Ephesians 6:11-17

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
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Contents

In Every Issue

Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm - p. 15
Dr. Billy Graham - p. 9
Life Lessons - p. 9
Your Government - pp. 32-33

“Now beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”
Isaiah 52:7 KJV

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AUTOMOBILES - Tires
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Spruce Pine Tire (46)

BEAUTY SALON
Rumors Salon (23)

BOOK STORE
Dellinger Book Store (51)

BUILDING SUPPLIES
Summit Building Supplies (42)

CHURCHES
All Saints Baptist (4)
Bakersville United Methodist (5)
Banner Elk United Methodist (4)
Bear Creek Baptist (4)
Berry Chapel Baptist (4)
Burlemont Baptist (5)
Burnsville 7th day Adventist (4)
Fair Fellowship (4)
First Advent Christian (4)
First Baptist Church (4)
Grassy Creek Baptist (4)
Great Hope 7th day Adventist (5)
Horizon (4)
Margaret Seventh Day Adventist (5)
Pine Branch Baptist (5)
Pleasant Grove Church of Brethren (4)
Plumtree Presbyterian (4)
Auala Mt. Missionary (5)
Spruce Pine United Methodist (4)
St. Lucias Catholic (5)
The Bridge (8)
West Burnsville Baptist (5)

CHIROPRACTIC
Cruz Chiropractic (53)

COLLEGE
McDowell Tech (24)

CONCRETE SUPPLY
Boone's Concrete (22)

CPR
Jamin Miller (53)

EQUIPMENT REPAIR
Superior Construction/Repair (49)

EMPLOYMENT
Carolina Home Care (22)

EVENTS
Berry Chapel (18)

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Freedom Life (11)
High Pastures (5)

FURNITURE
Book Store (18)
L & B Furniture (18)

PEOPLE'S FURNITURE (31)

SOUTHWEST TRADING (4)

HEALTH CARE
Bakersville Community Clinic (23)
Mission Health (1,2)
Prost Health Care (21)

HEARING AIDS
Miracle Ear (16)

HOSPICE
Hospice of McDowell (49)
Hospice of Mitchell (35, 16)
Hospice of butterflies (49)
Hospice of Yancey (25)

HOUSING
Clayton (20)

HUNTING SUPPLY
Cooper Trading (17)

INSURANCE
Former Insurance (13)
Miller Insurance Group (41)
Mitchell Co. Farm Bureau (44)
Norton Wide / Trent (55)

LANDSCAPING
Harding Landscaping (49)

MEDICAL SUPPLY
GlobalMED (10)

MULCH
McClure Construction (17)

PAYING
Appalachian Paving (7)

PAWN SHOP
Mountaineer Pawn Shop (44)

PET SUPPLY
Appalachian Pet Supplies (11)

PHARMACY
Eductor Prescription Pad (51)

PLUMBING/HEATING
Dunlap Plumbing Heating (45)

POOL SERVICE
Ken Ray Pools (38)

REALTORS
Whitson Realty (42)

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES
High Country Mahindra (19)

REHABILITATION/NUISING

BRIAN CENTER (6, 54)

RESTAURANTS
Ables Restaurant (26)
Bantam Chef (34)
Bobba's Good Food (31)
D T's (9)
Tokyo (30)
Western Sizzlin (22)

RETAIL
Grassy Creek Clothing (40)

RETIEMENT
Mars Hill Retirement (56)

TAXES
Jackson Hewitt (38)

TENTS
Blue Ridge Tent & Event Rental (5)

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Carolina Theological Seminary (12)

TRANSPORTATION
Mitchell Co. Transit (11)
Yancey Co. Transit (11)

TREE SERVICE
Ray's Tree Service (44)
Church Directory

Altapass Baptist Church
3631 Altapass Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
828-765-0660
altpassbaptistchurch@icloud.com
www.altapassbaptistchurch.org

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield
Sunday School: 10:30am
Worship: 11:00am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Sunday Youth Program: 7:00pm
1st & 3rd Sunday
(Community Church ages 5-18)
(Community Church: 7th-12th)
Wednesday Evening: 6:30pm
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Pine Branch Baptist Church
4 Church Rd
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone: (828) 766-9101
www.pinebranchbaptist.net
Reverend Bobby Joe Greene
Sunday School: 9:45-10:45am
Worship Service: 10:45am
Sunday Evening: 6:30pm
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The Bridge Church of WNC
207 Pinebrier Avenue
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
TECVNC.org
Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin
Sunday Service: 10:30AM
Wednesday Service: 7:00PM
Church Office M-F
9:00AM-5:00PM
Our passion is to help connect the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the Finger of God transform our community, state, nation and world.
(Ben John 1:14)

Berry Chapel Baptist Church
28 Chapel St.
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-766-6950
www.berrychapelbaptist.com
Pastor - Steve Williams
Sunday School: 9:45 AM
Worship Service: 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening Care Meal
Ministry - 5:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Service: 7:00 PM
When Everybody is Somebody
And Jesus Christ is Lord!

Spruce Pine United Methodist Church
1100 Azalea Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.sprucepineumc.org
sprucepineumc.net
828-765-7446
Pastor Rev. Jeremy Trotter
Sunday School: 10:00am
Sunday Worship - 11:00am
Choir Wednesday - 7:00pm
The mission of Spruce Pine United Methodist Church is to be a reflection of Christ in our mountain area, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ through: Worship, Fellowship, Education, and Nurturing Service.

First Advent Christian Church
211 Lenox Road
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-6206
www.firstadventmorganton.org
Pastor Patrick Bradshaw
Associate Pastor Javier Guzman
Pastor Patrick Bradshaw@gmail.com
First Advent Church
Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship: 11:00 AM
Wednesday: Youth Meal 5:30PM
Meeting: 6:30PM
Adult Bible Study/Prayer: 6:30 PM
Prayer: 7:15 PM
Bible Study/Prayer: 6:00 PM

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church
2167 Jamestown Rd
Morganton, NC 28655
828-593-8212
Pastor Rick Mercer
Sabbath School: Saturday
Bible Study: 9:00 AM
Sabbath Worship: 11:00 AM
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday: Praise, Prayer & Proclaim - 7:00 pm
www.morganton7day.org

Pleasant Grove Church of the Brethren
1717 Harrell Hill Road
Bakersville, NC
(828) 468-1947
Pastor: John Smith
Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Worship: 11:00 AM
We are a small, Christ-centered family of believers and would love to share God's Word and love with you and yours!

Horizon Church
500 East Fleming Drive
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-1212
Pastors: Senior Pastor Fortune & Associate Pastor Mike Stoud
Sunday Worship: 10:30 AM
Wednesday: 6:30 PM

Grassy Creek Baptist Church
193 Old NC 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-4620
www.grassycreekbc.org
Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Morning Worship: 11:00 AM
Sunday evening: 6:30 PM
Wednesday: J.A.M. (Jesus and Me): 7:00 PM
Seekers (young adults): 7:00 PM
Mid-week worship: 7:00 PM
"That Mitchell County may know Christ!"

Banner Elk United Methodist Church
486 College Dr.
Banner Elk, NC
(828) 863-8640
Pastor: Reverend Dan Brubaker
Sunday School: 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship: 11:00 AM
Traditional Worship Service: 11:00 AM
AA Open Step Meeting - 7:00 PM
UMM & UMY Meeting - 3rd Sun. 10:00 AM
English Classes - Tues. & Thurs. 6-9 AM
"Come grow with us"

Bakersville United Methodist Church
119 S. Mitchell Avenue
Bakersville, NC 28705
828-765-9015
Pastors - Dr. Louis H. Woodard, & Rev. Gene Lanier
Sunday School: 11:00 AM
Worship: 11:00 AM

Community Housing Coalition of Madison County
Volunteer Corner
By Stephanie McCullough
Madison County

This past Saturday’s Neighbors Helping Neighbors workday was a terrific success! The homeowner was out working alongside volunteers nearly the whole day. Some family, friends and neighbors all showed up to lend a hand as well. We had a group of 14 local volunteers and 4 client volunteers, for a total of 18 people on the work site. I explained to the homeowner that this is precisely why Community Housing Coalition of Madison County exists, and why we at CHC encourage the fostering of relationships across the county. In response, here is a quote from the homeowner, "I'm not just grateful to have had the help, but I'm also grateful to have made some friends." Additionally, before I had a chance to ask, the homeowner offered to volunteer at our future NNH week day. Success! On so many levels!

Summer 2017 will be here before we know it and many of our returning summer groups have already reached out to CHC for information on potential projects. We are in the process of conducting a client review, which will enable us to match unmet needs projects with community groups and their skills. More on this in April’s Housing Coalition Highlights.

Now it's time to be thinking about the next NNH. It will be held on Saturday, March 18th from 8:30-3:30. Mark your calendars! Be there if you can, it is a most rewarding experience. Interested individuals and groups should contact Stephanie at 828.640.1200 or email volumes coordinator@chcmadisoncountync.org.

Stephanie McCullough is a volunteer coordinator with Madison Housing Coalition.

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Plumtree Presbyterian Church
4277 Hwy 91E
Plumtree, NC 28664
828-782-6978
www.plumtreepres.org
Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
Pastor@plumtreepres.org
Sunday School 10:00 am
Worship Service 11:00 am
Lakeside Wednesdays: 6:00 pm
Second Services 2nd Sunday of each month, 11:00 am
John 10:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you
and ordained you to go and bear fruit - all fruit will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Reverend Bruce Cannon
Bear Creek Baptist Church
327 Bear Creek Road
Bakersville, NC 28705
www.bearcreekbaptist.com
Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 10:45 AM
Discipleship 6:00 PM
Evening Worship 6:45 PM
Wednesday Worship 7:30 PM
“For God so loved the world, he
gave his only Son...”

West Burnsville Baptist Church
222 West Burnsville Church Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828)-982-3890
Sunday Service: 9:45 AM
Morning Service: 10:50 AM
Evening Service: 6:30 PM
Wednesday Service: 6:30 PM
Church vision: To become passionate followers and servants of Jesus Christ while ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of our church and community.

Burkemont Baptist Church
4668 Burkemont Rd.
Hendersonville, NC 28735
(828)-437-2357
For more information, please visit www.burkemontbaptist.org
Dr. David Mills, Sr. Pastor
8:30 am - Early Worship
9:45 am - Sunday School
11:00 am - Worship
6:00 pm - Evening Worship

St. Lucien’s Catholic Church
595 Summit Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone (828) 765-2224
Sunday Mass 9:00 am
Wednesday Faith Formation
6:00 pm
Food Pantry Wed. 1:00 - 4:00 pm

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine
125 Tappan Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-9411
www.sprucepinebfn.org
www.sfbcs.blogspot.com
Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor
Sunday School: 9:45 am
Sunday Worship: 11:00 am
Sunday Evening: 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening: 6:30 pm
Knowing God, Serving God, Serving Our Community

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church
2907 US Hwy 70E
Morganton, NC 28655
828-475-2040
Pastor Barry Mahoney
Seventh Sunday - 10:00 pm
Interfaith Service - 10:45 am
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00 pm
“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.
And he delighteth in his ways.”
Psalm 37:23

Faith Fellowship Church
Champ Ray Rd.
Zirconia, NC 28775
(828)-475-2864
www.ffc.org
www.tcra.org
Pastor David Gillespie
Sunday School - 10:00 am
Worship Service - 11:00 am
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00 pm

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www.facebook.com/BlueRidgeTentandEventRentals

April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 5
National Day of Prayer

Prepare Your Hearts
By Monica Henley-Kritz
Mitchell County

Thursday, May 4th, 2017 — National Day of Prayer

Scripture: “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.” Daniel 9:19

Theme: “For Your Great Name’s Sake!
Hear Us...Forgive Us...Heal Us!”

