 21 in N.C. Area IV playoffs, 1st round, Game 1 (best of 5 series; time, site, opponent TBA)	of 5 series; time, site, opponent TBA)
MORGANTON REC DEPT Petanque (10 a.m., at Catawba River Soccer Complex courts) Pickleball (9 a.m., at Collett St. Rec Center and Mountain View Rec Center)	MONDAY, JULY 3 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL Burke County Post 21 in N.C. Area IV playoffs, 1st round, Game 3 (best of 5 series; time, site, opponent TBA)
VALDESE REC DEPT Masters swimming (8:30 a.m., at Valdese Community Center)	GOLF Nine-hole 'Operation 36' youth program (5:30 p.m., at Silver Creek GC)
SUNDAY, JULY 2 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL Burke County Post 21 in N.C. Area IV playoffs, 1st round, Game 2 (best	MORGANTON REC DEPT Pickleball (9 a.m., at Collett St. Rec Center)
	VALDESE REC DEPT Power hour (5:30 p.m., Valdese Recreation Splash Park Building)

TUESDAY, JULY 4 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL Burke County Post 21 in N.C. Area IV playoffs, 1st round, Game 4 (best of 5 series; time, site, opponent TBA)
--

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL Burke County Post 21 in N.C. Area IV playoffs, 1st round, Game 5 (best of 5 series; time, site, opponent TBA)
--

MORGANTON REC DEPT Adult industrial league softball playoffs (6:30, 7:30 p.m., at Shuey Park) Fencing (6 p.m. beginners, 7 p.m. advanced; Ages 8 and up; at Mtn. View Rec Center) Pickleball (Noon, at Collett St. Rec Center)
--

VALDESE REC DEPT Senior bowling (10 a.m., at Valdese Community Center)
--

THURSDAY, JULY 6 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL N.C. Area IV playoffs, 2nd round, Game 1 (best of 5 series; times, sites, matchups TBA)

MORGANTON REC DEPT Petanque (10 a.m., at Catawba River Soccer Complex courts) Pickleball (9 a.m., at Mountain View Rec Center) Tae Kwon Do (6:30 p.m., at Collett St. Rec Center; Ages 8 and up)
--

VALDESE REC DEPT Masters swimming (7 p.m., at Valdese Community Center) Power hour (5:30 p.m., at Valdese Recreation Splash Park Building)

FRIDAY, JULY 7 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL N.C. Area IV playoffs, 2nd round, Game 2 (best of 5 series; times, sites, matchups TBA) MORGANTON REC DEPT Pickleball (9 a.m., at Mountain View Rec Center)
--

SATURDAY, JULY 8 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL N.C. Area IV playoffs, 2nd round, Game 3 (best of 5 series; times, sites, matchups TBA)

MORGANTON REC DEPT Petanque (10 a.m., at Catawba River Soccer Complex courts) Pickleball (9 a.m., at Collett St. Rec Center and Mountain View Rec Center)
--

VALDESE REC DEPT Masters swimming (8:30 a.m., at Valdese Community Center)
--

SUNDAY, JULY 9 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL N.C. Area IV playoffs, 2nd round, Game 4 (best of 5 series; times, sites, matchups TBA)

ALL WEEK SIGNUPS BURKE CO. REC DEPT Youth football league (Ages 5-12; Call 828-764-9090 for more details)

MORGANTON REC DEPT Adult cornhole league (Ages 16 and up; Call 828-438-5350 for more details; ends July 5) Youth flag football league (Ages 5-13; Call 828-438-5350 for details)

VALDESE REC DEPT Youth outdoor soccer league (Ages 4-13; Call 828-438-5350 for more details)
--

VALDESE REC DEPT Youth cheerleading (Ages 5-12; Call 828-879-2132 for details)
--

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COLLEGE / PRO

Freedom's Bock commits to Charlotte for golf

FOR THE PAPER

Rising Freedom High School senior **Alex Bock** has verbally committed to Charlotte to play men's golf, Patriots head coach Rob Scott said.

Bock is already a three-time Northwestern 3A/4A Conference boys golfer of the year, claiming this year's honor with an 18-hole scoring average of 71.6 in league matches with the worst of six conference scores dropped.

Bock was medalist in seven of his eight total regular-season matches this spring, highlighted by a prep career-best round of 67 at Silver Creek Golf Club to win the individual title at the Burke County championships as well.

He's a past NCHSAA 3A West Regional champion and runner-up, and this year won a three-hole playoff to advance from regionals and earn a spot in the state championships for a third consecutive year, where he notched a third straight top-15 finish.

His tie for sixth place at state as a freshman is the highest finish by a Freedom boys golfer in the 3A classification and earned him FHS male athlete of the year honors, the first freshman to earn that award at any county high school in at least the last 15 years. After his sophomore season, Bock was named to the All-Charlotte Observer 2022 squad.

Bock is a former Dan Dobson Junior Open and Mimosa Hills Golf Club junior champion who's also won the 2021 HV3 Invitational at Gaston Country Club among multiple



JAMES LYNCH JR. / THE PAPER

Alex Bock watches a drive at the 2023 Burke County boys golf championships at Silver Creek Golf Club in April. Bock recently committed to Charlotte to play the sport at the collegiate level.

Tarheel Youth Golf Association and National Junior Golf Association events.

He tied for sixth at the inaugural Mimosa Hills Junior Invitational in August 2020 as one of the youngest competitors in the field thanks to his final-round 67.

Bock will be the third member of his immediate family to play collegiate golf, joining his father **Duane** (Campbell) and older sister **Albany** (Belmont Abbey).

Mozeley plays All-Star Game

Freedom High School 2022 graduate and rising UNC Greensboro sophomore catcher **Mason Mozeley** played in the Valley Baseball League All-Star Game on Sunday night, representing his summer squad, the host Front Royal (Va.) Cardinals. Mozeley's North squad took a 5-4 win.

In nine games prior to his All-Star appearance, Mozeley

was hitting for a .276 average with two doubles, one home run, seven runs, four RBIs, and 10 walks.

Mozeley was county player of the year as a senior with the Patriots last spring and is also a former Burke County Post 21 American Legion player.

PRO

Thomas recalled by D-Backs

Alek Thomas made his recent stay in the minor leagues pay immediate dividends as he homered on his first swing back with the Arizona Diamondbacks on June 19.

Thomas, who was recalled from Triple-A Reno prior to the contest after having spent 34 days there, stayed hot for the rest of Arizona's series at the Milwaukee Brewers early last week. After a 2-for-4 effort with two runs and two RBIs in the opener, he singled and scored a run the next night before going 3 for 5 with a double, run, and RBI in the series finale as NL West-leading Arizona took two of three games.

Thomas — who grew up in Morganton until he was 12 and whose father, Allen, is a Freedom High School graduate who was strength and conditioning coach for the Chicago White Sox for 17 seasons — was hitting just .195 through 113 at-bats in his second-big-league season before his demotion.

But at Triple-A, the former second-round draft pick Thomas worked on his approach at the plate and hit .348 to quickly

earn his way back to the bigs.

"It was a pure swing on the home run, and he just continued to make quality adjustments pitch to pitch and at-bat to at-bat," D-backs manager Torey Lovullo told MLB.com. "It was a good day for him. I was very impressed by what I saw."

Emmons cut by CFL team

Freedom High School 2016 graduate **BJ Emmons** was cut by the Canadian Football League's Saskatchewan Roughriders earlier this month before playing a regular-season game with the team.

Emmons on June 2 in the team's final preseason game against the Winnipeg Blue Bombers rushed six times (third-most on team) for 27 yards and caught one pass for seven yards after tallying 32 yards from scrimmage the week before. He was released by Saskatchewan the following day, ending his second stint with the team after having been on its roster toward the end of the 2022 season.

That was Emmons' sixth professional team spanning two other leagues as well as he has been a member of the NFL's Seattle Seahawks, Las Vegas Raiders, Jacksonville Jaguars, and Houston Texans, and the USFL's Tampa Bay Bandits.

Emmons' 6,573 rushing yards and 101 total touchdowns at Freedom are Burke County records, and he then played collegiately at Alabama, Hutchinson Community College, and Florida Atlantic.

CRUMP

FROM PAGE 1B

Burke Heat based out of the Oak Hill community, his "first taste of AAU," he says.

Crump was a promising young athlete for three years at Liberty Middle School. He was named the school's male student-athlete of the year as an eighth grader in 2018-19 when he played quarterback for a 5-1 second-place football team, led the Knights to the second of back-to-back Foot-hills Athletic Conference hoops titles as he regularly poured in 30-plus points, and starred for the track and field team as well.

Crump since has played basketball at Moravian Prep and Patton for one season each and reclassified back one year in school. He enters his second year at Winston-Salem Christian School in 2023-24, though it will be the first basketball season in which he will play there.

An ACL tear several years back kept Crump off the court for nearly a year, and when he came back, something wasn't right.

"It's normally a nine- to 12-month recovery, but we had a little hiccup in the process," Crump said. "The graft didn't heal as it was supposed to, so had to go back in for a second surgery. But after that, now, we're good. I've been released for about three or four months, been just getting back into shape and now it's basically time to go."

Crump said he's confident the knee issue is now in the past.

"I guess everybody coming off an injury, they're a little bit scared to get back out there and start doing some things. But now I would say I'm probably better than I was before the injury," he said. "Most people that grow through this, they know, your leg and your knee is 10 times stronger than it was before. It's a whole lot different than it was 10, 15 years ago. Now, you can probably come back better."

Crump said it would mean a lot to prove this week that he is indeed all the way back health-wise.

"I've been out, and a lot of people try to write you off when you have an injury like that," he said. "Yeah, it's a chip on your shoulder for sure."

Crump is most comfortable at the 3 and 4 positions on the floor, and college programs certainly haven't written him off. It's simply hard to ignore the potential of an athletic 6-9 shooter

even if the film and the recent statistics aren't available yet.

Crump is No. 12 in ESPN's state rankings and No. 42 for his position for the 2024 recruiting class. He receives an overall scout grade of 79; the lower end of the ESPN top-100 tier grades out at 81, so he's not far outside of it.

"I can play a little bit of both (positions), whatever the team needs at the time with the lineup they're in," he said. "At the collegiate level, I look probably to play more of a stretch four, spread the floor, shoot a little bit.

"I feel like can really shoot it, that's the go-to. You don't really find too many 6-9 guys that can shoot the ball above 40 percent from the 3(-point line). I'm fairly athletic for my size I think and can move pretty well and guard multiple positions."

Crump received his only D-I scholarship offer to date nearly three years ago from Texas A&M, but he says the list of other schools he's heard from includes (but is not limited to): North Carolina, Duke, Wake Forest, Clemson, Virginia, Virginia Tech, Georgia Tech, Tennessee, East Carolina, Seton Hall, Mount St. Mary's, and Yale.

Some of those schools are now "just waiting to see me play," said Crump, who could attract more offers soon.

"Virginia, they're pretty heavy on the recruiting side right now," Crump said. "A&M is still in the mix. Yale, that was a really surprising one for me. Wake every once in a while will be at a practice."

Crump said all the attention from scores of programs is "still pretty cool."

"There's times where you'll get tired of it, but it's like, you know, you've dreamed of it for so long, so you look back and think of the 'little kid you' that just wanted all that attention in the first place," he said.

All cool things must come to an end though.

"I'd like to make (the college decision) before the high school season begins just so you can get that weight off your shoulders and go play, have fun your last year," Crump said.

Looking ahead to next prep season at Winston-Salem Christian, Crump's goals are centered around helping the team win. The team finished last season at 19-10 (according to MaxPreps statistics) and lost in the title game of the High School SLAM portion of the Big Shots Prep Nationals in Rock Hill, S.C., in February.

"Just stay healthy and do whatever you gotta do to win, hopefully get a state champion-

ship," he said.

If Crump is playing D-I basketball in 16 months or so, he'll join a list of boys players from Burke County to do so over the last 20 years which is currently limited to two: Clay Byrd (East Burke 2013, UNC-Greensboro) and Fletcher Abee (Freedom 2019; The Citadel and UNC-


Asheville).

Crump's two older sisters, Taylor, played at Patton, and Makenzie, played at East Burke and later played collegiately at Wingate. He is the son of Scott and Jennifer Crump of Morganton.

Crump lives on campus at Winston-Salem Christian, and

though it's difficult with a packed schedule during hoops season at times, tries to get back home about every other weekend or as often as he can, he says.

Paul Schenkel can be reached at 828-445-8595 (ext. 2002) or paul@thepaper.media.



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HIGH SCHOOLS

Fletcher reflects fondly on Freedom soccer days

By PAUL SCHENKEL
Sports Editor
THE PAPER

David Fletcher never played soccer in Burke County yet remains one of the most iconic local figures in the sport.

Fletcher, 59, retired in June 2017 after 28 years with Burke County Public Schools, all of which he spent teaching and coaching at Freedom High School.

He was the only coach the Patriots' girls soccer team ever had when he retired after 25 years with the program and had also spent 22 seasons as head coach of the boys team after six years as a boys assistant coach under Rob Wilcher.