Riverside Park at 12:00 noon & again at 6:30 p.m.

Days of Repentance (leading up to the National Day of Prayer):
Saturday, April 29 at 12:00 noon
Monday, May 1 at 12:00 noon
Tuesday, May 2 at 12:00 noon
Wednesday, May 3 at 12:00 noon
(Also, Sunday, April 30, we ask that every church set aside a special time of Repentance & Prayer.)

Monica is a member of Berry Chapel in Spruce Pine NC.

Yancey County 4H Mentoring

Be A Mentor Change a Life
By Peirce Bingham
Yancey County

Many kids, growing up, lack the adult role models they need to make positive life choices. That’s why a mentor can literally change a kid’s life! When a youth spends time with an adult who’s interested in them, and who serves as an example of living life well, it profoundly affects their future. Mentors are truly community heroes! A mentor agrees to spend 3 to 5 hours a week for a period of one year, with a youth they have been matched with. Training and support are offered through the Mountain Challenge 4H program, out of the Yancey County Cooperative Extension, and the program uses an evidenced based National 4H model. What an opportunity to be a living example in the life of a kid and change the course of that life forever! The time you spend with your young person, can include almost anything and can vary from week to week. Great effort is made to make sure matches are compatible and that areas of shared interest exist. All matches are gender appropriate, and youth ages range from 10 to 16. Mentors may be ANY age 21 or older.

For those with families or who are married it is ok to incorporate a youth into family activities. The time you spend is extremely flexible and takes into account busy schedules, vacations and life’s unforeseen situations. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us at 862-6186 or 828-208-0199. I would be more than happy to meet with individuals or a group in your Church to discuss the program in greater detail. As a Christian I can think of no greater opportunity than the chance to reach out and build a relationship with one of our communities “At Risk” youth. I appreciate any attention you can give this and look forward to hearing from you.

Peirce Bingham, Mountain Challenge 4H Coordinator. 828-682-4184 or 828-208-0199

Peirce Bingham is the 4-H Mountain Challenge Coordinator.

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April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 6
Relay For Life Spotlight: Rhonda Buchanan & Blue Ridge Regional Hospital

By Don Ford

Mitchell County

It is springtime and there abound a flurry of activity: flowers blooming, trees budding, and birds chirping. The same is true at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital where a flurry of activity occurs this time each year when staff are involved in the Relay for Life effort. Rhonda Buchanan, Radiology Patient Representative is the BRRH Relay for Life Team Captain. During her fourteen years of employment at the hospital, Ms. Buchanan has become attached to many of the patients who come for cancer screening and treatment.

For Rhonda, cancer is personal as both her brother and sister have been diagnosed with the disease. At age 14, her brother had to go to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland to be treated. Rhonda says, "There were few places he could go for treatment decades ago. Thankfully, that has changed for the better today." Is it any wonder why she is so passionate about RFL and finding a cure for cancer?

Many resources are available to cancer patients in our area. The American Cancer Society provides assistance such as gas cards to help with transportation during cancer therapy and treatment. Mission Hospital System promotes programs such as "Look Good, Feel Good" helping women with makeup, nails and head coverings. Breast cancer support is also available, especially to those without a family or support system in place. In addition, the ACS has online support, information and counseling.

Rhonda Buchanan states that one reason that BRRH raised over $1,000 for RFL in 2015 "is due to its great employees and the courtesy of the staff." According to Rhonda, "this dedicated organization "Relays" all year long." She shared a few of the current fundraising ideas at BRRH which include: Getaway/Fun Day Give Away – a mini vacation, a shopping day package and tickets to an area theme park.

"It is not all about the money or funds," Rhonda says. "People can volunteer their time to serve on the RFL committee or help a cancer patient which is just as important." For more information, please contact Rhonda Buchanan at 828-700-1630. To help with Relay of the Blue Ridge, you may contact Russell Sexton at 828-765-9265.

Don Ford has served the Lord as a minister for 40 years. He and his wife Deborah have one daughter who lives in Georgia.

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April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 7
Prison Ministries

One Day with God
By Chaplain Jody Griffin
Mitchell and Avery Counties

One Day with God provides an opportunity for children to spend an entire day behind the prison gates with their incarcerated father. During this day the pain of separation disappears as they sing, play games, have quiet conversation and otherwise connect with one another. It is an amazing day, made possible by the generous sponsors of individuals, groups, Sunday School classes and churches. Forgiving Ministries, Inc. in Teravillo, NC reaches out to inmates and families providing a full day of activities designed to bring them together for healthy relationship development. Volunteers from around the area come together to assist in every part of the day. The costs associated with such an event are modest (about $9000.00 total for approx. 52 children), but must be raised apart from government funding. I am writing to request that your class/church/group/organization consider sponsoring a child/children for our event taking place at Avery Michel Correctional Institution on August 19, 2017.

Sponsorship for one child costs $175.00 and includes ALL materials and activities that will have during the day including a t-shirt, a backpack (with school supplies, books and a Bible included), arts and crafts, games, lunch snacks, a magic show, special demonstrations and much, much more! Any amount is appreciated! For one FULL day they enjoy the blessing of time with their Dad, but the effects of this Blessing last much longer! YOU can be a part of this Blessing too! Please consider giving one or more of these children the thing they lack most, TIME with their Dad! A Gift from God to them and their Dad.

God Bless you for considering sponsoring one or more of these children! You may make your tax deductible gift directly to Forgiving Ministry, PO Box 117 Taylorsville, NC 28681 (Memo: AMCD). Of course, if you prefer, you can contact Chaplain Jody Griffin at (828) 765-0239, ext. 353 or rachael on my call phone at (819) 475-5089 and I will gladly meet you to receive your donation!

Check out Forgiving Ministry online at forgivemin.org and on facebook for pictures, testimonials and more!

Jody Griffin is pastor of Central Baptist Church in Spruce Pine and Community Funded Chaplain at Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution.

BERRY CHAPEL BAPTIST CHURCH
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Saturday - April 15, 7:00 p.m.
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Call 765-6590 for group reservations
Rev. Steve Williams, Pastor

www.brecnews.com

April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 8
Life Lessons

Putting on the Armour

By Doug Harrell

I can’t speak for anyone else, but it seems as if each day is a battle with my mind. It is daily filled with temptations and ugly and lustful thoughts. James 1:14-15. 

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Lust can be many things: the first thing that most people think about when the word, LUST, is used is sexual lust. In reality, it can be any number of things. It certainly can be of a sexual nature and in today’s culture we are totally surrounded by images and inundated with ideas that make illicit sexual activity seem so exciting. There are many mentions of this kind of lust in the Bible. Matthew 5:28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. I have to admit that I have had to ask forgiveness for this at times in my life. At those times the verses above from the book of James and many of the proverbs have popped into my mind. In the real world, lust can mean a lot of things: we can lust after money, fame, recognition and many material things. The sad result is the same, disfavor with our Lord and Savior, James 3:14. 

Everywhere we look we are surrounded by things that people want us to lust over, and get out of balance in our lives. If we just go about our daily lives, we will be surrounded by advertisements and solicitations that compete with what should be our focus, doing the will of God.

How do we put on the Armour of God that allows us to resist all the temptations that surround us on a daily basis? There are several ways that I have found that help me in this and I freely admit that I always need help in this area. The best thing I have found is to concentrate on what goes into my mind daily. What I watch, read, listen to and associate with has a major impact day to day. As the old saying goes, “garbage in, garbage out” is true. We tend to be a composite of what we surround ourselves with. Ask yourself, “what am I reading, are the words in this book going to teach me to be more Christ like, or are they going to take my fantasies down the wrong road? Are the movies I watch going to fill me with Godly thoughts, or do they make me visualize paths that I should not be traveling? Are the people we are spending our time with, helping hold us to a higher standard, or are they helping us get in the gutter? We tend to become like those we surround ourselves with. Do you really want to be like them? If the answer to that is yes, then we need to change our circle of friends. As parents, how many of you have told your children, I do not want you associating with this or that person? There is a good reason that you said that, because bad influence is contagious. Today, peer pressure leads so many of our children and grandchildren down the wrong road. Please protect them as much as you can!

It is critical that we as parents set an example for our children: take them to church, don’t send them. Teach them to read the Bible by showing them an example of your day. I find that the study of God’s word is a God is the way that I put on my armour. Without that, my day is not complete. If we, as parents don’t put on the armour, how can we expect our children to do this? We are facing times that will be hard for Christians, if we believe what the Bible tells us. Our children will only be able to put on the whole armour of God if and when we teach them that.

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“Man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7).

The real question, therefore, is: How will we react when troubles and problems arise? Will we react in anger, or despair, or doubt, or hopelessness? Will we spend our time blaming others for our problems, or denying that they even exist and refusing to do anything about them? Will we try to solve our problems on our own — even if this isn’t realistic? Or will we turn to God for the wisdom and strength we need? This doesn’t mean all our problems will suddenly vanish. But it does mean we’ll sooner be alone, and even in the midst of life’s deepest problems we’ll find that God is strengthening us and helping us. Just as exercise makes our muscles grow stronger, so troubles and trials can make us stronger emotionally and spiritually. This is why the Bible says, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance” (James 1:2-3).

The greatest discovery you will ever make is that God loves you — and the proof is that Jesus Christ was willing to give His life for your salvation. Invite Him into your life, and then commit your problems to Him — today and always.
Snow Hill Baptist Church

No Regrets—Was Jesus Intolerant?

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

I was riding down the creek when I saw a Red Tail hawk perched on the power line overlooking a cleared Christmas tree field. For those of you off the mountain, let me explain what “down the creek means.” This would be a road adjacent to a river or creek that runs along with the flow of the water. I would rather be “down the creek” as opposed to “up a creek without a paddle” lol, and enough of my humor. The Red Tail hawk was amazing to look at and watch. I knew that hawk was spitting over that field just watching me. I turned and walked down and claw his next meal. Unsuspecting field mice, rabbits, or chickens would be totally unaware the enemy was watching and ready to attack at any moment. Christians, we are like the little field mice. We are scurrying along through the grass not expecting anything to happen and the next thing we know we are running for our lives. The devil is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Christians, let me be blunt, intolerance is not a sin. We have been led to believe by the enemy, to be good Christians we must be tolerant. And, this is simply not true. Could you imagine for just a moment the hawk swooping down to grab a mouse and the little mouse jumps up and says “not today, hawk, I am fighter back.” And the hawk says, “wait a minute, you are not suppose to fight back.” We, the Christian community, have been told not to fight back, but to be tolerant. This is un-biblical.

We are to love people, no doubt, but where in scripture are we told to lay down our decided distinctiveness and convictions to get along with a pluralistic society? We are to be in the world, but not of the world. There are two definitions that describe our culture and if I may use Ravi Zacharias definition of secularization and pluralization.

First, secularization is the process in which religious ideas, institutions, and instructions lose their social significance. Wow, did you catch that? Christian principles and doctrine no longer have the influence they once had. No wonder so many of our young people are confused when they are brainwashed by liberal universities and colleges. I know God is sovereign and absolutely nothing happens that He is not in control of; and we are fighting for the hearts and minds of our young people. Let me be blunt again, it is impossible to follow Jesus as a disciple and attend church once a week. Discipleship takes place in two places: a personal daily Bible study, and at a New Testament Bible believing church. We cannot excuse ourselves for the battle a couple hours a week sitting on a pew. And, we are fooling ourselves if we think we can get by with any less time spent with Jesus than Peter, James, and John, just to mention a few who left all to follow Jesus.

Second pluralization is when competing a number of world views are available to its members and no one world view is dominant. This is where we are at in America. There are a competing number of world views and we are asked to be tolerant of all of them. Could you imagine the Apostle Paul had he had the attitude of many Christians today “don’t rock the boat” you may offend somebody. The first and second centuries were much like we are today with many pagan world views and Christianity was small, but through the power of the Holy Ghost and boldness of Christians preaching the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ “turned the world upside down.” (Acts 17:6) The preaching of the Gospel is offensive. The Gospel message is a message of love but also repenance.

Intolerance is not a sin. If I am standing on moral ground, I am not standing there because I am better than other people; I am standing there because God’s word compels me to stand there. The Christian soldier in Ephesians 6 is commanded to stand, and to withstand at truth of God’s Word.

Please join me in teaching our sons and daughters and our grandchildren the difference between being judgmental and intolerant. The Pharisees were very passionate about God’s word, but they had no compassion for the sinner. They said one thing, but did something else. Jesus called them hypocrites. Jesus, on the other hand, “the Word of God in the flesh” (John 1:14) is compassion toward the sinner and at the same time compassionately holy and without sin. Jesus himself is intolerant. He does not allow, or accept sin, and He does not and will not share His glory. “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.” (Is. 6:3)

You say wait a minute, we are not Jesus. We are not, and we do not win the world by being tolerant. (Tolerant used in this article is not the idea of patience, but acceptance of ideas and practices contrary to God’s Word) We act in the same manner He did in the same manner. He did. The only way to do this is the Holy Ghost is us. The Bible teaches, the Holy Ghost converts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:8) I simply live in obedience to the Holy Ghost in me. We are compassionate and intolerant at the same time. We unapologetically preach the Gospel to save the sinner, and we remember we are but saved sinners.

Would you please consider this? When I write an article I have to ask, “Is this true?” I do not want to write anything that is not true. Live with “No Regrets”.

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Eakinsville, NC. He may be reached at 618-583-0113, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.
On Living the Christian Life Victoriously

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

What a paradox! Being a Christian is the most wonderful thing that can be said about anyone. To be forgiven of sin, have Heaven as our home, have the Holy Spirit living within and to be able to live by all of the promises given in the Word is such a blessing and privilege. Yet the Christian walk is a huge challenge! Jesus said, “In this world ye shall have tribulation...” (John 16:33) He also said, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you...” (John 15:20)

The Christian life is a war which began the moment we accepted Jesus and will continue until we finally make it home.

The Christian has three primary enemies: Satan and his army, the world, and the flesh. We must always remember, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6:12)

Our enemy is not the person who says things or does things which hurt us, but is the driving force behind that person. If we can remember that, it will help us to not have bitterness or an unforgiving attitude toward those who are being used to cause us pain.

Dr. Gary Smalley and John Trent coined the phrase, “Hurt people hurt people." Someone who has been hurt, and who will not release the person(s) who hurt him, can get so filled with anger that they hurt others; especially the ones they love most. Their angry outbursts are unintentional and even are uncontrollable because of the deep hurt residing within. Recently counseled with a senior adult whose family member is filled with anger because of having experienced deep pain in the past. Instead of being able to get past the pain, they have it held within. This person is literally being destroyed by their anger. Therefore, when someone comes into their presence they spray that person with their anger as one would spray paint with an aerosol can. I counseled the one who experienced this "spray" to forgive and not let the one being consumed with anger cause them to be that way.

Our flesh is an enemy. It loves to fail God and must be "reckoned dead.” (Romans 6:1) The flesh longs to fail God and if left unmastered, can lead to tremendous evil. Examples of this would include King David, Samson, or the multitudes who gave into the desires of the flesh and paid huge prices for their failings throughout the course of history.

Satan and his army, in my opinion, is the greatest enemy of the Christian because he uses the desires of the flesh and the lure of the world to mislead and to “steal, kill and destroy.” (John 10:10)

Yet, through these forces are so powerful and destructive, there is victory in Christ. “...greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.” (1 John 4:4) We can live a victorious Christian life! The Holy Spirit living within will guide with the Word. That’s His sword and He uses it to help us overcome. He will strengthen, protect and equip every believer who yields to Him.

What is our role? How can we be victorious? 1) Stay close to God by keeping sin confined. While speaking to a group of 3rd and 4th graders recently I very passionately and emphasingly said, “You know right from wrong. If something is wrong, don’t do it.” We, adults, know right from wrong also. If we know something is wrong, we must not give into it. And, if we do give in to the flesh or temptation, we must confess and repent quickly. Unconfessed sin destroys our ability to have the power and blessings of God in our lives. 2) Get in the Word. Feast on it. Memorize it. Meditate on it. The Word will help us overcome the forces of evil which seek to destroy. 3) Pray. Prayer is as much about our experiencing God’s presence, and His presence changing us more and more into the image of Christ, as it is about getting our requests answered by Him. Finally, we must surround ourselves with people who can hold us accountable in our walk with Christ. We are our brother’s keeper and if we see someone overtaken with a fault, we are to restore that person to Christ. (Galatians 6:1)

Be victorious in your walk with Christ. Every resource you need is available abundantly.

Rev. Bruce Cannon currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Bear Creek Baptist Church in Bakersville. Formerly he served as Director of Missions for the Hidden Baptist Association and has served on the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.
Enjoying Everyday Life

Face Your Giants and Move Forward in Life
By Joyce Meyer

We all go through hard times in our life and have issues we need to deal with. While it’s not easy to face challenges or things that have caused pain, it can actually help us if we let God use them to do a good work in us.

James 1:12 (AMPC) says, “Blessed (to be envied) is the man who is patient under trial and stands up under temptation, for when he has stood the test and been approved, he will receive the [victor’s] crown of life which God has promised to those who love Him.”

This verse is talking about how going through difficult times and resisting temptation to sin tests and tries us, revealing our true character. It prepares us to pass our tests so we can be promoted and move forward in God’s plans for us.

It’s time to stop running from things that are hard, that we’re avoiding or putting off because we just don’t want to confront them. I’m talking about issues like debt, an addiction, poor health due to bad habits, unhealthy relationships, messes caused by bad choices that have led you to live in self-pity... or anything else that is making you feel guilty, frustrated, and weary.

Maybe you’ve been living with a broken heart—an emotional wound—that’s been bleeding for too long. Perhaps you have an anger issue, bitterness, or insecurity that causes you to be easily offended and hard to get along with.

Whatever your “issues” are, they are not just hang-ups, weaknesses or things you have to live with. They are giants coming against you in your walk with Christ. And as a believer in Jesus, you don’t have to live with any giant—you are a giant killer!

Confront Your Giants

In 1 Samuel 17, we read about David, the shepherd boy who conquered Goliath, the Philistine giant who was oppressing the Israelite army. David’s brothers were soldiers, and his father sent him to the battlefield to take provisions to them. When he heard about Goliath, David asked, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” (v. 20).

It bothered David that these Israelite men of God were standing around, letting Goliathlaughter them, so he said, “I’ll fight him!” But King Saul didn’t think he could defeat the giant.

So, David told Saul how he had killed the lion and the bear when they came after his sheep. Then he said, “And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God!” (v. 35).

You’ve probably heard the story: he took his sling and five smooth stones, “ran quickly toward the battle line” (v. 48), and killed Goliath. David used what he had and ran toward the battle—not away from it. God blessed him and made him a giant killer, and He wants to do the same thing for you!

Learn the Best Strategy for Battle

The first step in confronting your giants is making the decision that you won’t live with them any longer but you will trust God to help you do what you need to do to be free of them. Your attitude should be: I am a giant killer, and I’m not running from my problems anymore. I’m going to take responsibility for the messes I’ve made and stop making excuses to avoid them. I’m trusting God to show me what I need to do, and by His grace, I’ll do it!

Remember that we are partners with God. We have a part to do, and He has a part to do. He won’t do our part, and we can’t do His part. When we do what we can do, He will always do what we cannot do. But we have to be willing to obey His direction, doing what He shows us to do.

The next step is to study the Word, look up every scripture in the Bible that addresses the issue and meditate on each one. Write them down and put them places where you’ll see them often. Pray and ask God to help you apply His Truth to your life. It can also help to read books about the subject, and if you need it, get professional help, like counseling.

As you spend time with God, praying and studying Scripture, He will work in your heart, healing your wounds, strengthening your faith, and showing you how to move forward to overcome your giants.

The truth is, you don’t have to live defeated, with a broken heart and emotional pain. Make your mind up today. “I’m not going to get stuck in the past and give up my future because of something that hurt me. I can’t go back and undo it, but I can go forward in Christ. I will have a whole heart and be healed because Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted. I am a giant killer!”

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times best-selling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 160 books, including Battlefield of the Mind and Overload: How to Unplug, Unwind and Unleash Yourself from the Pressure of Succeed. She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which airs on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Ephesians 6:11

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April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 12
The Inspiring Word

By Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D. McDeWell County

Thanks for returning to read another publication of “The Blue Ridge Christian News” and our article “The Inspiring Word”.

April finds the Christian authentically awaiting the celebration of Jesus resurrection. The world may celebrate Easter, but the savior of God celebrates in triumph. Yes, I realize the words are used synonymous in our culture, and I am not being critical of the radicals or their time of tears, fun and games. I only wish to remind the church of our redeemer and His victory over death and the grave. As we consider the resurrection, we must also consider the battles we are called upon to fight as the body of Christ.

We know from God’s word, the church will be faced with struggle against a common foe; the devil and his army, i.e. demons and their vessels. For this reason, we are told to put on the whole armor of God. If I feel all of us have heard or preached many messages about the armor of God. For this article, I will try to help you with the benefit of setting our hearts toward the resurrection I would like you to consider three things with me about the armor of God. Consider with me the armor’s purpose, place and presentation in your life.

This month open your Bible first to Romans 13 and follow along. Beginning with verse 11 Paul tells the Christian it’s time to wake up and realize our position with Jesus. Verse 12 is where I want to focus for a while. Romans 13:2 “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” The position we live is one of starting Jesus with these around us. We read the entire life of a Christian. They are saved by faith or the light of men. “He is the light of His children and we are equipped (armor) to share that light. Therefore, one purpose of God’s armor is the equipping of His saints to spread the light of His gospel.