Fletcher still holds the county records — and likely will for some time — for number of seasons coached in both boys soccer and girls soccer and for number of overall wins in both.

During his tenure at FHS, the soccer teams combined to win 526 games, win eight titles spanning the Northwestern 4A and 3A/4A Conference, and make 34 NCHSAA state playoff appearances at the state's two highest classifications.

He went out with a bang too, as near the end of his time guiding FHS soccer, the boys reached at least the second round of the 3A postseason each year for five consecutive seasons from 2011-15.

"It starts and ends with the kids," Fletcher said of his teams' success. "Coaches are important, but I've never seen a coach score a goal or a touch-down or a basket. ... I think most of the time it's about players making plays and winning the game.

"I don't think it's about anyone losing a game. And you can look at the most recent World Cup final and see that. (Kylian) Mbappé and France were unbelievable. (Lionel) Messi and the Argentina players were just a little bit better."

Fletcher had a limited background in the sport prior to his time at FHS. He was born and raised in Valdese and graduated in 1982 from East Burke

High School, where he played basketball and tennis.

He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina with a double major in English and History in 1986. He started law school the following year before deciding to pursue a different career, finishing his masters degree in English Education at UNC in 1989.

He was then hired as an English teacher by FHS principal Trossie Wall, his former principal at EBHS who had moved across the county by then, and Fletcher stayed in that role for nearly three decades.

"There was a (recreation soccer) program in Valdese when I was in I think elementary school or junior high school, and it was a high school sport. I think it started as a high school sport when I was at East Burke, but I never played," Fletcher said. "And then when I went to college, I took it as a class at Carolina, just as a P.E. class, and I played some intramural soccer.

"When I applied for a job — and back in those days the teaching jobs were pretty scarce — it was kind of one of the things that was attached to taking the job was would I be an assistant coach for the boys team? There was no girls team then. ... I was so glad to be able to come back to Burke County that I agreed to do that."

Fletcher credits Wilcher in expanding his knowledge of the game and coaching ability. Wilcher is a former player at Appalachian State University, where he set the program's assists record and was later inducted into the athletics hall of fame in 2018. He went on to win over 1,000 games from the prep sidelines, was an eight-time state coach of the year, led T.C. Roberson to three state titles, and was a 2018 North Carolina Soccer Hall of Fame inductee.

"I hit it off with Coach Wilcher, and I learned an awful lot about soccer from him," Fletcher said. "He had been a Parade All-American. ... He used to say he taught me everything I knew about soccer but not everything he knew.

"He was the head boys soccer coach and the head wrestling coach (at Freedom), and they did not want to make him the head coach of three sports, so he was actually my assistant for two years (with the



FOR THE PAPER
Former Freedom soccer coach David Fletcher pauses for a photo with his daughter and assistant coach, Katherine, and his grandson, James, following a game.

girls)."

Those two teams, in the spring of 1993 and '94, both won NWC titles in unbeaten fashion. But the first decade or so that Fletcher was at FHS was also marred by tragedy.

Two FHS boys soccer players died in car accidents, Bounmee Kue in 1992 and Josh Dansky in 1997, and former FHS girls player Katherine Wilson died of cancer while attending UNC for nursing.

"Those things are really tough, and you try to be there for the kids, the teammates, the friends. Those were really emotional times," Fletcher said. "We actually did some tournaments for several years to help raise money for her (Wilson's) scholarship fund at Carolina in the nursing program. We raised over \$10,000 I think over the years, and there's over \$200,000 in that scholarship fund now that helps nursing students at Carolina."

Fletcher said he still misses coaching and teaching at FHS, "the kids especially," he said, though nothing can take away the on-field memories he made while there ... things like the girls scoring four goals in 14 minutes to knock off league-leading East Burke on the road in 2000, or the boys winning in sudden-death double overtime over St. Stephens on Yaret Regino's back-heel goal in round two of the 2012 playoffs.

"We had some great battles with our rivals, East Burke, Patton, Watauga, Hickory, A.C. Reynolds," Fletcher said. "One time in girls we went and played at Myers Park in the playoffs, and they were heavily favored. Our goalkeeper played

a great game, and one of our best players, Whitney Cline, we had one shot in the game, and she scored on it.

"We were still up 1-0 pretty late in the second half. We ended up losing in regulation 2-1, but that was about as proud as I've been of any team I've ever coached just the way that they fought in that game. Sometimes you remember those ones that you lose even more than some of the wins because you're so proud of the effort."

Fletcher was named conference or region coach of the year a combined 25 times, and he was also a one-time state coach of the year.

"I'm proud of the success we had on the field," Fletcher said, "but I'm most proud of the values we had as a program and coaching staff all through those years. Dean Smith's always been my guy, and we tried to model a lot of that. You start in the program, and by the time you're a senior, you have a better idea of what we're trying to do and get a little more authority over the younger players. We expected our seniors to lead the way, not just in the way they attacked practice and games with their level of effort but also little things like we expected the kids to pick up trash after themselves. We tried to get everybody to understand that they had responsibilities that they had to live up to.

"I always looked (at sports) like you were a teacher still and it was part of their education. It was voluntary, but we were trying to teach them stuff they could use later in life. ... I think most of the kids who finished their senior season in

our program, by the time they were finished, they got it. They had bought into what we were doing and had a big hand in keeping it going."

Fletcher was inducted into the North Carolina Soccer Coaches Association (NCSA) Field of Honor in 2017, coached in two all-star games including the East-West Game in 2002, and 39 of his former players played at the collegiate level, with two going on to pro soccer careers.

"I still hear from former players and see some of them," Fletcher said. "We have former players who are now doctors, lawyers, teachers, work in non-profits, or are hospital administrators, but also kids working on power lines who are on these crews that go down when there's a hurricane and stuff, and they're making more money than I ever made.

"(Others are) now parents, youth coaches. Just to see those kids be successful and happy now in life, that's the best thing about coaching, to feel like maybe you had a little part in that. I love to hear from them now and am kind of amazed what all they're doing now."

Fletcher still lives in Valdese and spends much of his time with family — daughter Katherine, who coached with him several years at FHS and grandson James, who's now 15 — as well as volunteering around the community.

He serves on the board for the Community Foundation of Burke County and the Waldensian Heritage Foundation and is an active member of Waldensian Presbyterian Church, where he teaches Sunday School and is part of two choirs. Fletcher's wife, Jill, died three years ago unexpectedly.

"My mother, who's now 93, has suffered some serious health setbacks too," Fletcher said. "We help with her on a daily basis. I always felt like I neglected my family to some degree for 28 years, and I've really tried to focus on my family these last six years.

"I'm blessed. I have a great family, and I feel lucky that I got to work with such great kids as a teacher and a coach and with so many good people I worked alongside."

Paul Schenk can be reached at 828-445-8595 (ext. 2002) or paul@thepaper.media.

HIGH SCHOOL / LOCAL

Draughn OF Cozort wins district softball award

FOR THE PAPER

Recent Draughn High School graduate **Katie Cozort** has been named District 7 1A softball player of the year by the North Carolina Softball Coaches Association, winning the award for a second consecutive year.



Cozort

Cozort, an outfielder, is a Lenoir-Rhyne University signee who's also a former DHS female athlete of the year as well as Western Highlands 1A/2A Conference player of the year in both softball and tennis and WHC female athlete of the year.

Cozort hit for a .559 average this spring with eight doubles, six triples, seven home runs, 31 runs, and a program-record 52 RBIs. She sported a .655 on-base percentage and a 1.162 slugging percentage as the Lady Wildcats won their first-ever conference title and eclipsed the 20-win mark.

Cozort was joined on the 12-member 1A all-district squad by three teammates: junior shortstop **Maddie Crouch** (the 2023 WHC player of the year), junior catcher **Finlee Young**, and senior third baseman **Maddison Powell**, who recently announced she would play softball next season at nearby Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute. Each of those four DHS players was previously named All-WHC.

Meanwhile, 10 other Burke County softball players were

named to the 32-member All-District 7 2A squad. They included Patton sophomore pitcher **Marleigh Carswell**, senior outfielder **Hailey Snodgrass** (both of whom were named all-conference), junior second baseman **Lindsey Devine**, junior outfielder **Katie Lail**, sophomore shortstop **Kara Redwine**, and sophomore first baseman **Ellie Shuping** as well as East Burke senior third baseman **Madison Johnson**, junior outfielder **Grace Hammack**, sophomore shortstop **Kyndal Morrison** (each of whom were named all-conference), and junior pitcher/second baseman **Kaylee Paige**.

Aside from Burke, District 7 spans the counties of Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Caldwell, Catawba, Davie, Iredell, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yadkin.

The N.C. Softball Coaches Association's all-state awards were expected to be announced Friday after press time for this edition; see next week's edition for more coverage.

Silver Creek member-member

Silver Creek Golf Club held its annual member-member tournament on June 24-25. The first day of play consisted of 18 holes of better ball, while day two was split between six holes apiece of better ball, modified alternate shot, and captain's choice. The event was flighted after 18 holes.

In the championship flight, the team of **Garrett Coble** and **Lane Carswell** shot a second-round 64 to finish 12-under and come from six strokes down to win by two over **Greg Crump** and **Terry Rogers** and by

three over **Shane Hise** and **Richie Patrick**.

Other flight winners were **Larry Wilkerson/Fred Hardin** (second flight, 2-over), **Neal Kepner/John Schmeelk** (third flight, 9-over), and **Alan Weiler/Bob Blankenship** (fourth flight, 16-over).

Silver Creek, Mimosa tourneys

Silver Creek Golf Club will hold its Red, White, and Blue tournament on July 4 with a 9:30 a.m. shotgun start. Format is four-person captain's choice teams, and signup fee is \$75 per player (or \$35 plus cart fees for members). The price includes golf, prizes, and food after the round, and the event will also feature a best-decorated cart competition. Call 828-584-6911 to register or for more details.

Mimosa Hills Golf Club also has a busy second full week of July, with three upcoming tournaments.

The Dan Dobson Junior Open will be held July 10. The event, formerly known as the Western North Carolina Junior Open, since 2014 has served as a qualifier for the Mimosa Hills Junior Invitational. The tourney is named for Dobson, Mimosa's current pro emeritus who has worked at Mimosa for 50 years including a 1982-2013 run as head pro.

Then on July 13, Mimosa hosts the Carolinas Golf Association in a one-day, 18-hole ladies fourball event. And on July 15-16, Mimosa hosts its annual Net Member-Member tournament. Call 828-437-2967

for more information on any of the upcoming events at Mimosa.

Burke Co. youth football signups

Signups are now open for the 2023 Burke County Parks and Recreation Department's youth football league. There are three age divisions (5-7, 8-9, and 10-12), and age cutoff is Aug. 31. Those in the oldest age group cannot turn 13 at any time during the season or be entering seventh grade (or above).

Practices will get underway Aug. 14, the annual preseason jamboree will be Sept. 9 at East Burke High School, and the regular season starts Sept. 16. The playoffs in all three ages will be Nov. 11 and 18. Defending champions are East Burke (5-7) and Oak Hill (8-9 and 10-12).

Confirmed programs participating this year include Drexel, East Burke, George Hildebrand, Glen Alpine, McDowell, Mull, Oak Hill, Ray Childers, Salem, Valdese, and W.A. Young. All children living in Burke (or McDowell) County are eligible to participate, including those who attend charter or private schools or who are homeschooled. Call 828-764-9090 for more details about where and how to sign up.

Youth summer hoops league

The Prevail Summer League for rising second graders through the high school graduating class of 2023 this week ended its registration with a

mandatory draft evaluation and has announced its regular season playing dates and sites.

Games will take place July 11, 13, 20, 25, 27, and Aug. 8, 10, and 11 prior to the playoffs on Aug. 12-13. Games start at 6 p.m. each day and will be held at the R.O. Huffman Center and Hallyburton Academy, both in Drexel.

Contact Donald Rutherford at 828-455-4832 or prevail-sports365@gmail.com for more details.

Pair of youth soccer camps

Though none of Burke County's high school programs are offering youth soccer camps this summer, two summer camps in the sport will be offered locally.

The Morganton Parks and Recreation Department is offering its annual Challenger Sports soccer camp from July 24-28 at the Catawba River Soccer Complex. The camp is for ages 3-14, and daily camp times range from 8-8:45 a.m. for 3-5 year-olds (\$135), to 9 a.m. to noon for half-day camp (\$200), to 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for full-day camp (\$255). Visit challengersports.com for more details or to register.

The 11th annual Waldensian Presbyterian Church youth soccer camp for rising first-through sixth-graders will be held July 31-Aug. 3 from 8 a.m. to noon at Draughn High School. Registration cost is \$70, which includes lunch and a soccer ball, and registration ends July 15. For more details, call or text Jason Adams at 828-403-5821. To register, call the church at 828-874-2531.

YOUTH SWIMMING

Morganton battles it out with Catawba Valley

FOR THE PAPER

The Morganton Swim Club youth swim team hosted its first meet of the summer on Wednesday evening at the Collett Street Pool after last week's scheduled opener was rained out.