The armor begins at 13:12 where we read “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Ephesians 6:10-20 describes in detail the armor of God. I recommend you read the entire passage for clarity. Writing to the Ephesians Paul has in mind their weakness to resist temptation. Verse 12 tells specific about their first principle, that of being equipped. Now verse 13 begins with “wherefore” which means because of this. Because we face such a foe we must take advantage of God’s provision, His armor. Here, we find another purpose of God’s armor. It prepares us for the coming attacks of Satan and his demons.

Now that we have established a twofold purpose for the armor of God let’s briefly look at the pieces of God’s armor. First, we see truth. Truth does something very important: it serves as a gift, or a belt. The Roman soldier wore a leather belt which supported the other pieces of his armor. Truth is the belt which supports the other pieces of armor in our life. Truth, as it is used here refers to the truth of scripture. God’s word. His word is inerrant and inspired. We cannot lose that. Without that affirmation of the truth of God’s word in our life, everything else falls to the ground. Second, we see the breastplate of righteousness, the character and moral conduct that truth produces in our life. God’s word will change our character and conduct. God uses the phrase “be not again” for a reason. Third, we read about the gospel of peace. This is illustrated by a pair of shoes. These are not any ordinary pair of shoes. The Roman soldier wore shoes called caligae and these shoes allowed advancement against his enemy. They were a soldier’s all-wheel drive for advancing in combat. The Christian must have a sense of eagerness or willingness to advance the gospel against the Devil and fight his resistance. The gospel is what and how we advance. Fourth, we find a shield of faith. We take God at His word, we believe His promises, we trust His word, will and wisdom in our lives. Faith will protect us from the doubt and distraction we are promised to face from Satan. Fifth, we find the helmet of salvation. Paul writes to the Christians. They are saved by Christians need the assurance of hope that comes only through the daily reflection of salvation. Hope is not wishing for victory, it is expecting victory. Hope expects victory on God’s terms not God’s will to be made known in our hearts and minds. Sixth, we are issued the sword of the spirit, the word of God. The “sword” used here is not logos but rhema which refers to the written word of God. There are passages from God’s word which encourage us, strengthens us and prepare us. There is also a responsibility. We must read the word to understand how to properly use it.

I have discussed the purpose and the pieces of God’s armor; now let me conclude with the presentation of the armor’s God. It is given to be worn and used. God did not issue His armor for us to hide away. I see a comparison with the parable of the talents. The two people took the talents and put them to work, yet there was risk but there was also reward which paid off. The third hid his talent and faced horrible judgment because of it. When you stand before God in judgment will your armor be clean, pretty and shiny because you have hidden it? Or, will your armor be beaten, dirty, patched and dented because of combat? I don’t think God wants to see His armor in a museum, because He has issued it for the battlefield. Until next month may God richly bless your walk with Him.

Spruce Pine, North Carolina

Casting for Hope

The 6th Annual Casting for Hope Gold-Level Fly-Fishing Competition will occur on April 7-9, 2017 in Spruce Pine and Brevard, North Carolina. Anglers from all over the United States and even abroad have made Casting for Hope a staple on their competition circuit. Over the last four years, this event has raised over $300,000 for women and children battling ovarian or another gynecological cancer in our western North Carolina communities.

The Casting for Hope team is seeking volunteers to make the competition another great success. Volunteers are needed to perform a number of tasks such as food pick-up and delivery to sites and registration, but principally, volunteer stream monitors are needed to record the length of the fish that are caught by anglers during the competition. If you’ve ever wanted to learn more about fly fishing or just enjoying sitting by a river watching a great angler fish—this event is for you! And your services will directly aid Casting for Hope’s work in our communities in western North Carolina.

To learn more about the fishing competition, check out the website: http:// castingforhope.org/casting-for-hopes-gold-level-fishing-competition/ .

To sign up to volunteer with Casting for Hope, complete this form http://castingforhope.org/fishing-tournament-registration-to-volunteers-of-casting-for-hope. Volunteers will be given an official 2017 Casting for Hope shirt and provided meals while volunteering.

Casting for Hope is a regional 501(c)(3) public charity with offices in Morganton, North Carolina and Asheville, North Carolina. Dollars raised through events such as this and others throughout the year support Casting for Hope’s mission objectives. Casting for Hope provides fly-fishing retreat programming and financial assistance for women and families that are coping after a diagnosis of an ovarian or other gynecological cancer. For more information about Casting for Hope, check us out on the web at www.castingforhope.org.

For more information or pictures beyond the visual assets attached here for publication regarding this event and other Casting for Hope questions, contact: John Zimmerman, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Board: john@castingforhope.org

Taylor Sharp, Co-Founder and Vice-Chairman of the Board: taylor@castingforhope.org

Kathy Hensley, Executive Director: kathy@castingforhope.org

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April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 13
Fresh Start Gets to Start Fresh!
By Beth Davis
Mitchell County

There are just a handful of things that Mitchell County SafePlace Shelter Manager Lisa Cassaro gets excited about: her three precious, perfect grandbabies, gardening, cooking, canning, and Fresh Start. Thanks to the generosity of Trinity Episcopal Church, SafePlace is finally able to restart Fresh Start! Trinity is welcoming us into their Parish Hall, and they are donating pizza and drinks for the ladies and children who attend. Fresh Start will meet every Monday, beginning April 3, 5:00-6:00. Babysitters will be provided to give Moms a break, and gas vouchers may be available.

This program is not just limited to current or former SafePlace clients; any woman or young lady who has been a victim of domestic violence and/or sexual assault is welcome to attend. Fresh Start is a support group that provides a safe, welcoming environment for them to discuss the pain they endured at the hands of their abusers, as well as lasting affects this has on, not only them, but their children, too. But this isn’t going to just be a weekly gripe session for women to commiserate about their suffering. No, no, no! Not on Lisa’s watch! Lisa is going to help empower these women, strap on their armor, to fight themselves with confidence and self-worth.

Lisa has worked tirelessly putting together engaging, informative, and entertaining programs to help women succeed in many aspects of their lives. Several volunteers in the business community, the Spruce Pine Library, and other local experts are graciously lending their time and expertise to help give the women a boost. Below are examples of some of the Fresh Start programs:

- Empowerment Skills - identifying job search possibilities and careers, and develop goal strategies, cover letter and resume development and writing, completing job applications, mock interviews.
- Computer Literacy Skills - fundamentals of using a computer, basics in creating, saving, and reopening a document, basic email and internet skills, sending, receiving, and downloading attachments.
- Budgeting - opening a bank account, learning to budget based on income, debit cards, credit cards, and check writing; clipping coupons and daily spending diaries.
- Personal Appearance - hair and make-up, wardrobe coordination and dressing for success; work clothes vs. play clothes.
- Self Care - yoga, healthy self-esteem and positive affirmations, journaling; effects of stress on mental and physical health.
- Ladies Choice! Cooking and healthy nutrition; basket weaving; gardening and canning; hobbies and special interests.

According to Lisa, “I want our new Fresh Start to simply offer women a place where they feel accepted, where they feel they belong, where they feel they can blossom and grow and thrive together!”

Beth Davis is the Resource Development Coordinator at Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-765-1013 or bethbdavis60@gmail.com.

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Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story

I will never forget the day! One of the things that Clint’s plowing Vickie’s yard taught me was to be sure and verify that the message was loud and clear! I had asked Clint if he knew where a little field was across the creek from where we were working that day and he had assured me he knew. I got to the field and I had been talking about and there was no Clint. It was an hour or so later that I learned he was actually plowing Harrell Hill. Harrell Hill is a very quiet, easy-going neighborhood, but plowing up someone’s yard was pushing buttons even for Harrell Hill. There was laughter over this for several years and I had to realize and smooth out the yard twice to get it back in shape. Oh, how I missed the days of the old hillbilly and funny stories we had and lived to tell about it. The Funny Farm is real life examples of how we should be able to find fun and joy at even the most horrendous experiences. I have not had a chance to visit with Glenn and Vickie this spring, I think they have just gotten back to the mountains and Harrell Hill after spending the winter down off the mountains. I am sure we will still get a laugh out of the memories though, when we do get a chance to chat.

Blessings,

Furman Doug

Funny Farm

Dear Friends,

As late as March of this year I believed I was a country boy. My home is Hendersonville, NC, a nice town of 20,000+ only 1 1/2 hours away. But my perspective changed dramatically in late March when I came to spend a few months with my friends Doug and Barbara Harrell at Harrell Hill Farm near Bakersville. Doug and I go back more than twenty years. I was executive vice president for GTI Corporation (now Verizon) and Doug was a technology analyst. A “country boy” by definition good is the way I often thought of me. Well, let me tell you, I have learned some valuable and unforgettable things about the real “country.” I’ve worked on the farm now for nearly six months and experienced things which could only happen in a Chevey Chase film – or to me. Anyway, if you’ll all tolerate me I want to share some of my hair raising farm stories. We’ll call them “Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm” – names will be changed to protect the innocent and chances are I may exaggerate the facts a wee bit. It will go something like this:

Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm

I was filled with joy the day Doug let me drive his Kioti tractor for the first time. A spring of hay in my boots, dirty jeans on my body and a holey tee shirt rounded out my attire…oh yeah, and a great straw hat! So if you think I was ecstatic just get around the wheel, imagine my delight when he sent me on my own for the first time. Here’s my account:

“Hey Clint, you know that field on the other side of the river?” Doug asked. I assured him I knew just the spot. “Why don’t you take the tractor down there after lunch and plow it for potatoes?” folks tell me, I’ve never heard joy for a job like this in all my life. “That’s a hay field, a tractor and a plow…vargen ground, I was a full-fledged farmer in a few short weeks. My heart was filled with wonder.

I was proud as a peacock drivin’ that machine down Harrell Hill Road. Go figure, this was the coolest experience a man could have. And I was dead set on making Doug proud, sure I would make the best plow – or whatever you call a plow person – ever.

I pulled into my appointed plot of ground, fixed my hands, sat high in the saddle – oops I mean seat – and lowered the plow handle. When I pushed the little green button that makes the plow thing go, I experienced an adrenaline rush. If only my daddy could see me now.

I plowed and I plowed… I rowed at folks driving by, some slowing down to gawk at me rather suspiciously. But I didn’t mind, thought, “I am an ONE with the tractor.”

Every now and then I would turn my head slightly to admire the progress, plowing, digging, excavating… I was the “real deal,” a virtual John Deere. I hesitate to call it a spiritual experience but darn near.

As I tuned the ground, making deep rows for potatoes I heard a soft tap on the tractor door. Glancing to my left, a small woman, her head covered with a sunbonnet, gazed up at me, her eyes a bit frantic. I was more than a tad anxious. I stopped the plow (or whatever you call it), killed the roaring engine, and asked, “Hellos ma’am, may I help you?”

“Can you plow for my potato field?” she asked. Easy, right, after all, I was a cowboy preparing a potato field! “Hi, my name is Clint and I am plowing,” I replied. “I am helping my friend Doug plant potatoes.”

Vicky seemed a bit skeptical and gazed into my eyes, then the look was less than as the asked, “Oh, huh?” She replied, “Is it easy?” Oh yeah, my heart fluttered, my pulse raced, my head began to spin, my skin glowing like a burning ember I answered, “Oh Lord I hope not!”