The Marlins hosted Catawba Valley in a dual meet which was originally set to also include Rutherford County, and the night's scoring ended in a near draw.

The Morganton boys were victorious, 272-179, while Catawba Valley's girls took a 313-213 win to edge Morganton in total team scores, 492-485.

Marlins swimmers **Lumina Miguel** and **Lucy Jones** each won three individual events and were part of a team-high five total wins, with Miguel swimming up by one age group to team with Jones plus **Jamee Cysco** and **Daynesa Gonzalez Tomas** in a pair of relay victories.

Miguel won the girls 10-and-under 50-meter freestyle (36.40), 50 breaststroke (50.68), and 50 butterfly (41.89), and Jones claimed first in the girls 11-12 50 free (35.50), 50 breast (46.64), and 50 fly (41.76).

The quartet's 11-12 200 free relay victory came in a time of 2:35.90, and their winning 200 medley relay time was 3:10.56.

Four Morganton swimmers took two individual events apiece: **Jayden Gomez-Andres** (boys 8U 50 free, 53.81; 50 backstroke, 59.54), **Joel Gomez-Andres** (boys 10U 200 individual medley, 3:53.64; 50 fly, 54.20), **Nicholas Chiota** (boys 14U 200 IM, 3:15.09; 100 fly, 1:40.44), and **Coley Welch** (boys 15-and-over 200 IM, 2:58.82; 100 free, 1:02.30).

Other Marlins were **Presley Powell** (girls 10U 50 back, 44.73), **Aidan Lopez-Rodriguez** (boys 11-12 50 fly, 42.33), and **Daynesa Gonzalez Tomas** (girls 11-12 50 back, 48.78).

Two more Marlins squads swept both relays in their age groups. **Carter Phillips**, **Rex Jones**, **Abdiel Gonzalez Tomas**, and **Nicholas Chiota** did so in 14U boys



Several members of the Morganton Swim Club await their next events during Wednesday's opening meet of the summer season held at the Collett Street Pool in Morganton.

(200 free, 2:18.73; 200 medley, 2:50.75), and **Nate Carswell**, **Blake Peahuff**, **Dominick Curtis**, and **Coley Welch** swept the 15O boys relays (200 free, 2:13.64; 200 medley, 2:44.67).

The trio of **Thelma Francisco**, **Addison Lowman** and **Neyli Lopez-Rodriguez** teamed with **Alyssa Chiota** in winning the girls 14U 200 free relay (2:42.47) and with **Siena Morton**, who served as fourth leg in the 200 medley relay (3:24.98). And the Marlins also got a win from the girls 10U 200 free relay of **Desiree Gonzalez Tomas**, **Siena Morton**, **Sadie Patton**, and **Presley Powell** (3:27.26).

Morganton hosts its final summer meet on July 12 versus Watauga and Rutherford County.

VALDESE WINS FOR 2ND TIME

The Valdese Torpedo hosted Lenoir and Granite Falls in a June 24 Tarheel Swim League meet at the Valdese Aquatic Center and edged runner-up Granite Falls in a pair of close team races.

The Torpedo boys totaled 228 points compared to Granite's 183 and Lenoir's 38, while the girls scored 279 points to finish ahead of both Granite (196) and Lenoir (68) as well. **Andrew Harmon** led Valdese

with four individual event wins, claiming the boys 8U 25 free (22.77), 25 back (27.08), 50 free (51.83), and 25 breast (34.71).

Jacob Gersch (boys 15-18 200 IM, 2:40.34; 100 free, 1:05.32; 100 breast, 1:18.59) and **Presley Powell** (girls 9-10 50 free, 35.29; 100 free, 1:22.80; 50 breast, 47.95) both claimed three individual events, with Gersch also being

part of two winning relays as he took part in a team-best five wins on the day.

Nine other Torpedo swimmers won two individual events apiece: **Desiree Gonzalez** (girls 9-10 100 IM, 1:46.20; 50 fly, 48.40), **Remington Treadway** (boys 9-10 100 IM, 1:55.00; 50 fly, 52.27),

William Bowman (boys 9-10 50

back, 46.76; 100 free, 1:29.19), **Ryan Watson** (girls 11-12 100 free, 1:11.35; 50 fly, 39.58), **Matilyn Brown** (girls 11-12 50 back, 37.50; 50 breast, 40.92), **Walker Bowman** (boys 11-12 50 fly, 40.94; 50 breast, 49.02), **Lilah Johnson** (girls 13-14 200 IM, 2:54.34; 100 breast, 1:31.42), **Quintyn Reasoner** (boys 15-18 100 back, 1:17.68), and **Ava Jensen** (girls 15-18 100 free, 1:10.23; 100 breast, 1:30.34).

Single winners for Valdese included **Adeline Parris** (girls 6U 25 free, 35.44), **Pasleigh Kirkland** (girls 8U 25 fly, 32.95), **Alex Likins** (boys 11-12 50 back, 47.77), **Saylor Watson** (girls 13-14 100 fly, 1:26.95), **Sam Jensen** (boys 13-14 100 free, 1:13.78), **Quintyn Reasoner** (boys 15-18 100 back, 1:17.68), and **Taylor Lennex** (boys 15-18 100 fly, 1:17.95).

The Torpedo also claimed 10 total relays: the 8U girls 100 free, the 9-10 girls and boys, 11-12 girls and boys, and 15-18 boys 200 free, the 8U girls 100 medley, and the 11-12 girls and boys and 15-18 boys 200 medley.

The team's next meet is July 8 at home versus Forest City.

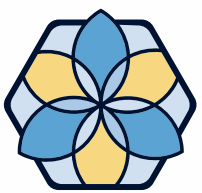
Stingrays 10U play at AAU Nationals



FOR THE PAPER

The Burke County-based Blue Ridge Stingrays 10U travel youth football team wrapped up a 1-2 week at the 2023 AAU Spring Nationals in Fort Mill, S.C., June 20-24. The Stingrays lost 13-6 in their opener before claiming a 21-0 triumph over the Brick City Lions and completing the event with a 19-6 loss.

"First time ever in this kind of atmosphere, and even though you didn't win a trophy, you still represented the 828 very well, and I am so proud of you," said Stingrays founder and coach Curtis Bristol, a former Freedom High School standout quarterback. "Every last one of you young men have my heart, and I love you all so much. It was a great learning week. Now we know what it's like and what it takes, and we'll be back, that I promise."



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'Three apples' and an abundance of flowers



PAUL SHELL

GOOD OLD SALEM HIGH SCHOOL, home of the Tigers. We were considered hillbillies and hicks, living 4.2 miles out of town as the crow flies.

Yeah, we did have our share of roughnecks since we boys would sometimes participate in pre-arranged fights at football games away from the stands of cheering Tiger fans. Their cheers were futile, since we weren't very good at football.

Glen Alpine, with the late Ralph "Jug" Wilson as coach, always kicked our butts, and Oak Hill was a powerhouse team too. We didn't have the financial support that other, more prestigious schools had. We didn't even have a band, but we did have a Dance Drill Team which was more of a glorified group of cheerleaders that enjoyed dancing. They gave it their all, smiles included.

I'll never forget the feeling that I had as I stepped up to the charity stripe during a basketball game in an attempt to make a free throw. In unison the cheerleaders would chant, "Sink it Paul, sink it." That simple cheer was an adrenaline boost to aim true: bend your knees, flip your wrist, and follow through. "Swoosh" ... no other sound is as sweet.

Salem had excellent coaches in Roy T. Waters, who was inducted into the Burke County Sports Hall of Fame and whose name now adorns the Salem Gymnasium. Wilton Daves, who had played for Waters, was my basketball coach, and he led our team to a Skyline Conference Championship in the 1969-70 season.

Coach Daves knew his stuff, because he ran our tails off with heavy basketball fundamentals and endless drills. He once took our team to Gardner-Webb College to watch their basketball team practice. "This is all right," I thought, my first exposure to college life.

My joy was short-lived since the very next day at our practice, guess what difficult and lung-sucking drills Daves put us through? Exactly, the very same ones that we had witnessed the night before while watching Gardner Webb. Our dedicated workouts paid off, hello Skyline Conference championship. We even received T-shirts with the logo adorning the front of the shirt.

Even though Salem was located "in the sticks," we still had our social circles: the brains, jocks, rednecks, and the outdoorsy types. Many of the boys would lay out of school on opening day of squirrel season and of course, to fish during the pre-spawn and whenever fishing peaked.

We tasted the leather strap on our behinds if we got out of line with our rowdiness and misbehavior. Some of the other classmates, teacher pets as we called them, would rat on you if you did something wrong or if they saw you doing something that did not comply with school policy, such as smoking in the boys room.

Most of the guys signed up for FFA, Future Farmers of America, and the girls took Home Economics. Diane Duckworth must have finished at



PHOTOS BY PAUL SHELL / FOR THE PAPER

Diane enjoying the beauty and peace that she loves in relaxing outside surrounded by her flowers.

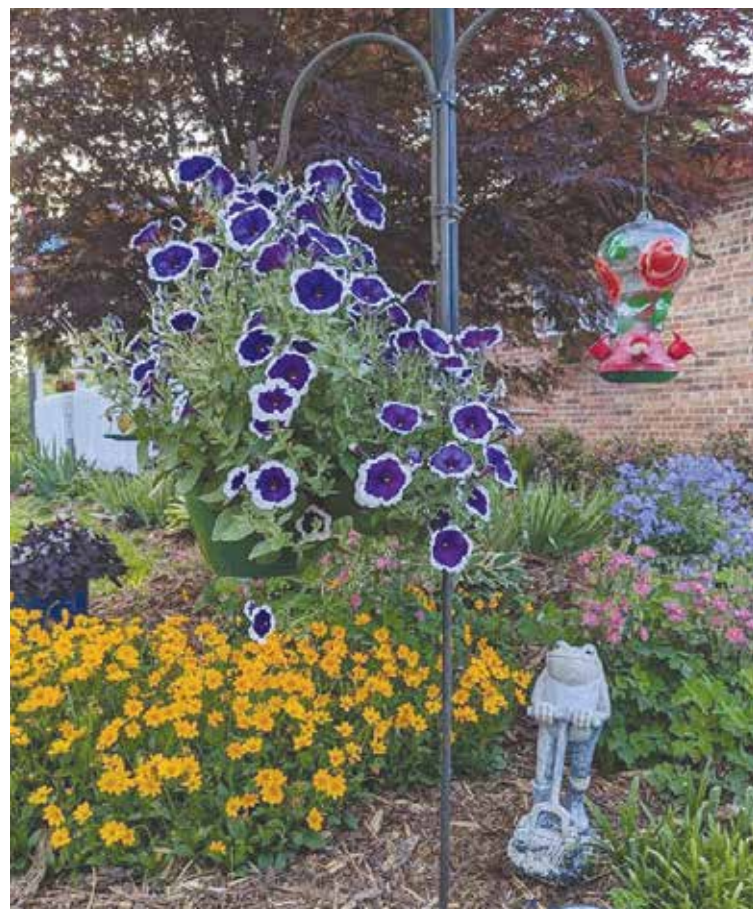


A fuzzy caterpillar plant that resembles a cayenne pepper plant.

All-in-one stop

Edible Landscapes and Homesteading Skills offers permaculture farm and garden designs, tree removals, pruning, chipping, firewood, and compost and mulch delivery, wild food and medicine workshops, home butchering and dairying workshops, and health coaching and speaking engagements.

For more information, contact Ryan and Siobhan Gagliardo and family at 828-334-3505, 828-212-8279 or ryan.gagliardo@gmail.com.



Stunning purple and white petunias above yellow ground cover daisies.



A purple shamrock sporting white flowers.

love for flowers comes from my grandmother Duckworth since she always had her porch filled with all kinds of flowers. She once said, 'God always made a weed pretty.' So I guess that that's what I feel too. I have never seen an ugly plant.

"To sit back and watch a plant come to life gives me contentment and peace. I just love dirt! I tell people when I get down and depressed, I go to therapy, 'dirt therapy.' I love flowers. I talk to them, water, feed, and prune them. They give back to me in blooms and beauty. I tell Steve that I want my flowers now while I can enjoy them. I love color, lots of color.

Diane says she mulches and uses Miracle Gro all-purpose plant food, which feeds for six months. If she has a bare spot or pot that needs something in it, she plants.

"My momma loved flowers, and she always had huge baskets," Diane said. "The last summer that she was still with us, she told me that she could not water them like she wanted to, so I went every day to make sure her plants made her happy. Nothing beats a long summer day than to just sit on my porch with my "hummers" (hummingbirds) and flowers and enjoy what God has blessed me to do."

She said her flowers were purchased at Debbie's Greenhouse, M&M Greenhouse, and Lowes. Diane can be contacted at ddrhodes53@yahoo.com or 828-443-6547.

For a large portion of the past 40 years, Paul Shell has covered the outdoors for various newspapers and magazines, including Sports Afield and The Angler, and is the former owner of the Rod & Fly in Morganton. He can be reached at 828-443-4157 or rodfly82@gmail.com.

the top of her class in Home Ec, since currently she is the owner-operator of "Mom's Fried Pies."

She didn't open her business straight out of high school. Through many prayers, self-reflection, and assistance from husband, Steve "Roho" Rhodes, she took the plunge with the bare minimum of baking ingredients.

"Three apples" were all she needed to begin her successful baking business. Diane bears a part of her soul now, and maybe her story will help some folks increase their faith.

Mom's Fried Pies started in 2020.

"My son told me when my beauty shop closed from COVID that I should make 'MawMaws' fried pies, which was something that I had never done before," Diane said. "I prayed many prayers and did a lot of crying because I had been a beautician for 50 years. After two months trying to decide if I was going to open back up or not, one Saturday in April, I went downstairs and sat on my steps and prayed and cried.

"After then something happened. God said 'You have three apples that Luke hasn't

eaten. Cook those and make a pie.' I looked around, not a soul but me there, so I looked up and said, 'OK God, if that's what I'm to do, I will try.'"

Diane told her husband Steve what she was doing and put a post on Facebook.

"If I get one order for a fried pie, I'll know that's what God wants me to do," Diane remembers thinking. "Steve looked at me funny and said 'It's 9 a.m. on a Saturday, nobody is going to order any pies.' I said, 'Well, we will see.'"

In less than 10 minutes, Diane had an order for a dozen, then another, and another dozen.

"I said, 'Oh mercy, you're going to have to go get more apples,'" Diane said. "I didn't have any pastry dough made up, so what am I going to do? Steve looked at me and said, 'God wants you to fry apple pies. I'm going to the store, and when I get back, we will fry pies.' So we did."

That first day, three apples turned into 85 fried pies.

"I'm out of the kitchen and I'm worn out," Diane said. "The last order was picked up at 5 o'clock that afternoon.

Steve said, 'I think you got your answer.' We just sat on our back porch and thanked

God. He showed me!

"My Mom has been gone for seven years. She was a great cook, and she always told me that you eat twice, once with your eyes and then with your mouth, so always make them pretty."

Diane now has made over 5,000 fried pies. She added her mom's recipes for her pound cakes and has coconut, strawberry, German chocolate, carrot, cream cheese, cream pies, cobbles, cupcakes, and apple dumplings. She bakes fresh when ordered.

"I do old-timey, from scratch, never frozen, the way momma did," Diane said.

Twice a year, Diane sells goods at Carousel Kids Consignment. Natalie Head helps out when with orders, Diane said, and they take orders weekly.

"When ordered and baked, I text (customers) when ready for pickup," Diane said.

While Diane continues to receive orders for her delicious pies and cakes, her in-depth analytical approach to her flowers are unmatched. Her rich, healthy blooms with an intense depth of color bring out the robust colors in all of them.

She continues her story: "My

CORNELISON: Age is just a number

FROM PAGE 1B

he just doesn't lose it and get a case of the yips or start whacking wormburners or rainmakers or slicing the ball sideways into the trees. It's a mental game, golf is.

"I tightened up, I'll admit it," he said.

Cornelison started thinking about Joe Cheves, the long-time Mimosa head professional who scored 17 shots under his age when, on Aug. 27, 1999, at the age of 81, he shot 64 (8-under par) at Mimosa. Many claim that this was the world record for shots-under-age.

Of course, Cheves was a member of the North Carolina

Sports Hall of Fame, a member of the Carolinas Golf Hall of Fame, a member of the Carolinas PGA Hall of Fame. And so on.

Cornelison isn't thinking about the Hall of Fame. He's thinking about a world record.

"It's a rarity for someone to shoot under their age," he said. "I got excited on number 14 because I birdied 13. I could tie Cheves! But then I bogeyed 17."

He shot a 37 on the back nine, 1-over par, bringing his total round score to 69, or 3-under par and 12 below his age. Five shots back from Cheves' record.

"It's a big deal," said Mimosa club pro Jimmy Piercy. "It's

newsworthy. For a casual golfer, an amateur, it's phenomenal. If you shoot 12 shots under your age it means one of two things or maybe both: That you're really old; or that you played really well."

When advised of Cornelison's score, his good friend and fellow golfer John Branstrom said, "Cornelison shot what? I'd like to know what ball he used."

Allen VanNoppen, who would have to be 107 years old to shoot under his age, once made a legitimate par, with witnesses, at Mimosa.

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	P	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	IN	TOT	Handicap	
BLACK	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
BLUE	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
WHITE	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
GOLD	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
PAR	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
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HANDICAP	5 7 11 13 9 15 3 1 17									10 12 1 16 2 6 11 18 8														
RED	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
PAR	4	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
HANDICAP	3 13 7 9 5 15 1 11 17									10 8 1 11 2 12 16 18 6														
DATE:	6/26/23																							
SCORER:																								
ATTEST:																								

Cornelison's June 26 scorecard is his evidence: four straight birdies on holes No. 2-5 en route to five total and an impressive 3-under par round.

FOR THE PAPER



THE PAPER™

a&e

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Healing Dragons of Lake James

Women uniting in acceptance, laughter

By DINAH POTEAT
For The Paper

I live in a beautiful county in the Foothills of Western North Carolina that appropriately bills itself as “Nature’s Playground.” We have plentiful parks, hiking trails, and fresh water available for the enjoyment of both children and adults.

Since I’m 20 months beyond a debilitating concussion, my doctor has been encouraging me to exercise, beginning back around month 12. I’ve been able to postpone it, especially this spring because of my continuous throat maladies which still have not ceased; nonetheless, my doctor and I have moved beyond antibiotics — which were not working — to more creative measures, so I continue to harbor hope. And I’m trying to move on

See DRAGONS, Page 10B



ELICIA CARTER PHOTOS / FOR THE PAPER

Dinah Poteat, sunglasses and blue vest, prepares to splash her boatmates on a recent summer evening.

Paddles in the water as the Healing Dragons of Lake James head out.

PICKS OF THE WEEK

▶ SATURDAY, JULY 1

▶ TUESDAY, JULY 4

▶ THURSDAY, JULY 6

▶ FRIDAY, JULY 7



Southern rock gets celebrations rolling

Get a jump on your July Fourth celebrations with music and fireworks at Horseshoe Bend Family Campground. The fun begins at 6 p.m. with high-energy classic rock by veteran Southern rock band Whiskey Down. Fireworks at dark. Entry is \$6 for adults and \$4 for kids under 12. The campground is located at 6675 NC-181 in Morganton.



With liberty and justice for all

Catch the old-fashioned patriotic spirit at Glen Alpine’s July Fourth. Want to be in the parade? Simply show up at 9:15 a.m. on Pollard Avenue to line up. The parade begins at 10 a.m. And don’t forget the Fourth of July Blast at 4 p.m. at the Burke County Fairgrounds. Admission is \$5 per car. Fireworks will be ignited from Freedom Park in Morganton around 9:45 p.m.



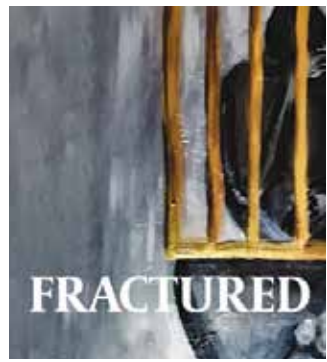
Test your inner wizard at Trivia Night

What do you know about Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff, and Ravenclaw? Put your knowledge to the test during Sidetracked Brewery’s Harry Potter trivia night beginning at 7 p.m. Dressing up is encouraged. There will be a little prize for the best dressed! This is also the one-day release of Butter Beer. Sidetracked Brewery is located at 609 S. Green St. Suite 100 in Morganton.



Downtown Morganton on two wheels

The Slow Roll is back on the first Friday of every month. Meet at Overmountain Cycles with your mountain bike, cruiser, hybrid, BMX, low rider — whatever you have for a spectacular community ride in downtown Morganton. Kids that can keep up with an adult pace are welcome, or bring a trailer and tow them! Meet at the shop at 6 p.m., 313 N. Green St. in Morganton.



Join the Conversation

WFAE and FRONTLINE hosted "Fractured: A Public Conversation" with

journalist Dana Miller Ervin to discuss incarceration's effects on those with mental health conditions. The event was moderated by WFAE Senior Producer Sara Delia and also included North Carolina's Secretary of Health and Human Services Kody Kinsley, Mecklenburg County District Attorney Spencer Merriweather, and Guilford County Public Defender Richard Wells.

A replay of the June 27 event can be viewed on WFAE's website, wfae.org, and the station's Facebook page. The audio from the event will also be edited to broadcast as a future episode of "Charlotte Talks," which can be heard at WFAE.org.

ABOUT "FRACTURED"

The mental health care system in North Carolina has been failing for years. Perhaps nowhere is that more evident than those who get caught up in the criminal justice system, out of sight, therefore out of mind for the general public and policymakers. But their plight — and the brokenness of the mental health system — affects everyone in the state. "Fractured" looks at how North Carolina's mental health and criminal justice systems fail the mentally ill.

Fractured is produced in collaboration with FRONTLINE, the PBS series, through its Local Journalism Initiative, which is funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

To date, 11 episodes have been broadcast and can be heard on WFAE.org.

Episode 1: "The wait inmates with mental illness endure because they're too sick for trial"

Episode 2: "Life sentence on the installment plan"

Episode 3: "The Abyss: Inmates with mental health and substance abuse disorders cycle through jails relentlessly"

Episode 4: "How North Carolina got the math wrong on mental health"

Episode 5: "The mental health crisis in North Carolina's emergency rooms"

Episode 6: "How the mental health system affects North Carolina's jails and the people that work there"

Episode 7: "How NC's mental health system is Fractured"

Episode 8: "When criminal justice systems have to deal with mental illness"

Episode 9: "Kids, trauma and mental health"

Episode 10: "Fractured: The effectiveness of psychiatric residential treatment facilities"

Episode 11: "The importance of culturally relevant training in mental health care"



'The Abyss: Inmates with mental health and substance abuse disorders cycle through jails relentlessly'



'How the mental health system affects North Carolina's jails and the people that work there'



'Kids, trauma and mental health'



'The mental health crisis in North Carolina's emergency rooms'



'When criminal justice systems have to deal with mental illness'

The art of storytelling

Morganton journalist tells the stories behind the data and statistics

By **ANGELA KUPER COPELAND**
Arts & Entertainment Reporter
THE PAPER

North Carolina ranks 39th in the U.S. for access to mental health care treatment.

Involuntary commitment petitions have nearly doubled from 2011 to 2021.

One-third of the treatment beds in North Carolina state hospitals, including Broughton Hospital in Morganton, are not utilized due to staffing shortages.

Nearly 45% of North Carolina kids who need a psychiatric residential treatment facility are shipped out of state away from their families because the state lacks the capacity to help them.

These statistics are interesting, but without connecting the numbers to real people, does anyone care? Journalist Dana Miller Ervin believes the answer is probably not.

In "Fractured," her current investigative series, she takes listeners beyond the data and introduces the people who are directly impacted by the chasm between the criminal justice and mental health care systems.

"I used their interviews in ways that weren't using (taking advantage of) them," she said.

Ervin is currently a reporter examining the U.S. healthcare system for WFAE 90.7 FM, Charlotte's NPR news source. "Fractured" is produced in collaboration with FRONTLINE, the PBS series, through its Local Journalism Initiative, funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The series can be heard on the WFAE's website, wfae.org.

When she first embarked on her investigative series, she envisioned three parts. But as she dug deeper into her research on North Carolina's mental health and criminal justice systems, the series quickly expanded to nine parts



Dana Miller Ervin, Morganton resident and award-winning journalist

with a couple more yet to be released.

"I wish my stories were simpler, actually. I wish they weren't so complicated. But that's just the way my brain works, I guess. I originally pitched three stories (how people cycle back and forth between hospitals and jails; how the state got into the situation; and how underfunding the mental health system affects everyone)," she said. "Everything else came out of the reporting."

In the research for "Fractured," Ervin said she talked with as many public defenders as possible around the state who would talk with her about their clients who are in the criminal justice system and also live with mental health issues.

"I told them what I wanted

to do and then listened to them. As they told me stories I thought, 'Oh I have to do that, I have to do that,'" she said. When waiting to interview an inmate, she told a jailer why she was there. The jailer remarked that Ervin needed to also interview jailers about how they are expected to handle inmates in mental health crises, too. The series continued to grow.

"That's the fun of journalism - learning new stuff," Ervin said.

Editors from WFAE and FRONTLINE are an important part of the collaborative process that happens behind the scenes before her work hits the airwaves.

"There's edits and edits until the last minute. But I will tell you the editors are great. And so do I disagree with them

and lock horns? Sure. Do they make the pieces better? Oh, absolutely."