At that moment I had a near out-of-body experience as I imagined the consequences for my error. I’ve seen the films when a farmer encounters on another’s land - he is always shot with a Colt 45. I watched Miss Vicky’s hands, fully expecting her to draw a pistol from her pocket and end my life.

I considered leaping from my tractor and running away, but I was hemmed in – either jump into the Toe River or on the suet Harrell Hill Road on my right. Ski would have told me to “get back on the horse” and press on. “The Harrell Hill Experience” turned out to be a great one!}

Lees-McRae Appalachian Heritage Week

BANNER ELK, N.C. — Sponsored by the Stephenson Center for Appalachia, Lees-McRae will kick-off the start of spring and highlight the unique aspects of mountain living during its seventh annual Appalachian Heritage Week.

The weeklong event will begin on Monday, April 3, with the New Opportunity School for Women Open House from 1-5 p.m. The program provides the opportunity for visitors to meet Lees-McRae students and faculty and to tour the campus.

Starting at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, professor of biological sciences Gene Speers and professor of biology Stewart Sheets will lead students and community members around campus to identify and discuss the variety of trees on campus. Interested participants should gather at 1 p.m. in Swank Park behind the Chaffee Administration Building.

That evening, the Bailey Mountain Cloggers will have the cafeteria jumpin’ at 7 p.m. The award-winning team from Mars Hill College returns for the fourth year in a row at a request of students and faculty who have enjoyed the previous dances.

Wednesday, April 5 is the 13th Annual Mountain Day of Service during which students, staff and faculty will participate in humanitarian activities and volunteer their time and efforts in projects around campus and in the community. For information or to volunteer, contact Renee Baker in the Student Development Office at baker@lmc.edu or 828.898.3416.

That same day, April 5, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, April 4, the college will celebrate old and new Appalachian crafts and traditions. Local Potter, Rob Widrow, from Brevard, North Carolina, will demonstrate his pot-throwing techniques in Swank Park. Students and visitors are invited to get their hands wet and shape clay on the turning wheel. Widrow will also have a selection of his work for sale.

Also, beginning at noon on Tate Lawns, student-favorite Apple Hill Farm owner Lae Rankin will bring apples to campus.

That night beginning at 7 p.m. in Evans Auditorium, area author and historian Michael Hardy will present a program on North Carolina history. Appearing as the second Richland High School lecture series, “North Carolina is the Place to Be,” this series explores aspects of North Carolina history. Hardy is the author of six books, including “The Well-Traveled Heart.”

Virginia author and historian Michael Hardy will present a program on North Carolina history. Appearing as the second Richland High School lecture series, “North Carolina is the Place to Be,” this series explores aspects of North Carolina history. Hardy is the author of six books, including “The Well-Traveled Heart.”

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The week’s festivities conclude on Friday, April 7 when Greg “Bumble Bee” Miller brings his percussive talent and carriage to campus to take students and visitors on a musical and visual odyssey. Carriage rides will be available from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. in the free EA Spiral Auditorium, Lees-McRae history professor, Scott Hafford will present the acclaimed film Blood on the Mountain and lead a discussion of the issues raised by the movie, which explores coal mining in Western Virginia and the struggles miners have endured over the years.

Once again, we invite everyone to join us in Lees-McRae’s celebration of our Appalachian heritage,” Michael Jolin, director of the Stephenson Center for Appalachia at Lees-McRae College said. “Whether you can contribute to our understanding through one of our lecture series or just join us on the carriage ride, we’re looking forward to sharing this rich part of our heritage with you.”

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Walnut Grove Church

Jesus Wept (John 11:35)
By Pastor Kurt Bomar

As we enter the Easter season, this is a good time to look at the shortest verse in the Bible. Jesus is just days away from the cross and we see some deep emotion in him as he weeps. Why is he weeping? He has just arrived at the house of Mary, Martha, and their brother Lazarus. Lazarus has just died four days earlier. The funeral is in process.

If I put myself in Jesus’ place, I still don’t see why he is weeping. I wouldn’t. I would be joyful and saying “Hey guys, stop crying. I’m here. I’m going to raise Lazarus. Let’s get ready for a party!” So why was he weeping?

Let’s examine some possibilities:

1. Perhaps he was reminded of the effects of sin. Maybe he was thinking “This wasn’t our plan from the beginning. I’m saddened that my buddy Lazarus has to suffer because of the fall of man.”

2. Some say he was saddened because he knew Lazarus was in paradise and he was about to yank him out of there.

3. He could have been sad because he had been ministering for three years now and still there was unbelief among all the other people. In fact, Mary blamed him for her brother’s death.

However, I think maybe the main reason is that Jesus was fulfilling prophecies. Remember what Isaiah said about him. He was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3).

Maybe even though he knew everything was going to eventually turn out OK, he looked around right then and saw all the hurting people. This sounds so simple but I think it’s true.

Hebrews tells us that as our High Priest he sympathizes with us, he feels for us, and that he prays on behalf of us to the Father. We often focus on Jesus as God, but sometimes we forget that he was a man too.

I like that.

When I’m hurting, I want someone who cares for me. I want someone who sees me as a good friend. Someone who says “ouch” when I cut or burn myself. That’s what I see here. That’s why he was crying. And that’s why we can be confident that when we are hurting, Jesus, our best friend is hurting too.

As we enter into Easter, remember that while Jesus loves us, he likes us too! Selah (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.

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Decorative Gravel
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Public Welcome
Hung from His Creation
By Allen Buchanan

City folks don’t have the opportunity to walk outside their door and gaze at their surroundings and see billions of trees like you and me. We cannot avoid contact with this creation. Everything from a toothpick to large skyscrapers have wood or a product consisting of wood in them.

Stop for a moment and ask yourself how the very existence of creation would have been_shered without trees. Then turn your mind to the fact that the creator of the tree sent His only Son to earth to die on a tree for you and me.

The first question I ask is, why a cross? How did dying on a cross become the way of punishing a wrong doer? According to Deuteronomy 21:22 (KJV), “And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, then hang him on a tree…”

My second question would be, what kind of tree was used for the cross? Throughout the scriptures the following trees are made reference to: Olive in 1 Kings 4:31; Almond in Jeremiah 1:11; Sycamore in Luke 17:6; Sycamore in Luke 19:4 and the Fig, Pomegranate, Palm and Apple trees in Joel 1:12 (KJV). Cypress, Juniper and Cedar are mentioned in Isaiah 40:19 (NKJV). Nowhere did I find one of these referred to as being used for the cross. Since I don’t have biblical reference materials, I questioned a couple of ministers who told me basically what I had found. I was curious as to what information about the cross I could find on the Internet. According to Google about 18,700,000 results are available concerning the cross and crucifixion. I scanned through several of these and came to a conclusion. No one knows for sure.

The kind of tree used to suspend our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ between heaven and earth to save each one of us from our sins is such a mystery. It doesn’t matter. I am just glad He was willing to die for me.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“I’ll never know how much it cost to see my Savior upon that cross!” (From “Here I Am to Worship” - Tim Hughes 2001)

Allen Buchanan is a freelance Christian writer. Allen attends Bear Creek Baptist Church.

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The Stone

By Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin

They found the largest stone to place
In front of Jesus’ tomb;
The darkness shadowed all around
From the sadness of the moon.

The sun and stars and earth agreed
That the darkness day of all
The when the stone came rolling out
They heard the angels call.

“Rejoice oh kings and peoples; Take joy ye earth and shafts
The Savior has arisen
Lord Jesus is alive.”

He stood in whitest garment
His face down like the sun
His mission was accomplished
Oh how God loved His Son.

Earth trembled at His entrance
The stone was rolled away
It bowed before the master
Holding silent till that day.

When Jesus comes again to take
His tribe to Heaven fair
The stone will breath in great release
When He breaks through the air.

Joy is a resident of Madison County, where she now lives with her husband, Danny Joe Baldwin. She is currently a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Marshall, NC. As a previous member, she calls Forks of Ivy Missionary Baptist Church in Weaverville, “home away from home”. She is currently singing with the Gospel Group “Joshua’s Voice” out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song “Homecoming” will soon be heard by many.

Stay Plugged In

By Wendy Cannon
Mitchell County

One morning a couple of weeks ago, I was sitting at the dining table paying some bills. I was using my smartphone as a calculator. Suddenly, the screen started to dim. That was when I noticed the battery of my smartphone was almost empty of its charge. So, I quickly retrieved my smartphone charger and plugged it in. The power was restored! I completed the task at hand but afterwards the Lord began to speak to my heart.

The smartphone is a wonderful creation. We are able to use it to do a multitude of things. We can use a smartphone to make a call to someone. A smartphone can also be used as a GPS, a calculator, a camera, a radio, a weather forecast, something to connect us to social media, and so on. But, without a power charge, a smartphone will become useless. If the battery has a full charge, the smartphone can function for a while, but eventually it will go dim and then become useless.

How like us! We are a wonderful creation. We were created in the very image of a loving God and were created to do so many wonderful things. But, we also need power. We need to connect daily to our power source to function as we intended. Our power comes from God. We need to connect to our power through prayer, Bible study, and sitting under the Word. When we neglect those things, our power begins to wane and “our screen will begin to go dim.”

In today’s world, all of our lives are extremely busy. With our busy lives we may neglect to “recharge our batteries.” There may come a time when we realize that it has been a few days since we picked up our Bible. We may come to the end of a busy day and realize that we haven’t taken the time to pray. At first, we do not feel a whole lot different because we are working off of a “previous charge.” But eventually, if we do not “plug in,” we will feel the difference. Our attitudes will change. Things that we have dealt with previously will suddenly seem so much harder to handle. We will wake up one morning and our joy will be gone. What has happened? Our “screen has become dim.” Our battery has lost its charge.

It is time to “get plugged in.” Read the Word. Talk to the Father in prayer. He has been waiting for your return. We have a never-ending abundance of power available to us if we just “plug in.”

Wendy Cannon serves with her husband, Rev. Bruce Cannon, at Bear Creek Baptist Church. She states, “I love western North Carolina and am so happy the Lord is letting us serve Him here in this very beautiful part of the state.”

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Blue Ridge Christian News
Easter Day HE IS RISEN!
By Rev. John McCory
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

It is one of the strange things in the modern Church that we think of the Easter faith only at Easter time. It is at Easter time almost alone that we think of the Resurrection and of the life to come; it is at Easter time almost alone that we sing the hymns of the Easter faith. This is so wrong. I think that we have forgotten the origin of Sunday, the Lord’s Day. The Sabbath, the Jewish holy day, commemorated the rest of God after the labour of the six days of creation; the Sunday, the Lord’s Day, commemorates the Resurrection of our Lord, for it was on that day that he rose from the dead. In the early Church the Resurrection was the star in the firmament of the Church. The Resurrection was the one glorious fact on which all worship and all life were founded. To that centrality of the Easter faith, the Resurrection faith, we would do well to return continually. It is the Easter faith (the faith in the risen and living Lord) which makes us able to meet life. For if we believe that Jesus Christ is risen and living, then we must believe that all life is lived in his presence, that we are literally never alone, that we are called upon to make no effort, to endure no sorrow, to face no temptation without him. It is the Easter faith (the faith in the risen and living Lord) which makes us able to meet death. It is the Easter faith that gives us a friend and companion who lived and who died and who is alive for evermore, who is the conqueror of death. The presence which is with us in life is with us in death and beyond. Once a week a story where the writer tells how his father died. His father was old and ill. One morning the writer tells how he went up to his father’s bedroom to waken him. The father said, “Pull up the blinds so that I can see the morning light.” The son pulled up the blind and even as the light entered the room, his father sunk back on his pillows dead. Death was the coming of the morning light. The Easter faith should be in our thoughts not simply as a certain season of the Christian year, it ought to be the faith in which Christians daily live, and in which we end the day, only to live again.