LEAVING BEHIND HER LEGAL STUDIES

Ervin, who lives in Morganton with her husband, Robert C. Ervin, did not initially set out to be a journalist. She had completed her first year at Harvard Law School when she became ill and had to put her legal studies on hiatus. As she was recuperating, she began watching "Nightline" on ABC. This new habit changed her career's trajectory.

"I started to watch 'Nightline' with Ted Koppel and I got absolutely addicted. And I thought wouldn't it be nice to see if I could work for Koppel. So I convinced him to hire me and I didn't go back to law school."

Chances are, hiring her was a decision Koppel didn't regret.

"The first story I did at 'Nightline' was an investigative piece. And Koppel came up to me and said, 'Well, I'm not supposed to say this to new people but people are telling me you are really, really good at investigations and we need to keep you on investigations.'"

If her awards are any indication, she is really, really good.

She's a three-time Emmy Award winner for investigative reporting and research and has won a Peabody Award, Alfred I. DuPont Award, and the Edward R. Murrow Award for Overall Excellence from the Radio Television Digital News Association.

Her career has included working as a producer with "60 Minutes," CBS News, and "CBS This Morning," a freelance investigative producer with "60 Minutes" and CNBC, and a contributing opinion columnist with the Charlotte Observer.

She also spent a dozen years as a nonpartisan investigator with the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations. That experience convinced her that she wanted to return to journalism.

"The futility of working on

I wish my stories were simpler, actually. I wish they weren't so complicated. But that's just the way my brain works, I guess.

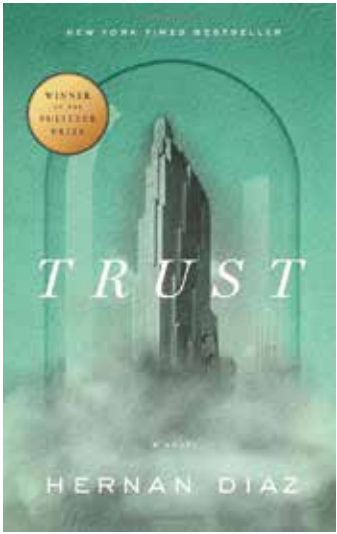
DANA ERVIN, MORGANTON RESIDENT AND INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER AT WFAE FM 90.7

See **STORYTELLING**, Page 10B

BOOK REVIEW

‘Trust’ questions how we discern Truth

By JEAN VANNOPPEN
For The Paper



Trust

by Hernan Diaz

Beginning in the 20th century, writers began experimenting more often with alternative narrative structures in their novels. Early examples of this sort of novel are James Joyce’s “Ulysses” and “Finnegan’s Wake” or Faulkner’s “The Sound and the Fury.” Structure can be another tool for an author to convey meaning.

In his new Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, “Trust,” Hernan Diaz employs an unusual four-part structure to tell the story of Andrew Bevel and his wife Mildred from four different points of view and in four stylistic genres: fiction, autobi-

ography, memoir, and diary. Part I, called “Bonds,” is a fictional story of a Wall Street financier named Benjamin Rask who makes a fortune during the financial boom of the early 1900s and during the stock market crash of 1929. It follows Rask’s life until the death of his wife Helen in a Swiss sanatorium.

Part II, called “My Life,” written by a financier named Andrew Bevel appears to be a half-written manuscript of his autobiography detailing his financial successes in the early 20th century and the death of his beloved wife Mildred.

Part III, entitled “A Memoir, Remembered,” is written in the current day by the author Ida Partenza who as a young woman was hired to be the ghostwriter for Andrew Bevel’s autobiography.

Part IV by Mildred Bevel consists of excerpts from her diary in the last weeks of her life. Each part adds another layer of complexity to the portrait of the Bevels and the world of privilege they inhabit.

Andrew Bevel is not a particularly likable character, and the structure of the novel can feel disjointed and confusing at first. And yet the story becomes surprisingly mesmerizing as it becomes clear that the mysterious heart of the story is Bevel’s deceased wife Mildred. Who was Mildred and what role did she play in the life and success of Andrew? Everyone’s version of Mildred

is slightly different. In some ways she is the most interesting character in the book and yet she is a blank.

“Trust” questions how we discern Truth. In our age of “fake news,” this is not an academic question. What, if any, are trustworthy sources of information? Diaz warns that the power of great wealth can distort reality in ways we may never be aware of. As one character says, “History itself is just a fiction — a fiction with

an army. And reality? Reality is fiction with an unlimited budget. That’s what it is. And how is reality funded? With yet another fiction: money. Money is at the core of it all.”

Diaz raises questions about the dangers of capitalism without settling for easy answers. Andrew Bevel’s antithesis in the novel is Ida’s father, an Italian immigrant anarchist. Neither man is a happy, well-adjusted, functioning member of society. Both are solitary

and self-absorbed.

“Trust” is a great book club read with lots to discuss. For those whose summer reading lists include catching up on thought-provoking literary fiction in addition to the more typical beach reads, I recommend you give this one a try. Hernan Diaz is a young writer whom I can guarantee we will be hearing more from in the future.

Jean VanNoppen is the owner of Thornwell Books.

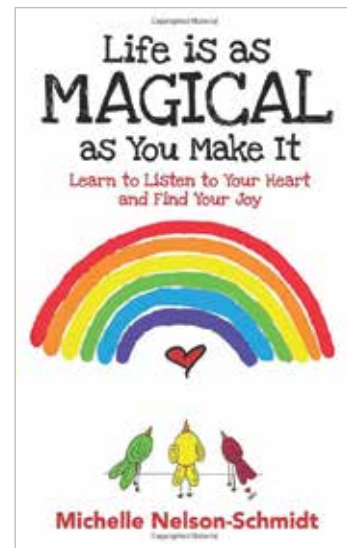
Author event and book clubs at Thornwell Books

MEET THE AUTHOR MICHELLE NELSON-SCHMIDT

We live in stressful times and at a pace that leaves little time for reflection or self-care. One of my favorite mantras from families in the recovery community is “Put on your oxygen mask first before turning to help others beside you” because you can’t help anyone if you don’t take care of yourself first. Self-care is not selfish but essential.

After writing 32 popular children’s books, Michelle Nelson-Schmidt has just released her first book for adults, “Life is as Magical as You Make It: Learn to Listen to Your Heart and Find Your Joy.” Michelle shares her own life struggles and how she has learned to find joy in individual moments of gratitude.

Come meet Michelle on Saturday, July 15 at 1:30 p.m.



THORNWELL BOOK CLUBS

Book Club #1 meets July 11 at 6 p.m. They are reading “The Rabbit Hutch” by Tess Gunty in July and “The Covenant of Water” by Abraham Varghese in August.

Book Club #2 will meet next on July 25 at 6 p.m. They will be discussing “The Door to December” by Dean Koontz.

Book Club #3 (nonfiction) will meet on July 18 at 6 p.m. They will be discussing “Poverty, By America” by Matthew Desmond. On Aug. 15 they will meet to discuss “Who’s Your Founding Father” by David Fleming.

All are welcome to join any of these three groups, no sign up necessary. Book club members receive a 10% discount on book selections for their clubs.

‘Dopesick’ author addresses substance use in forum

By SAYDIE E. BEAN
Staff Writer
THE PAPER

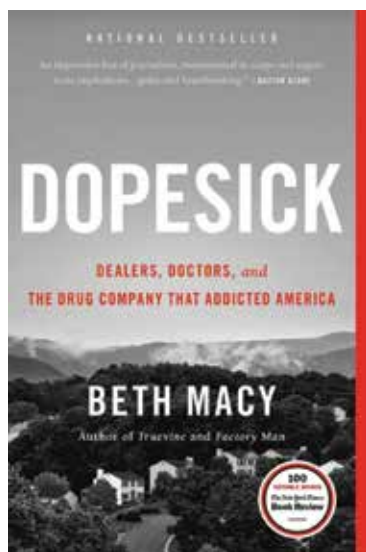
The journalist and best-selling author whose work inspired the Hulu series “Dopesick” is coming to Morganton to discuss substance use and promote her new book “Raising Lazarus.”

Beth Macy, author of “Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company Addicted America,” will lead a discussion on substance use and her new book at the CoMMA Performing Arts Center on July 12 at 6 p.m.

Her book “Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company Addicted America” focuses on in-depth reporting on opioid addiction and what the opioid crisis looked like in Central Appalachia through people of a small town and advocates fighting the crisis.

Event sponsors, including Burke County Health Department, UNC Health Blue Ridge, and the Olive Branch Ministry, will also be present. The doors will open at 5 p.m. and admission is free.

“This event is important for many reasons,” said Ashlyn Minton, public information officer for the Burke County Health Department. “It kicks off Beth Macy’s book tour for her new book “Raising Lazarus,” which is based in this area. Substance-use disorder continues to be an ongoing is-



FOR THE PAPER

Macy’s book ‘Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company Addicted America’ inspired the Hulu series.

sue in Burke County and was identified as the No. 2 priority from the 2022 Community Health Assessment.

Minton continued, “The purpose of this forum is to further educate the community on substance use and bring awareness to the issue, as well as to unify the citizens of Burke County.”

BACKGROUND ON THE STORY

Macy partnered with Olive Branch Ministry for her new book. The outreach ministry



FOR THE PAPER

Journalist and author Beth Macy will speak at a forum on July 12 at CoMMA.

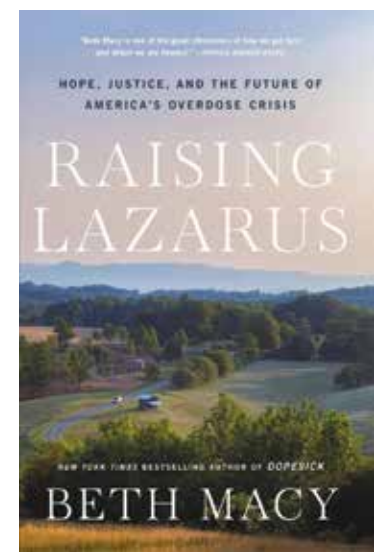
works to “serve untapped populations through faith-based Harm Reduction,” according to their website. The organization serves numerous counties including Burke County.

According to the National Harm Reduction Coalition, harm reduction is a “set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use... also a movement for social justice built on a belief in,

and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.”

Harm-reduction strategies reduce overdoses or infections through safer use. One example is providing the public clean needles through a needle/syringe site to prevent infection. Users are also informed about safe practices.

Macy joined with the ministry to work with rural communities to meet people who are suffering and fighting the fight



FOR THE PAPER

The forum also kicks off Macy’s book tour for her latest release, ‘Raising Lazarus.’

against opioids.

The forum will follow an interview-style format. Macy will answer questions posed by a moderator. Community members can ask questions at the end of the interview. An ASL interpreter will be present.

If you don’t want to watch the forum in person, you can watch as it is live-streamed on the Burke County NC YouTube Channel.

Saydie Bean is a summer intern for The Paper. She may be reached at 828-445-8595 or saydie@thepaper.media.

Beucler receives Moving Mountains Award

FOR THE PAPER

AMOREM, formerly Burke Hospice and Palliative Care and Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care, has honored one of its social workers for making a patient’s dream come true.

Mary Beucler, an AMOREM medical social worker, received AMOREM’s Moving Mountains award from the organization after she arranged a telephone call between her patient, Tammy Haga, and NFL legend, Peyton Manning.

AMOREM’s Moving Mountains award was created by the Culture and Talent team to recognize and honor AMOREM team members who have shown resilience and exceeded expectations to deliver an act of love to patients and their families.

Director of Learning and Engagement, Britt Abernathy, says, “My hope is that when people hear the term Moving Mountains, they envision the willpower and determination



FOR THE PAPER

Mary Beucler is shown with her Moving Mountains award.

that one demonstrates when they achieve what may seem impossible.”

Beucler’s patient at the time had requested to fulfill one of her bucket list items — to meet Peyton Manning.

After working many hours and numerous communications, Beucler found the Dream

Foundation which assisted her in arranging a telephone call between Manning and Haga.

“When I realized how much this patient loved Peyton Manning,” says Beucler, “I knew we had to do everything possible to make this connection happen. The family’s contagious sense of hope made me truly believe that this wish would come true.”

It was a telephone call that Haga and her family would never forget.

“I witnessed Mary and her team listen and problem solve to complete a lifelong dream for a patient,” says Abernathy, “this is why we are proud to honor her with AMOREM’s first Moving Mountains award!”

To read Beucler and Haga’s full story, visit www.amorem-support.org/about-news.

To learn more about AMOREM services, call 828.754.0101 or visit www.amoremsupport.org.

PET OF THE WEEK | BURKE COUNTY FRIENDS FOR ANIMALS



Noir is a sweet and playful kitten

“I’m Noir and 9 weeks old. I have fun at Friends for Animals but would really have more fun if I had a home. I’m really a sweet and playful little girl and get along with everyone. I’m spayed, have my shots and am ready to go. Burke County Friends for Animals, located at 417 Kirksey Drive, Morganton, invites you to come visit Noir, and see the all pets available for adoption.