John McCory is pastor of Evergreen Church in Roan Mountain, Tennessee and also chaplain at Roan Highlands Nursing Center.

Spring into Action…
By Mike Stroud
Burke County

Everybody feels better this time of the year. Winter is behind us and longer days before us. April showers bring Spring flowers. Time to get some spring cleaning going on around the house and the yard. People are bustling and cleaning up at the bit to get out of the house and into some projects. It seems our lives can be like that spiritually. We sabotage during winter months of our lives. Time to awake and get the sleep out of our eyes. Time to get into the light of day and start moving. It’s like jumping out of the bed first thing in the morning. Hard to do when you are sleepy. The sun upon your face helps you get moving. That is what we have to do in this season of our life. Let the SON shine upon our face. Wake up from our sleep and put on some good music and praise the Lord. He gives us life, and we should shout His name with every breath.

Come out of the valley and scale the mountain to the top. Enjoy life from the high side, not the low side. Spring into action with your daily reading of the word of God. Take a few minutes first thing every day to acknowledge Him in all your ways. He will guide your every step. He has dreams inside of you that only you can fulfill. Run with the dreams in His mercy and grace are more than you can handle. Start anew each and every day, enough to propel you into your destination. You are a child of the Most High God. An Ambassador for Christ. You are the most influential person in your circle of friends and family. Bring new life to those around you, just like spring brings new life to the planets. Blossom into a beautiful person, full of God’s glory and grace. Be an encourager, a visionary, a leader with words and actions to the hurting. Break new ground and run up the old dry soil and water your soul. Pour out to others and God will fill you up to overflowing. There is now better ways to start the spring season than doing just that. You are beautiful and wonderful in who God created you to be. He the new life to yourself and others around you. Let your light shine and blossom in the Lord.

Mike Stroud is a pastor at Horizon Church in Morganton, Music Director at www.AmazingGraceRadio.com, and owns Stroud Building Supply in Morganton.

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The Day a Witchdoctor Got Saved

By Rev. George Patton, Jr.

It was a typical warm sunny day in Uganda when we left the inn where we were staying. We pulled out on the paved road, passing many little shops along the way, until finally we arrived at a little dirt road. We had not traveled over a mile after turning off, and out through the jungle we went. The further we went down the road the sparser the houses got. Not only did the houses get sparser, they became less and less like a house and more and more a hut. Little grass huts began to dot the sides of the road and the hillsides. We went through little village after little village. Finally, the electric poles stopped. I knew we were going into some of the most remote areas of Uganda. We started to slow down as the road got worse and worse. The pastor we were with, Jeremiah was his name, he is a converted witchdoctor that God has saved and called to be a preacher of His Word) pointed up the hill to one of the huts and said, “That is the house of one of the cannibals. He is dead now.” You see up until a generation ago they were still practicing cannibalism. We finally arrived at the village center. I had been told that this place was held by witchdoctor, some of the most powerful. We had arrived an hour early so our Brothers in Christ decided to show us around the village. We made our way down the village to one of the witchdoctor’s houses. His name is Edward. Now Edward’s dad used to be a teacher of witchdoctors in East Africa. They would come from all around to be trained. Edward began to show us around his property. We went by his house and out to his garden. He was telling us stories along the way. We circled around and ended up in the cemetery at his father’s tomb. It was elaborately decorated. It was made of white marble with his father’s picture on the tomb. As we were standing there I asked Edward, “Edward,” I said, “Do you know who Jesus is?” “Yes,” he said, “I know who He is.” I said, “Edward, you know He is the Son of God?” “Yes,” Edward said, “I know that.” I said, “Edward you know He came, lived, and was put in a tomb and on the third day He rose again and now He is seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven?” “Yes, Edward said, “I know that as well.” “Edward,” I said again, “You know He came to take away the sins of the world?” “Yes,” He said, “I know that too.” “Edward,” I said, “What is keeping you from asking Jesus to save you and to take away your sins and give you a place in heaven?” Edward looked up with a glow in his face and said, “I suppose nothing.” I said, “Edward, don’t you think you want to ask Jesus to come and save you today?” With a big smile on his face he said, “Yes, I do.” Right there, on his knees, in front of his father’s tomb, Edward prayed and received Christ. He said afterward that he had been thinking about this for some time and that God had sent us there, that day, for that purpose. After Edward had prayed, he asked if we wanted to pray with him. This is the place that he had been doing his surgery I said, “Yes we do.” We went and laid hands on those brick stones and prayed with all that we had, offering every spirit of Satan that was there. Then we asked the holy spirit to come and render any evil activity practiced there ineffective. We proceeded on to our conference at the church and it wasn’t long before Edward came in the back and took his seat. What amazing day when God takes an old witchdoctor and transforms him into a follower of Jesus Christ.

George Patton is an evangelist missionary to the world from Grace Baptist Church in Margenton.
More than Conquerors!

By Rick and Cindy Mercer
Burke County

The daily grind can really take a toll on a person from time to time. There are so many “landmines” just waiting to cause us to stumble as we try and take our stand for Jesus. I think it is safe to say that we just live life “out of focus” on occasion. And it is no surprise that we watch people (and maybe even ourselves) become discouraged if we linger too long on the distractions that swirl around us on a regular basis.

It is then that we can be thankful for the armor that we can “suit-up” in to shield us from the darts, bumps and challenges that we experience way too often. Yes, we have protection! The Bible gives instructions to “take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:13). The scriptures continue on in verses 14-18 with giving us our waist with truth, putting on a breastplate of righteousness and to shoot our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Then we are to take the shield of faith with us in order to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And that’s not all! We must take the helmet of salvation and sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God and then pray always with all prayer and supplication with the Spirit, being watchful in this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints! Amazing! God loves us that much, to give us this wonderful outfit of protection as we face difficult situations!

There was a man named Dirk Pieters who was awaiting his execution in prison. He wrote a moving letter of comfort to the one he called “my most beloved sister and wife, Willemien.” He tried to pour the hope that unnerved his heart into hers. He quoted Christ: “Therefore you now have sorrow, but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice. And your joy no one will take from you” (John 16:22).

Dick helped his wife focus on the future joy of being reunited in the presence of Christ. He wrote, “I admonish you...you must believe...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...I commend you to God.”

He fought through his anguish. He didn’t allow his present circumstances to overwhelm him. And he quoted the reassuring words of Paul: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:35-37).

Dick looked to eternal realities. He looked through the bars and through the prison walls. He was able to affirm that absolutely nothing, not anything in all creation, could separate the believer from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This is what Dick was able to share in his darkest hour.

When we face life’s end, Jesus’ promise of eternal life is our only hope. Staring death in the face, we find that Jesus’ promise of “forever” makes all the difference. Sussing that this life is not the end brings us up with new hope.

In one of my favorite books, Steps to Christ, we are reminded that “the Christian is not left to walk in uncertain paths. We are not left to vain regrets and disappointments. And if we do not have the pleasures of this life we may still be joyful in looking to the life beyond.”

In Christ we look to the “life beyond.” We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave us beautiful instructions in His precious Word! Nothing can separate us from His love. Daily look to Him and let your heart be filled with courage. Daily look to Him and let your life be filled with joy. Daily look to Him and let your soul be filled with hope!

With Jesus on our side...we are mighty and strong...we are more than conquerors!

Rick Mercer is the pastor of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church at 2187 Jamaestown Road, Morganton. They can be reached at 828-859-0159 or cmberger@bellsouth.net. Check out www.morgantonnc.org. Their passion is to share the love of Jesus with all who will listen.
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By F Brent Price
Mitchell County

Comfort, Love and Respect—these words embody the essence of Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge. They are woven into the heart of our promise to provide the best care possible for all those who choose us to care for them at the end of life.

When we speak of comfort, freedom from physical pain is a primary concern. Medication and personal care assistance, as well as emotional and spiritual support, all seek to ensure comfort. Frequently, physical pain is diminished once emotional and spiritual pain is resolved.

A gentle touch, a measuring presence or a single tear—all are expressions of love that defy words. This is love that doesn’t bend others to our will. It’s rooted in grace that isn’t cheap and doesn’t play favorites. This love validates the worth of each person we serve.

Every patient and family in our care are treated with respect. Regardless of anyone’s past history or circumstances, every person has worth and deserves to be treated with dignity. We affirm the right of every patient to make their own choices regarding their care and quality of life. We are committed to honoring and affirming their decisions without judgement.

When you choose Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge you are choosing more than simply another agency doing business as usual. You are choosing a team of exceptionally qualified, compassionate and dedicated persons who have answered a call to committed service.

Our patients and families come first—always. The needs of those we serve at the end of life are our priority. We are the choice you can count on.

Rev Brent Price is a chaplain at Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge.

The Rotary of Spruce Pine

Restoring the Penland Post Office
By Doug Sudduth
Mitchell County

Restoring the Penland Post Office and general store was the topic at the March 9 regular meeting of the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine.

Penland Post Office Project board of directors chair Alicia Swarrangus and board treasurer Suzanne Ford told the club about the history of the buildings and the board’s accomplishments since it was formed in 2012. The same year the post office and general store were placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Swarrangus said the post office was established in 1879 and moved several times before moving to its current building in 1934. The building itself was built in 1902 and housed the Bailey Lumber Company, and later several General Stores.

The project needs more money to finish the restoration, at which time the space will be available for rental spaces, an outdoor recreation outpost such as kayaking or rafting because of its location along the banks of the North Toe River or other businesses.

Visit www.penlandpostoffice.org or mail a check to the Penland Post Office Project, P.O. Box 41, Penland, NC 28765 to donate.

Rotarian Reid Duncan, left, presenting locally handmade mugs to Alicia Swarrangus, center and Suzanne Ford.

Doug Sudduth is the Public Relations Officer for the Spruce Pine Rotary Club.

Check out our new Website
www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

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828.682.9675
hospiceofyancey.org
856 Georges Fork Rd. Burnsville, NC

April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 25
Mine Creek Baptist Church

Jesus Lives, Jesus Lives!

By Preacher Chris Rathbun
Mitchell County

Spring to me is a glorious time of year. We can look around us and see the signs in God’s cre-
ation that show us that winter is releasing its hold and slowly giving way to spring. Already, at the
time I’m writing this, the yellow flowers (I call
them Easter flowers) are up out of the ground and
blooming. Others are springing forth after a long
winter of being dormant in the ground. Gradu-
ally as time goes by, we will see more and more
evidence of the changing of the season. Many are
already looking forward with great anticipation to working in the gardens, seeing the beauti-
ful blooming colors of spring, and enjoying the warming days ahead.
It’s rainy and cold outside today. Just sitting here in my study writing about spring
gives me a renewed sense of excitement in the days that lie ahead. I’ve never re-
ally been a hot weather kind of person, but since it seems we aren’t going to get
much snow, I must say I’m looking forward to warmer temperatures and sunny
days! Spring seems to give us a feeling of new life springing forth around us and
results in a feeling of new life in us. Cold and dreary winter days can sometimes
leave us feeling cold and dreary on the inside. However, there is one thought that
encourages us, spring is almost around the corner!

The greatest reason I love spring is the fact that it is the time of year we as
Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Christ our Lord! As a pastor and preacher,
I always feel that it is of utmost importance that we as believers focus our
hearts and minds on the events of the death and resurrection of Christ. Though our
salvation is the free gift of God, it came at a great
cost to the Lord. We must never forget the great
suffering that Jesus went through to save us from
our sin. His suffering and death paid the cost that we
could not. The message of the Gospel teaches us
how much the Lord loves us. Even though we
deserved hell, Jesus took
our sins upon Himself. I
often tell my church family that God’s love is not measured through our circum-
stances, but always measured through the cross of Calvary.
The events that transpired when Christ suffered and died must have broken
the disciples’ hearts. After following the Lord and looking forward to the future
with Him, they were utterly devastated when He was crucified. The emotions and
tumult that was going on inside them was great. How would they go on? What
would they do next? The One they had followed was now dead. They had dedi-
cated their life to Him and now He was gone. They hid behind closed doors for
fear they would be next. Peter had denied Him and the others had fled. But …

Then came the women to the tomb. Seeking to mourn the body of their de-
creed Lord and Master, their hearts were surely burdened tremendously. Who
would roll away the stone for them? Could you imagine how many tears had been
shed over those last few days? Can you imagine the heaviness of their hearts as
they slowly made their way to the place where Jesus was buried? However, the
feelings of depression and heartbreak began to change when they found things
totally different than what they expected. The tomb was empty and the stone was
rolled away! The question was asked, “Why seek ye the living among the dead?
He is not here, but is risen; remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in
Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered in to the hand of sinful men,
and be crucified, and the third day arise again.” (Luke 24:6-7). Like the emotions
of winter giving way to the emotions of spring, the news of His resurrection began
to spread and the disciples were changed forever! The Lord was alive! Death
had been conquered and the grave had been defeated! The way for man’s sin to be
forgiven and accomplished in Christ, God’s Son! The disciples would not be
unaware of the depth of the Loving Lord any longer, for they were receiving the message of
the Risen Lord, a message that will sound throughout eternity.

Christians, our Savior is no longer on the cross. Our Savior is no longer in the
tomb. Our Savior is alive forever and ever and is seated at the right hand of God!
Let us celebrate together and worship the One who rose from the dead to never
die again! Let us read the story in the Holy Scriptures! Let us sing the songs that
tell the story of His resurrection! May our hearts rejoice inside us as we proclaim
to the world, “Jesus lives, Jesus lives!”

Preacher Chris Rathbun serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.
Sitting on the Steps of Life

By Timothy W. Tron

A few weeks ago, God took me to the front porch of the little convenience store in the town of Colletsville. There, as I sat on the steps of the modern day general store watching the world go by, I waited. The voice had told me to go there and wait for someone, whom I did not know. So, I stayed the night there. One person after another got out of their cars, and either went inside the store or pulled up to the gas pumps to fill up their vehicle. My destination began with speaking to the woman inside, asking if they went to any local churches, neither did. I asked if they lived in the area, and they said yes, just up the road. It was then I realized that was part of the reason I had been sent. Pouring myself a cup of coffee, I then retired to the front steps where my story began and waited.

It didn’t take long, but soon an older man, scruffily dressed in overalls, pulled up in his pick-up truck and got out, calling out to me as he shut the door. “Fine day we’re having,” he nearly shouted from across the parking lot. I took another sip of the hot brew and nodded, “Yes, it certainly is,” I answered. He stepped on the first step and started to climb but paused when I said, “It’s not quite as bad as it was last night, though.” The rough-hewn mountain man looked down at me. “Yes, that wind can cut right through you.”

The previous night had been a bitter cold sixteen degrees with winds gusting to thirty miles an hour. The chill was still in my bones, thus, the hot coffee was good after dinner. I took another sip as I nodded in agreement. I removed my sunglasses so as not to seem unfriendly and asked, “Do you know of my good churches in the area?”

“What kind church you lookin’ for?” he answered as he stepped backward off the step so that he now stood in front of me.

“One that preaches the Word of God,” I answered solemnly.

“Then the best kind. That’s what I like,” he quipped as he checked me out. It was at that moment, that silent split second when you feel a connection to someone, someone you had never met before, but there in the moment, there was something that tied you together far beyond the mere seconds in which you stood. “Well, there’s the couple we have here in Colletsville,” he tilted his head in the direction of the two churches I had just driven past a few minutes earlier when I was checking out their starting times and denominational affiliations. “The Advent Church was started over a hundred years ago, when their preacher rode down from the mountains on a mule.”

“Wow, I exclaimed.”

“They’re all good folks.”

“I noticed they were pretty close together, the churches that is.”

“Yeah, the one used to sit facing the road but the flood spun it around on the foundation, and they just left it there after it was repaired.”

“The flood that took out the railroad tracks?”

“Yep, that’s the one. He then stepped forward and introduced himself, “I’m Cecil Byrd.”

I reached out my hand and shook his firmly, “Tim Tron,” I answered, smiling back at him. I followed with, “You have the same name as one of my favorite uncles.” To that, he smiled extra wide.

“Yep, I guess it’s a very common name.”

“You take your brother, for example, his name is Daniel Boone Byrd. You’d thought they would’ve called me Davis Crockett Byrd, but no, they called me Cecil.”

“No, I guess not. Did they name you after a family member?”

“No, they told me my daddy worked for a man that he didn’t like. His name was Cecil.”

“Hmmm,” I said biting my lip in curiosity. “It don’t make any sense, but then sometimes that’s just the way life is.”

When I asked if there was anyone around that needs string music, he told me, no, but his mother used to play the banjo.

“She was quite musical you might say. She played the banjo, guitar, and even the piano.” The pride in his voice was evident, but as he spoke, he seemed to drift off there as if he was still listening to those ancient tunes come back to life. In the distance, I could almost hear that relic of claw hammer sound echo off the mountain walls near us.

As our conversation continued, Cecil would welcome or call out to almost everyone that was coming and going in and out of the store. It was obvious he was a social town Mayor. He is a large black Ford 2500 Diesel pulled up in which commanded all of Cecil’s attention. It had just pulled out of the school parking lot which was across the street from the store.

“Nice rig,” I remarked admiringly.

“Sure is,” the grinned, “That’s my boy.”

Cecil then left me and walked over to visit with his grandchildren who began pouring out of the massive, fully-loaded pickup, complete with a heavy duty electric winch fastened on the aftermarket painted black metal, Texas bumper. I waited for the appropriate time so as not to interrupt, threw my empty coffee cup into the garbage nearby as I hopped for my car.

“You talk to later Cecil,” I said, waving goodbye.

“You too, he called back, waving in my direction. “Good talkin’ to ya.”

Behind the store, the John River silently flowed past as time and mankind came and went. Somewhere in the farthest reaches of a holler nearby sits a banjo covered in dust whose memory begs to come to life. Somewhere those memories are still alive, a hearth away.

Welcome to my new home.

Thanks be to God.

Timothy W. Tron is the Executive Director of the Waldensian Trail of Faith. He lives in Waldensia with his family. He is the author of “Bruches to Heaven,” and an active blogger, artist and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from US as an Eagle Scout and is Vice President of the Waldensian Merchants’ Asso. He has been Ordained to perform weddings at the Trail and attends several area churches seeking to serve the Lord every day.
Avery County
Avery County YMCA - Become a Vendor at the 2017 Healthy Kids Day. On April 29, the Y will celebrate Healthy Kids Day, our national initiative to improve the health and well-being of kids. Join the Movement by participating in one of the nation's largest health days for children! The Williams YMCA would like to invite you to be a part of our local Healthy Kids Day for the children of Avery and surrounding counties. This is a free event for the entire community! The event will be held at Newland Town Park (weather permitting) from 11:00-2:00 on Saturday, April 29th. 2017. We would like to have as many local businesses there as possible to provide our children and their families with lots of resources to keep them active, healthy and safe. In 2016, close to 400 people were served at this event and we hope to serve even more this year. We are looking for vendors and sponsors for this event. If you would like a table at the event or would like to be an event sponsor - let me know! Please send me any questions you may have! Below are a couple of quick event details:
Date: April 29th, 2017
Time: 11:00am-2:00pm (Vendors will be asked to set up by 10:45am)
Location: Newland Town Park (If the weather is not cooperative the event will be held in the Newland Elementary School gymnasium)
Vendor Information: We ask each vendor to provide a fun activity (I am attaching some ideas!), resources and/or snacks, etc. The Y will provide tables and chairs if you need them! There is a Healthy Kids Day Facebook event page under the Williams YMCA Facebook page - please invite your friends to help us get the word out about the event!
For more information please contact, Bonnie Clark, Wellness Program Director

Burke County
Brown Mountain Baptist Church EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE 2040 Brown Mountain Beach Rd, Morganton, NC Sunday, April 16, 2017 at 7:00am Breakfast afterward, then Sunday School. After Sunday School the “Golden Valley Crusaders” will sing. Everyone welcome. For more info call 437-3848 Doug St. John.

Burke County Chamber - A Taste of Burke at the Old Armory Building at 306 W. McDowell St. in Morganton. Tuesday April 11th at 6:00 to 8:00 pm. For more info call the Chamber:
437-2690

Safe Plans/Certified Food Protection Manager Course April 26 and 27th from 9am to 4pm with a 2hr exam on April 28th at 9:00am. 130 Announs Dr. Suite 2 in Morganton call 828-764-0480 for more info.
Chamber Classics TV Sat. April 8, 2017 at Dredge Auditorium 7:30pm call 828-384-5004 for more info.
Western Piedmont Youth Symphony Spring Concert: Monday, April 10, 2017 7:00pm Dredge Auditorium for more info call 828-324-8603.

Catawba River Baptist Association
• April (month of food collection for the Children's Homes of NC)
• 1st-Sat. RA Race Day
• 6th-Sat. Adult Outing
• 16th – Easter
• May - 2nd Church Security Seminar @ 6:30 pm @ Walker Road Baptist
• 21st- Association Missions Offering
• 33rd –Why They Stay Seminar with Dr. Steve Parr @ 6:30 pm @ Mulls Grove Baptist
• 13th- Why They Stay Seminar with Dr. Steve Parr @ 6:30 pm @ Mulls Grove Baptist

Mission Trip
Catawba River Baptist Association will be leading a mission trip to Cuba September 14-22. This will be an exciting trip where we will do construction, prayer walking, personal evangelism and teaching. The cost for the trip which includes transportation, food, lodging and supplies is $2,000 per person. This trip is open to both men and women. If interested you will need to begin the process of getting a passport.