FOR THE PAPER



'Life sentence on the installment plan'

STORYTELLING

FROM PAGE 8B

the Hill is horrifying, just horrifying," she said and then elaborated. "I worked on national defense issues so I did classified work. Of course, when you are a journalist the whole point is to learn stuff and then to tell people. But when you are in classified work you can't tell anybody and that drove me insane."

She left her work on the Hill in 2020 and returned to investigative reporting for WFAE.

TELLING IMPORTANT, UNREPORTED STORIES

Ervin notes that few people care about mentally ill offenders, but their plight affects everyone in the state.

"Mentally ill offenders can be confined in jails and hospitals for years if they don't have the capacity to stand trial. Hos-



WFAE PHOTOS / FOR THE PAPER

'The importance of culturally relevant training in mental health care'

pital personnel and attorneys say the system is cruel and wasteful. (An alleged offender) may have to wait three months in jail just to get evaluated and then another six months to get a hospital bed to have their capacity restored. One psychiatrist basically said it was torture."

She explained that when a mentally ill offender regains the capacity to stand trial through treatment, they return to jail. But they may regress while awaiting trial, again lose capacity, and return to the state hospital. This cycle can happen dozens of times, she said.

"It's not that we are just underfunding the mental health system. We are flushing millions of dollars down the toilet



'How North Carolina got the math wrong on mental health'

every year because of the way we underfund it. The reality is we are paying for it, we are just paying for it in ways that are a total waste of money that do nothing to help people. It's

bad public policy on all levels," she said.

There is a conversation about the series being turned into a podcast or film. If this happens, Ervin said she would

like to expand the series by looking at the problem from a national perspective. She knows the lack of mental health resources and funding is not unique to the Tar Heel State.

But she stressed that she is no advocate, even if she forms opinions during the reporting process.

"What happens as a result of my reporting is not my concern," she said. "My job is to tell stories accurately and to inform people. What people do with that is their business."

Angela Kuper Copeland covers education and arts and entertainment for The Paper. She may be reached at angela@thepaper.media or 828-445-8595, ext. 2003.

DRAGONS

FROM PAGE 7B

with my life as my energy — and voice — allow.

I've long desired to take up a watersport. My husband, Bill Poteat, nearly loses his mind when we get near water because I am not afraid of pool water over three-foot deep, ocean water above my ankles, or lake, river, or creek water without a current, and he fears that I may go under. He fears that he will not be able to save me. He's cautious and chivalrous, and I love him for protecting me. Therefore, I'll never torture him by setting out onto the water in a kayak or on a paddleboard alone, even while wearing a lifejacket.

Fortunately, a few weeks ago, I saw an announcement on the greatest time-waster known to humans, Facebook, that the Healing Dragons of Lake James needed new members. I did not know one thing about this group, but therein lies one of my greatest strengths. Not knowing about something has never stopped me from acting like I am completely knowledgeable. Obviously, that quality made me a great teacher for many years.

I'm sure that confidence can overcome competence in most situations.

That theory is completely wrong when it comes to Dragon Boat paddling. The kind ladies I met on the dock my first day assured me that what I was about to undertake in no way resembled paddling a canoe or kayak, which comforted me greatly since I've never paddled either. I have paddled a stand-up paddle (SUP) board, but we don't stand in the Dragon Boat, so I knew that skill would be useless. Plus, my experience with SUPs is akin to splashing around in the bathtub; it's rather lacking.

No, Dragon Boat paddling is a rigorous, athletic, full-body workout. I'm still adjusting to the required endurance.

Here's the basic lowdown:

A Dragon Boat holds 20 paddlers and one steerer in the back. A drummer may sit in the front, and she is useful for feedback because she is facing and can see the entire team. The boat has 10 seats, which must never be stepped upon when lifting oneself out of the boat and onto the dock, and each seat holds two people.

Each person sits with her hip against the inside edge of the boat. Her inside hand is on

top of the paddle, and her outside hand is at the base of the paddle, in the water. She inserts the paddle into the water at the hip level of the woman in front of her, pulling the paddle back with her outside hand while keeping her inside hand straight and on top of the paddle, and — this is the hardest and most crucial move for me — when the paddle reaches her hip and wants to keep sailing past her in the current, she uses her inside hand and arm, which is now reaching above her head, to lift the paddle from the water and insert it back into the water as quickly as possible in front of her again, repeating the entire process.

Theoretically, each woman forms an "A" shape with her body and paddle, facing her partner, then rotates the pad-

dle through the water, moving the boat forward. And she must hang outside her side of the boat while she completes this task quickly and efficiently for several minutes at a time because the paddle must stay parallel to the side of the boat. While hanging over her side of the boat, she must also be looking as far ahead as possible to the opposite side of the boat because she cannot watch her paddle. She must watch the paddlers ahead of her on the other side, always keeping her head up.

I sometimes practice this stroke in my kitchen with a broom while sitting on a chair in a doorway; it doesn't sound like much of a workout, but I can exhaust myself in no time.

Midway through an hour and a half practice, I have generally soaked the sweet ladies

in front and behind me so much, I wonder if I'm just flapping around aimlessly like a broken-winged big bird.

Twice-weekly practices challenge the body and brain. Before I chose to attempt this sport, I had told my counselor that I didn't know if I still suffer the effects of my concussion because I never have opportunity to test my brain. I can now say that yes, I still have some problems.

We do not paddle with our arms; we paddle with our core, powering from our legs and hips. I can listen to directions in short spurts. Maybe two or three at a time. If our leader lengthens her instructions to include both our arms and our legs, I shut down and pull my paddle into the boat, leaning over with it between my legs for my own safety. Too many directions at once confuse me. I can think back about what she has said as I rest, but I cannot comprehend her words and respond to them as she's saying them.

If boats of loud people go by and yell at us, if jets fly over going to Linville Gorge, if our team begins to wave at another boat and the person I'm pacing with isn't paddling, I have to pull in and rest my paddle, leaning forward. I cannot be distracted and paddle at the same time. I am trying to overcome this unfortunate challenge so I can eventually race with our team.

Sometimes our leader calls out for us to "Power Up!" even though I heard her say that same command several strokes back. I occasionally mumble something like, "What the bloody hell have we been doing?" Fortunately, I generally have a wonderful partner who explains that I have to count my paddle strokes, completing 10 power strokes and then returning to normal strokes be-

fore she yells again to "Power Up!"

I cannot paddle and count. Well, I can actually. But I rarely start at one. I start at a random number, like seven or thirteen or whatever pops into my head, and then I just count like a preschooler: five, forty-seventeen, one hundred, two, fifty-eight. My counting is nonsensical. Sometimes my partner will count for me, but I hate to burden my partners. I truly want to learn how to paddle and count my own strokes, beginning with one and counting like my first-grade grandson, in consecutive, numerical order.

We practice twice a week, and fortunately, I've joined in the summer, so the days have been long and warm and stunning. At 8:30 on a Saturday morning, just the drive to the lake on Interstate 40 is a delight because I'm facing the Blue Ridge Mountains. On the water, as the sun climbs, the wet reflection of a beautiful, quiet morning juxtaposes our eager efforts. We are surrounded by trees as well as mountains peaking skyward in the distance.

On Tuesday evenings, we end the days with this magnificence in reverse, the same scenery, but the sun moving lower across the water. As we exert ourselves outwardly, all around us, an inner peace envelops us, whispering for us to calm. All is well in our world. Even in mine, as I splash my teammates, counting aimlessly.

Last evening, in a moment of rest, I told my seatmate that I missed being part of a loving group like I once had in my classroom. On the boat, as the waves rolled beneath us, we perspired as we grabbed a sip of water and breathed for a moment, the boat filling with laughter and talking. I admitted that I've found the comradery I've longed for since retiring, a tribe, a formed heart that mine can beat with.

This group is named the Healing Dragons of Lake James because breast cancer survivors began the group many years ago, and the group has grown over the years, welcoming other women with sincerity and acceptance. I'm honored to be a part of such a lovely group of women, and I'm hoping that their kindness, their patience, their directions, will help heal me also.

Dinah Poteat, who lives in Drexel with her husband Bill, is a retired high school English teacher.



An evening practice brings a view of the sun sinking low toward the Blue Ridge Mountains.



PHOTOS FOR THE PAPER

The Healing Dragons of Lake James leave from the dock at Lake James Marina.

THE PAPER PLATE



Southwestern Fried Pickles



HELLO EVERYONE! Here is a favorite delicacy in my household — Southwestern fried pickles. The batter has a little kick to it and is different from your ordinary fried pickle appetizer.

The recipe is not fully mine but the original owner has blocked others from seeing it. I, however, will not hide this recipe from y'all!

To complete this appetizer, I have a simple dipping sauce that takes two seconds to whip up! I usually just measure with my heart and soul but I have kindly included the measurements.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PICKLES

30-40 dill pickle chips (I use Aldi's brand)
1 egg
1 cup milk
½ cup oil (we use canola oil but

whatever floats your boat)

3 cups plus 2 tbsp. all-purpose flour, divided
¼ cup of Panko crumbs
2 tbsp taco seasoning (add more for a kick!)

FOR THE DIPPING SAUCE

3 generous tbsp sour cream
1 tbsp Ortega Taco Sauce

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat your oil on medium-high. While your oil is heating up, place your pickles on a paper towel to remove excess pickle juice.

In a small bowl, whisk together the egg, milk, and 2 tablespoons of all-purpose flour. In a large bowl, throw together the flour, Panko crumbs, and the taco seasoning.

Take a pickle to dip it into the egg mixture and coat in the dry mixture. I personally do this twice

for an extra crispy pickle but this is up to you if you want a less exciting fried pickle.

To test the oil, stick your fingers into some running water and flick the water drops into the oil. If the oil cracks, you are ready to go!

After battering all of your pickles, place them in your frying oil pan. Fry them until golden brown or to your liking. Make sure to flip them as well.

Lay fried pickles on a paper towel-covered plate to soak up excess frying oil. I gently pat them to make sure they aren't too oily.

For the Saydie special sauce, just combine your sour cream and taco sauce. Mine usually looks light pink.

When the pickles have cooled off, enjoy!

SAYDIE E. BEAN
Intern at The Paper



FOR THE PAPER

Chaffles

WHILE I CAN'T CLAIM to have invented this low-carb miracle I have added to it and made it mine.

Originally intended (I think) to replace bread for hamburgers and sandwiches, it has turned into one of my favorite meals. I don't pretend to be a cook so easy is my go-to.

I add a pack of albacore tuna (in water) to the mixture with salt and pepper, or I add taco-seasoned ground chicken. I like to cut the chaffles up and dip them in salsa and sour cream! Mucho Bueno!

This recipe makes four chaffles.

INGREDIENTS

2 eggs
1 cup finely shredded cheese (I love sharp cheddar)
Salt, pepper or seasoning to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix all ingredients with a fork or whisk.

In a mini waffle maker, pour 1/4 cup of the mixture. I tend to flip mine for a good even grill. Usually takes about 4 minutes.

You can freeze them for a

pop in the toaster. Finding things to eat that are low carb and being creative can be hard but these are so quick and easy. Enjoy!

DANAH TOLBERT
Morganton

Chess Pie

I WILL STAND BEFORE THE JUDGE. place my hand upon the Bible, and swear before God and anyone else who cares to listen that my late mother, Beatrice Poteat, known to the Drexel community as "Ms. Bea," made the best chess pie in the history of the universe.

No birthday cakes for me as a grow-

ing youngster — I much preferred a birthday chess pie.

Another reason chess pie was the perfect birthday dessert? Neither my brothers nor my Old Man was nearly as crazy about chess pie as I was, meaning the treat could last upwards of a week if I cut the slices small.

INGREDIENTS

½ cup butter
2 cups white sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 large eggs
¼ cup evaporated milk
1 tablespoon cornmeal

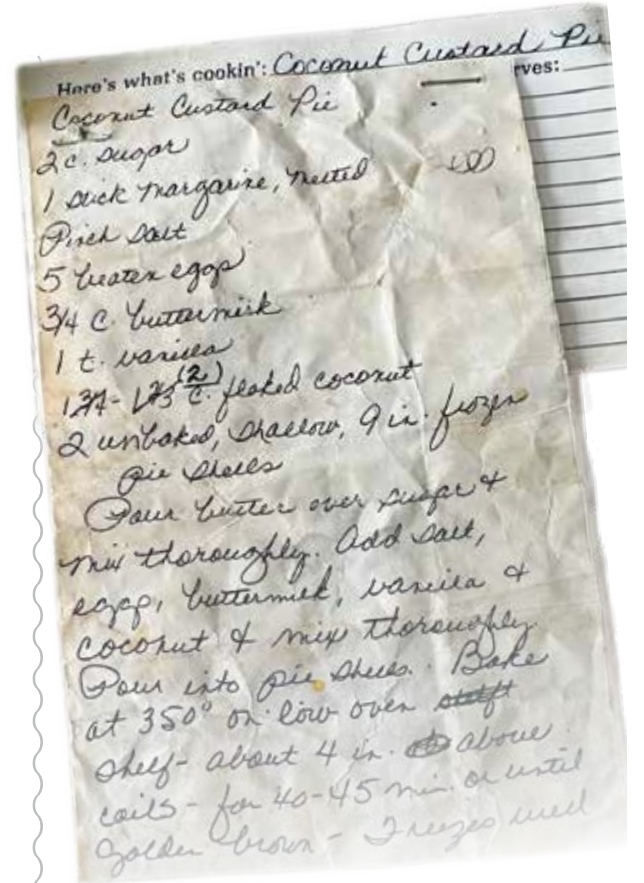
INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Mix butter, sugar, and vanilla together in a large bowl. Mix in eggs, then stir in evaporated milk, cornmeal, and vinegar until smooth. Pour into pie shell.

Bake in the preheated oven for 10 minutes, then re-

duce heat to 300 degrees F and continue to bake for 40 minutes. Let cool before cutting.

BILL POTEAT
Editor of The Paper



Coconut Custard Pie

LAST SUMMER, my best friend Chandler Kelley picked me up from Charlotte airport and took me to my grandmother's house to grab my passport. I had stupidly forgotten to bring that little key-to-the-world book while I was on my way to Rhode Island the week prior and needed it for my flight to London later that day.

While I may have been qualified enough to attend summer school at Oxford, I clearly was not qualified to travel alone. As Chandler and I walked up the steps to my grandmother's door, we were hit, blown off our feet, and stunned by an aroma like no other: Grandma Kathy Valentine's (colloquially referred to as "Chick Chick") Coconut Custard Pie.

As any sweet-as-pie grandma would do, she politely handed over my passport but aggressively propelled us toward her art form: the pies, fresh out of the oven. I thoroughly enjoyed my slice but was not shocked by its quality, as I've known for years that Chick Chick doesn't mess around in her kitchen. However, Chandler was so moved by the pie that she expressed the joy it brought her to her mother, Leesa Kelley, that night.

Leesa was intrigued by Chandler's description and reached out to get the recipe for her grand Thanksgiving Feast, which Chick Chick ever so willingly passed over. Leesa even wrote the recipe into the official Kelley family cookbook, making sure to cite Kathy appropriately as well.

Needless to say, this pie has brought families together, permanently altered Thanksgiving spreads, and helped me retrieve my passport to get to Heathrow on time. This pie will NOT disappoint.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups of sugar
1 stick of margarine or butter, melted
A pinch of salt
5 beaten eggs
¾ cups of buttermilk
1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
2 cups of flaked coconut
2 unbaked, shallow, 9-inch frozen pie shells (Pillsbury boxed pie shells are ideal)

INSTRUCTIONS

Pour butter over sugar, and mix thoroughly.

Add salt, eggs, buttermilk, vanilla, and coconut, and mix thoroughly.

Pour filling into pie shells.

Bake at 350 degrees on a low oven shelf (about four inches above coils) for 45 minutes or until golden brown.

NOTE: This recipe freezes well to preserve.

ANNABELLA BERNHARDT
Intern at The Paper

WE HAVE AN APPETITE FOR YOUR RECIPES

Share your favorite recipes on *The Paper Plate!*

Whether it's a recipe that's been handed down through generations or is a new creation, we want to publish the tasty dishes you are proud to place on your kitchen table.

Bonus points for sending a photo of the dish, too. Email us at info@thepaper.media.



FOR THE PAPER

PICTURE OF THE WEEK



ANGELA KUPER COPELAND / THE PAPER

This whitetail deer calmly ate as a group of students from NCSSM-Morganton rehabilitated a nearby trail on Grandfather Mountain. Whitetail deer can run as fast as 40 mph, but this one was in no hurry.

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.

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

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Crossword | JACQUELINE E. MATHEWS | SOLUTION BELOW

ACROSS

- 1 "Star ___"
- 5 Primates
- 9 Highlander
- 13 Witch's spells
- 15 Capital city
- 16 Dwelling
- 17 Absurd
- 18 Engulfs
- 20 Holiday drink
- 21 Prof. sports assn.
- 23 Inborn gift
- 24 Propane & helium
- 26 Altar vow
- 27 ___ up; spoke frankly
- 29 Lunatic
- 32 Intellectuals
- 33 Composer Carmichael
- 35 Dangerous critter
- 37 Waiter's item
- 38 Grand or upright
- 39 In style
- 40 Mo. to put on snow tires
- 41 Musical symbols
- 42 Baggy
- 43 Main characters in novels

- 45 San Diego team
- 46 Drs.' group
- 47 Septic tank alternative
- 48 Impolite looks
- 51 Ask nosy questions
- 52 Antlered animal
- 55 Custodian
- 58 Tennessee ___ Ford
- 60 Thirst quenchers
- 61 ___ of the above; test answer choice
- 62 Stallone role
- 63 Tidy
- 64 Ocean motion
- 65 Final letters

DOWN

- 1 Slender
- 2 City near Lake Tahoe
- 3 Blow out of proportion
- 4 Barbie's beau
- 5 Rap sheet info
- 6 Metal fastener
- 7 Second-largest bird
- 8 Chile's capital
- 9 "Peace!"
- 10 Sheep pen
- 11 Foreboding sign
- 12 Trial run

- 14 Perceives
- 19 Family member
- 22 Cot
- 25 Griffith, for one
- 27 Hang ___; keep
- 28 Freshwater fish
- 29 "A ___ home is his castle"
- 30 Disgust; loathing
- 31 Disruptive sound
- 33 Goes quickly
- 34 Fool
- 36 Many hardware stores
- 38 Nice to be around
- 39 Secret writing
- 41 One of Santa's reindeer
- 42 Courtroom figure
- 44 Least common
- 45 ___ person; apiece
- 47 Shopaholic's binge
- 48 Read electronically
- 49 Story
- 50 Zone
- 53 Be partial to
- 54 Janitor's ringful
- 56 Backyard pond fish
- 57 Bring to a close
- 59 Actress Russell, to friends

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1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13				14		15				16				
17						18				19				
20				21	22				23					
		24	25						26					
27	28							29				30	31	
32						33	34					35		36
37						38						39		
40				41						42				
		43		44						45				
						46				47				
48	49	50							51			52	53	54
55						56	57			58	59			
60						61						62		
63						64								65

PETS OF THE WEEK | BURKE ANIMAL SERVICES



Diesel loves toys and is very affectionate

Diesel is a 1- to 2-year-old handsome gentleman who is good with other dogs, kids, and all people. Diesel loves toys and is very affectionate and loves snuggles.

BURKE ANIMAL SERVICES PHOTOS

BURKE ANIMAL SERVICES is located at 425 Kirksey Dr., 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 \$90, 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 \$125, 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.



Chichi is a stunning girl looking for her forever home. She would prefer a home that is a little quiet where she can enjoy her day relaxing and basking in the love of her new family.



Koa is a 1-year-old lab mix. He is very sweet, gentle and cannot wait to find his forever home. Koa is good with kids, other dogs and cats.



Yogurt: This handsome gentleman is 1-2 years old and an absolute love. Yogurt does well all people and seems to enjoy other cats.

Bridge Club | FRANK STEWART

Simple Saturday

"SIMPLE SATURDAY" columns focus on basic technique and logical thinking.

"If you can find someone who can cook and do housework, don't hesitate: Marry him!" -- bumper sticker on my club member Wendy's car. Wendy thinks when God made man, She was only warming up. If you can find a partner who never plays to the first trick without some thought, grab him or her. (Good luck finding such a partner.)

In today's deal, West led a low spade against 3NT, and South impulsively played low from dummy. When East (rather unexpectedly) played the queen, South frowned: If he took the ace, he would have no entry to his diamonds.

LOW CLUB

So South let East's queen win, but then East shifted accurately to a low club: three, king, ace. When West got in with the ace of diamonds, he returned a club, and the defense took three clubs for down one. If South wins the first spade, he goes down two. South should pause before playing to the first trick, then play dummy's jack of spades.

DAILY QUESTION

You hold: ♠ K J 3 ♥ A K 7 6 2 ♦ K 3 ♣ A J 6. You open one heart, your partner responds one spade, you jump to 2NT and he bids three dia-

monds. What do you say? ANSWER: To show your three-card support for partner's first suit is correct. But you have good support -- not, say, 10-3-2 -- and your values are slam-mish. You have useful cards in his long suits and aces elsewhere. Jump to four spades. You would bid three spades with K32,AKJ63,K3,KQ4.

NORTH DEALER
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ K J 3
♥ A K 7 6 2
♦ K 3
♣ A J 6

WEST
♠ 9 7 6 5 2
♥ 8 5
♦ A 2
♣ K 9 5 2

EAST
♠ Q 8
♥ Q J 10 9
♦ 8 6 5
♣ Q 10 7 4

SOUTH
♠ A 10 4
♥ 4 3
♦ Q J 10 9 7 4
♣ 8 3

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♥ Pass 1NT Pass
3NT All Pass

OPENING LEAD -- ♣ 5

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Puzzle solutions

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

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

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Western Piedmont CC students will have guaranteed admission to WCU

FOR THE PAPER

On Wednesday, June 21, Western Carolina University Chancellor Kelli R. Brown and Joel D. Welch, president of Western Piedmont Community College, signed a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions that guarantees admission to WCU for all Western Piedmont graduates who satisfy certain requirements.

The MOU will offer a direct pathway for students at Western Piedmont to earn their four-year degree at WCU.

“Western Carolina University is proud to partner with Western Piedmont Community College in streamlining the pathway for transfer students to further their education,” Brown said. “As a community college graduate myself, I understand the unique challenges that students often face in their transition from community college to university and look forward to helping provide a pathway that is not only affordable but also leads to a

high-quality, four-year education.”

Welch is excited to see the impact Western Piedmont students will leave at WCU.

“Western Piedmont Community College is excited about our new partnership with Western Carolina University and the opportunities that it will provide to our students,” he said. “Through our partnership, students will have a straightforward path to pursue their educational goals. I look forward to seeing our students achieve great things at WCU.”

Students who are interested in participating must satisfy the following conditions:

- Be a currently enrolled student at Western Piedmont in a degree-seeking capacity
- Submit WCU application for admission and records by WCU deadlines
- Submit application fee or waiver and fulfill all commitment action steps
- Be in good standing at Western Piedmont and other institutions attended



FOR THE PAPER

Western Carolina University Chancellor Kelli R. Brown and Joel D. Welch, president of Western Piedmont Community College, signed a memorandum of understanding between the two institutions that guarantees admission to WCU for all Western Piedmont graduates who satisfy certain requirements.

- Demonstrate good citizenship and conduct
- Earn and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 at Western Piedmont and a minimum GPA of 2.20 in their most recent term
- Earn an associate's degree from Western Piedmont in a college transfer program or in an applied program for which an articulation agreement exists
- Enroll at WCU within one academic year (within the next two regular terms [fall/spring semesters] of completion of the associate's degree).

WPCC receives \$7,000 from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation

FOR THE PAPER

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation (DGLF) recently awarded Western Piedmont Community College's College and Career Readiness program a \$7,000 grant to support adult literacy.

This local grant is a part of the Foundation's largest, one-day literacy donation of more than \$13 million throughout the 47 states in which Dollar General operates to support adult, family, and summer literacy programs.

“It is an honor to receive our first grant from Dollar General. The funds will enable us to enhance and grow our distance learning literacy program by providing access to students in need,” said Patsy Miller, coordinator of College

and Career Readiness.

WPCC's College and Career Readiness programs serve over 200 students in its Distance Education Program, which includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and High School Equivalency (HSE). To meet our students' needs, grant funds — along with a match from WPCC — will support students' free access to educational software packages designed to increase students' attendance and measurably improve their literacy.

“It is a joy to celebrate this historic grant announcement during our 30th anniversary year,” shared Denine Torr, executive director of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. “For three decades, DGLF's investment in community pro-

grams has created meaningful access to literacy skills for adults, children, and families alike and exemplified Dollar General's mission of Serving Others. We believe everyone deserves the opportunity and access to a quality education, and we look forward to seeing these literacy grants inspire reading and build brighter futures.”

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation supports organizations that increase access to educational programming, stimulate and enable innovation in the delivery of educational instruction and inspire a love of reading. Each year, DGLF awards funds to nonprofit organizations, schools, and libraries within a 15-mile radius of a Dollar General store or distribution center to support adult, family, summer,

and youth literacy programs.

The Foundation also offers a student referral program for individuals interested in learning how to read, speak English, or prepare for the high school equivalency exam. Referrals to a local organization that provides free literacy services are available online here or through referral cards found in the Learn to Read brochures that are available at the cash register of every Dollar General store.

ABOUT WESTERN PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Western Piedmont Community College is situated in the picturesque rolling foothills of Morganton, North Carolina, and has served the citizens of Burke County since 1964. Ap-

ply online at wpcc.edu or visit the WPCC campus to apply in person.

ABOUT THE DOLLAR GENERAL LITERACY FOUNDATION

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is proud to support initiatives that help others improve their lives through literacy and education. Since 1993, the Foundation has awarded more than \$233 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, helping more than 19.3 million individuals take their first steps toward literacy, a general education diploma, or English proficiency. To learn more about the Dollar General Literacy Foundation or apply for a literacy grant, visit www.dgliteracy.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SATURDAY, JULY 1

Dogs on the Catwalk, Pooches on Parade: 10:30 a.m.-noon, Historic Burke County Courthouse Square, 102 E. Union St., Morganton

Pet Art Day: 3 p.m., Burke County Public Library, 204 S. King St., Morganton

Live Music by The Happy Enchiladas: 6-9 p.m., Hillman Beer, 301 S. Sterling St., Morganton

Mommy & Me Yoga: 1:30 -2:30 p.m., Breathe Yoga & Pilates, 115 W. Union St., Morganton

Saturday Farmers Market: 8 a.m.-noon, 300 Beach St., Morganton

Yoga on the Square: 8-9 a.m., with Breathe Yoga & Pilates on the Historic Burke County Courthouse Square Amphitheater Stage, 102 E. Union St., Morganton

Downtown Breakfast and Brunch: 8 a.m., Rodoret and Main Street, Valdese

Community Warm Yoga Classes: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Breathe Yoga & Pilates, 115 W. Union St., Morganton

First Saturday Music Series: 5 p.m., Fonta Flora Brewery, 317 N. Green St., Morganton

Retro DJ Music: 10 p.m.-2 a.m., Downtown Sports Bar, 216 E. Union St., Morganton

Live Music with Two's Company: 7-10 p.m., Copper Penny Grill Lake Hickory, 101 Catawba Ave., Rhodhiss

Live Music with Whiskey Down: 8 p.m., Horseshoe Bend Campground, 510 Riverside Drive, Morganton

SUNDAY, JULY 2

Group Walk on the Greenway: 2-3:30 p.m., Valdese Lakeside Park, 1149 Lake Rhodhiss Drive NE, Valdese. Hosted by Friends of the Valdese Rec. Meet at the restrooms to walk the 2-mile greenway. Cross the 160-foot suspension bridge on the way. Reach McGalliard Falls at the 2-mile mark. Turn back anytime. Dogs on a leash welcome.

Air National Guard Band of The South: 3 p.m., CoMMA Performing Arts Center, 401 S. College St., Morganton

Mimosas & Mimosa Flights at Sidetracked Brewery: 1-8 p.m., 609 S. Green St., Morganton

Sundays at Swede's Cafe: 8 a.m.-4 p.m., 116 W. Union St., Morganton

Breakfast at The Grind: 10 a.m.-2 p.m., 136 W. Union St., Morganton

MONDAY, JULY 3

Tennis Lessons: 8 a.m., Monday-Friday, City of Morganton Parks and Recreation Department, 300 Collett St. and 111 Alphabet Lane, Morganton

Food Truck Court: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Historic Courthouse Square, 102 E. Union St., Morganton

Dynamic Movement: 8:15 a.m., Breathe Yoga & Pilates, 115 W. Union St., Morganton

Pilates with Emily Elder: 8:15-9 a.m., Bigfoot Climbing Gym, 212 Avery Ave., Morganton (\$5 for members/ \$10 for nonmembers)

\$10 Day Pass Day: Bigfoot Climbing Gym, 212 Avery Ave., Morganton

Cornhole Tournament: 6:30 p.m., Downtown Sports Bar, 216 E. Union St., Morganton

Disco Golf Putting League (First Monday of Every Month): 6:30-8:30 p.m., Sidetracked Brewery, 609 S. Green St., Morganton

Beginner Spin Class: 5-5:45 p.m., Collett Street Recreation Center, 300 Collett St., Morganton

Run Club: 6:15 p.m., Fonta Flora Brewery, 317 N. Green St., Morganton

Pinball Tournament: 6:30 p.m., Sidetracked Brewery, 609 S. Green St., Morganton

TUESDAY, JULY 4

Glen Alpine July Fourth Parade: 10-10:30 a.m., downtown Glen Alpine. Line-up begins at 9:15 a.m. on Pollard Avenue and anyone is welcome to walk in the parade, Glen Alpine

Fourth of July Blast: 4 p.m., Burke County Fairgrounds, 145 Bost Road, Morganton. Festivities will include music by the Jacktown Ramblers at 7 p.m. Great location to watch the Morganton fireworks. Admission is \$5 per car.

Independence Day Fireworks: 9:45 p.m., Freedom Park (400 block of Independence Avenue), Morganton

Live Music with Caged Affair: 5-8 p.m., Hillman Beer, 301 S. Sterling St., Morganton

Cornhole Tournament: 6:30 p.m., Downtown Sports Bar, 216 East Union Street, Morganton

Pint Night: All day, Sidetracked Brewery, 609 S. Green St., Morganton (\$3 and \$4 all beers)

New Yoga Classes: 6-7 p.m., Collett Street Recreation Center, 300 Collett St., Morganton

Tapas Tuesday with Chef Lara from Queens Catering: Set up at 5 p.m., The Olive of Morganton, 111 E. Union St., Morganton. Enjoy free bar bites featuring our tasty Olive Oil and Balsamic. Receive 10% off featured Oil, Balsamic & Spice Blend.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

Mini Farmers Market: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., 111 N. Green St., Morganton

Singo and Dance Party/Wine Down Wednesday: All day, The Olive of Morganton, 111 E. Union St., Morganton (\$1 off glasses of wine all day)

Ladies Climb Wednesday: 5-9 p.m., Bigfoot Climbing Gym, 212 Avery Ave., Morganton (\$10 for nonmembers)

Wine Down Wednesday: 5:30 p.m., Treat, 100 W. Union St., Morganton (half-off bottles of wine)

Whiskey Wednesday: 5-10:30 p.m., Magnolia Room, 400 N. Green St. Suite A, Morganton

Food Truck Court: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Historic Courthouse Square, 102 E. Union St., Morganton

Hellfire Hot Wings Food Truck: 5-9 p.m., Fonta Flora Brewery, 317 N. Green St., Morganton

Trivia Night: 8 p.m., The Levee Brewery and Pub, 118 Main St. W, Valdese

Wiseman Tap Takeover: 6-10 p.m., Brown Mountain Bottleworks, 115 E. Union St., Morganton

THURSDAY, JULY 6

Spruce Up Valdese Lakeside Park: 8-11:30 a.m., Valdese Lakeside Park, 1149 Lake Rhodhiss Drive NE, Valdese. Hosted by Friends of the Valdese Rec. Volunteers are needed to weed-eat trail edges, improve tread on a trail, clean out the plastic cove, pull weeds, and build a picnic table. Bring any tools you have - weed eater, rake, etc.

Dynamic Movement: 8:15 a.m., Breathe Yoga & Pilates, 115 W. Union St., Morganton

Open Art Studio: 11 a.m., The Old Rock School, 400 Main St. W, Valdese

Pint Night: 8 p.m., 100 Main Restaurant and Bar, 100 Main St. E, Valdese

Brainiacs Trivia: 7 p.m., Brown Mountain Bottleworks, 115 E. Union St., Morganton

Trivia Night - Harry Potter & Butter Beer Release: 7 p.m., Sidetracked Brewery, 609 S. Green St., Morganton

Thirsty Thursdays: All day, The Olive of Morganton, 111 E. Union St., Morganton

Open Mic Night: 7 p.m., The Levee Brewery and Pub, 118 Main St. W, Valdese

FRIDAY, JULY 7

Farm Fridays Farmers Market & Live Music: 5:30-8:30 p.m., Fonta Flora Brewery at Whippoorwill Farm, 6751 NC-126, Nebo

Yoga at the Farm: 6-7 p.m., Fonta Flora Brewery at Whippoorwill Farm, 6751 NC-126, Nebo. Head out at Whippoorwill Farm on the first Friday of each month (May through September) for a donation-based yoga class! This class will be for all levels, outside at Fonta Flora's Whippoorwill Farm during their Friday Farmer's Market.

Homeschool Climb: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Bigfoot Climbing Gym, 212 Avery Ave., Morganton

Valdese FFN Concert Series with Fracured: 7-10 p.m., Old Rock School - Temple Field, 400 Main St. W, Valdese. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the music. Concessions are available for purchase and proceeds fund various civic groups in Valdese.

Burke County earns National Achievement Award for 'Pet of the Month' program at monthly meetings



WILL BROWN, BURKE ANIMAL SERVICES / FOR THE PAPER

Burke County's "Pet of the Month" program has been recognized with an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo). Pictured from left are Burke County Commission Chair Scott Mulwee with Bella, an adoptable dog from Burke Animal Services, Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board, and Kaitlin Settlemyre, Director of Animal Services.

BURKE COUNTY
For The Paper

Burke County's "Pet of the Month" program has been recognized with an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

Since the creation of the Animal Services Department in 2019, the Animal Services Center is always bursting at the seams with dogs and cats. Increasing the live outcome rate for shelter pets takes constant creativity, tenacity and most importantly, teamwork.

Working together, the Clerk to the Board, the Commission Chair and Animal Services Director devised a plan to keep the animal shelter, its activities as well as its inhabitants, in the hearts and minds of elected officials as well as the entire community. The "Pet of the Month" program is the product of their teamwork.

Animal Services Director Kaitlin Settlemyre brings a shelter dog and presentation slide for the cat of the month to the Commissioners' business meeting. She formally presents them to the board and public by highlighting the pets' individual personalities to increase their chances of being adopted or fostered.

The "Pet of the Month" presentation is a multifaceted program geared towards raising public awareness about the many shelter animals in need of their forever homes. It allows pets to spend time outside their kennels, it educates staff on the animal's behavior in different settings to better facilitate adoption, encourages citizens to spay or neuter their pets, and to inform the public of the shelter's current activities or promotions. This no-cost public awareness program is easily replicated in any county or municipality across the state.

Chairman Scott Mulwee stated, "Pet of the Month" is

my favorite part of the entire meeting. The dog puts a smile on our faces, and this program is a perfect example of how elected officials can use a public meeting to make a difference in a pet's life, reduce the stress and strain on our staff as well as the animal shelter, and reduce the surplus pet population by encouraging citizens to spay or neuter their pets. I am extremely proud that our Burke County team has earned a National Achievement Award for this innovative and heartwarming program."

"This program would not have been possible without the support of the Burke County Board of Commissioners and the Burke County Manager. I applaud their willingness to include this program in their monthly agenda, which clearly demonstrates their commitment to finding homes for adoptable pets and supporting the Animal Services Department in fun and unique ways. They are innovative, dedicated leaders and as far as I know, we're the only local government in North Carolina or the United States that uses County Commissioners' meetings to advance positive outcomes of shelter pets. To me, that's 'All About Advancing' at its finest and I am elated that the National Association of Counties sees the worthiness of this public awareness program," said Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners.

Kaitlin Settlemyre, Burke County's Animal Services Director said, "Animals are such a big part of every community and often get overlooked. This program has been so beneficial in every aspect. Our animals enjoy some time out of the kennel setting to explore and meet new people.

Our staff gets a break from the busy hustle and bustle of shelter life to learn what is going on in our community by attending the Commissioners' meetings. The community gets

to see what programs and resources we can offer them, and the "Pet of the Month" program has led to several successful adoptions for pets looking for their second chance in life. We are so appreciative of the support we have from our Board of Commissioners and for the recognition of this program."

Each year NACo's Achievement Awards are given in 18 categories that reflect the vast, comprehensive services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice and public safety, county administration, information technology, health, civic engagement and more. Launched in 1970, the program is designed to recognize innovation in county gov-

ernment. Each nominated program is judged on its own merits and not against other applications.

"The Achievement Awards demonstrate excellence in county government and the commitment to serve our residents every day," said NACo President Denise Winfrey. "This year's winners represent some of the most innovative and collaborative efforts we have seen in over 50 years of presenting these awards."

To see Burke County's pet of the month in person, come down to the Burke County Services Building, 110 N. Green Street, Entrance E, in Morganton, North Carolina or watch it live via YouTube on BurkeCountyNC every third Tuesday at 6 p.m.

DAR presents Outstanding Cadet Award to Jordyn Beaulieu



FOR THE PAPER

Pictured from left: Cadet Jordyn Beaulieu, DAR regent Pat Wells of Nebo, past DAR regent Janie Matthews, Rebecca Pherigo, and Michelle Flowers of Morganton, who is the chapter's current National Defense Chair.

A DELEGATION OF the Quaker Meadows Chapter NSDAR attended the Civil Air Patrol's Burke County Composite Flight Awards Banquet on June 3. Rebecca Pherigo, past chapter DAR National Defense Chair, presented the Quaker Meadows Chapter's DAR Outstanding Cadet Award to Jordyn Beaulieu.

This award is presented to a

cadet who demonstrates loyalty, leadership, service and patriotism. Cadet Beaulieu has achieved the rank of Cadet Senior Master Sergeant.

The Daughters of the American Revolution is a non-profit, non-political volunteer service organization with the mission of promoting historic preservation, education and patriotism.

Neighbors caring for neighbors.

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