Christiana Business Men’s Connection (Morganton) - We are a movement of Men to Experience the Power of One God, the Value of One Man and the Leveraging of One Team to move the Spiritual Reproduction among Businessmen. Please join us for lunch at one of our weekly Bible studies Monday, 12:00 noon at the Community House, Morganton. Contact: Wayne Giese, 828-413-5819.

Hopedale Baptist Church Spring Revival – April 9th to 12th 6:00 pm Sunday, 6:30 pm Monday thru Wednesday. Dr. Len Tumer is the speaker. For more info contact Hopedale Baptist Church.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church - Truth for Youth Evangelistic Meetings begins April 12th, and will take place every Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday through until April 30th. These meetings will be presented by our local youth. Beginning at 7:00 p.m., each night, at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Janestown Road, Morganton, NC 28655. The Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church invites everyone to their Spring Cantata! Saturday, April 15th, at 11:00 a.m. 2187 Janestown Road, Morganton, NC 28655. Cooking Demonstration and Food Sampling with Connie Vati - Tuesday, April 18th, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the Silver Creek Adventist School, 2195 Janestown Road, Morganton, NC 28655. Cost is $5.00 per person. Please contact Cindy to register at 870-510-8048 or e-mail cjaerger@tdnet.com.

LifStart Seminar: Reversing Heart Disease Naturally will take place April 25th, at 6:00 p.m., at the Silver Creek Adventist School Gym, 2195 Janestown Road, Morganton, NC 28655.

Aglow International Hickory Lighthouse Hickory Lighthouse meetings are the second Saturday of each month.
Patient Modesty Organization – Everyone is invited to participate in the Caribbean 5K Run/Walk on the Morganton Greenway at 9:00 AM, Saturday, April 29th. Registration will begin at Catawba Meadows Park (Shelter #3) at 9 AM. Chicken sandwiches from Chick Fil A of Morganton, and water will be provided to all runners after the race. Each runner will be guaranteed a tote bag with goodie inside. Registration can be done by April 15th.
We will also have a silent auction under picnic shelter #3 with many great items including gift certificates for local restaurants, attraction tickets, and gift certificates for items in different states you can bid on. This silent auction is open to non-participants and public starting at 9:30 AM. Check out the silent auction link at http://www.patientmodesty.org/morgantonsilentauction.asp. Be sure you bring your check book and/or extra cash so you can participate in the silent auction.
The Top 3 females and male finishers will receive gift certificates for Caribbean resorts in Antigua and Grenadines donated by Slave Island Resort. We will also have a costume contest for the race for the best Caribbean theme (must wear short and pants/shorts) dressed people. The two best dressed will win gift certificates for Caribbean resorts. See web site: http://patientmodesty.org/caribbean5krun.aspx for more details.
The costs for entering the race are:
Early Bird Registration before April 1st - $20 (Walk - $15)
Pre-registration before April 28th - $25 (Walk - $20)
Day of Race - $30
The race will benefit Medical Patient Modesty, a 501c3 non-profit organization that works to educate patients about how to stand up for their rights to same gender medical care for certain procedures and how to have maximum amount of modesty for procedures. The organization was Founded by Misty Robbins, a deaf woman. This is an often unspoken need which Misty has found. And while we may not have thought about modesty before, this is especially a needed area for people who are concerned about their modesty in medical settings and abused victims. Your support to MMP is much appreciated.

McDowell County
Clinchfield Baptist Church (Marion) – We are accepting resumes for Minister of Music. Current worship style is blended using both traditional hymals, choral, and contemporary arrangements with soloist and choir. The position is a part-time position and involves organizing and leading the church music ministry as well as both adult and children. Baptist background preferred. Send resumes with references to ClinchfieldBaptistChurch@fronties.com or to address 1150 East Court Street, Marion, NC 28752 Attn: Personnel Committee.

First Baptist Church of Marion - Belize Medical Mission Registration is now complete for the 2017 Belina Medical Mission Trip. 14 am onboard and preparing to provide free clinics in 5 underserved villages in the northern Corozal District of the country. The team is currently raising funds for medical supplies and medications. Contributions are greatly appreciated. Please make your donations to FBC for the Belina Medical Fund. For more info, please contact Scott Hagaman.

Announcement Grace Community Church in Marion, NC will hold its 4th Annual Community Easter Egg Hunt, which will be held at the church, from 10 am to 1 pm on April 15th. Puppies will be available for adoption for local area residents as well as residents from surrounding areas. The event is free to the public and will feature free games for children and adults, bounce houses, free snacks, and a craft table. For more information, please contact the church at 828-724-8399.

Historic Marion Tailgate Market
When-12:00-2:00 pm, March 26, 2017
Where-Marin Town Depot, 45 Depot Street, Marion, NC 28752
Historic Marion Tailgate Market is having a community kickoff to kick-off the 2017 market season. Bring a friend & your favorite cover dish. The HMTM will provide the meet and drink. Vendor applications will be provided. In 2016, the HMTM celebrated 10 years of providing local foods and crafts by our local farmers and artisans. Let’s continue the tradition. Please RSVP by March 21, 607-835-1051 or Lorenf@ymail.com.
Historic Marion Tailgate Market is open on Tuesday from 1 to 6 pm and Saturday from 9 am to 12 pm in downtown Marion under the Tailgate Market shelter. Opening day, Tuesday, May 2.

Hospice of Rutherford and Carolina Forhilis - Hope Grief Support for those who have lost loved ones: Offered at First Presbyterian Church, “79 Academy St. Marion. March 7, 14, 21, 28 at 6pm.

New Hope of McDowell (Marion) - New Hope of McDowell is seeking a full-time Associate Director - Shelter Manager. New Hope of McDowell is a non-profit domestic violence and sexual assault agency located in McDowell County, NC.

www.brcnews.com
April 2017- Blue Ridge Christian News page 28
Bits 'n Pieces

This position includes benefits such as employee health insurance and paid vacation, personal, and sick time. The primary purpose of this position is to provide direct client services and advocacy to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children, as well as assisting with carrying out the strategic goals and objectives of the organization, providing direct leadership and supervision to all Client Services Advocates, and operating under the direction and expectations of the Executive Director/Court Advocate and Board of Directors.

Mitchell County

Bear Creek Baptist Church-Ledger - Events for Bear Creek Baptist Church during the month of April are:

- Sunday, April 9th, 6:30 p.m. - "The Living Last Supper" Easter Drama will be presented.
- Friday, April 14, 8:00 a.m. - Community Women's Prayer Breakfast at Helen's Restaurant in Balsaville
- Sunday, April 16, 7:00 a.m. - Eastside Sunrise Service followed by breakfast pre-event dinner at the church
- Sunday, April 30, 6:00 p.m. - 5th Sunday Night Singing. Special music provided by Rhonda Gouge & friends.

Please mark your calendars for all these events.

Berry Chapel Baptist Church Spruce Pine invites you to their 31st Annual Presentation of the Easter Drama "The Living Lord's Supper" Friday, April 14, 2017 and Saturday, April 15, 2017 7:00pm For more info call 828-765-6500

Bradshaw Fire Department's annual raffle dinner will be on 4-15-17 this year. We'll have our usual menu, and hamburgers and hotdogs. Please join us if you can. We're also going to raffle off an AR 15 this year. Raffle tickets are $5 each. See any Bradshaw member for tickets.

Celebrate Recovery - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving up and help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any question contact Josh Wise 285-0051

There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families. Bear Creek Baptist Church in Lednor, NC 7:30pm

Calvary Chapel Asheville - Spruce Pine - Calvary Chapel Church in Ashville is sponsoring a home fellowship and Bible Study in Spuce Pine. The fellowship is held on Tuesday evenings at 790 pm at 790 S. Elder Rd. (28714). For more information contact Pastor Dan at 765-7777 or calvychaplaustin@gmail.com.

Mitchell County EDC will hold a meeting open to the community on Tuesday, April 25th at 7:00pm at the volunteer fire station. The meeting will be open to the public.

Support group for caregivers of those with memory loss will hold meetings the first Friday of each month from 1-3PM

Care & Share, a newly-formed support group for caregivers of loved ones who have memory loss, will hold monthly meetings at the offices of Hospice of Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge, 136 Hospital Dr. in Spruce Pine, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. The North Carolina Caregiver Foundation welcomes and encourages all caregivers to attend.

Family dealing with a loved one with memory loss can quickly become exhausted, traumatized, and isolated, and this new group intends to provide support, friendship, education, information, and referrals for caregivers. Monthly meetings will be held on the first Friday of each month with refreshments and fellowship. There will be opportunities for caregivers to tell their stories, learn useful tips, trade information, and gain and support to others in the same situation.

For further information about the group and the meeting please contact Suzanne Russell at (714) 614-5807 or Janet Orita at jorita@yahoo.com.

First Baptist Church Spruce Pine - First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine is seeking a part-time childcare provider for their toddler nursery. The position will require approximately 8 hours per week consisting of 4.5 hours on Sunday and 3.5 hours on Monday. The hours will be flexible, depending on the needs of the church. A background check is required and First Aid is recommended and can be completed once employed. The hourly pay is $15-$20 per hour and is negotiable based on experience and qualifications.

Applications should contact First Baptist Church, 125 Tappan Street, Spuce Pine, NC 28777. Phone #828-765-8411 Ext 501.

Grassy Creek Baptist Church will hold an Easter Sunrise Service at the Apple Orchard on the Blue Ridge Parkway April 16th at 6:45. Everyone is invited to join us for a wonderful sunrise service on the edge of the mountain. We will have bus service up there. If you would like to ride the bus, we will leave the church parking lot at 6:30am. In case of dense fog or rain, we will have the service at the church. For more information, call the church office at 765-4620.

Historic Courthouse in Balsaville - Thursday, April 6 at 7pm 1ST ANNUAL HISTORY BEE

We wanted to remind you of our History BEE, at which students-competeants

will receive great cash prizes ($500 for 1st place, $300 for 2nd place, $200 for 3rd place... in two divisions: ages 15 to 18, and under 15). All questions will be taken from Jennifer Hunter's book, Voices of the Valley, a photographic and narrative jewel about the town of Mitchell County. There will be an admission charge of $5.00 for adults, $2.00 for individuals, and $5.00 for families. We sure do want to see some spruce pine friends and grandparents there. Light refreshments will be served. If there are any students who still want to register, the deadline is March 31st. Call us at 828-4371 for info.

Monday, April 17 at 7pm "MITCHELL COUNTY EARLY CROSSROADS OF CULTURE & MUSIC"

We invite you to join us as Dr. Daniel Barros takes us on a fast-paced visual journey into the past and consider a variety of real people and cultures that have visited Mitchell County from around 800 BC to 1780 and one fictional character by novelist Franklin Ochberg. Using historic and contemporary Google maps of trails and roads, we'll see how you can actually walk in the footsteps of the first indigenous people, the first Europeans, and many of our Scottish and Scots-Irish ancestors.

Sunday, April 23 at 3pm "OLD-TIMES MOUNTAIN STYLE GOSPEL SONGS"

Please join us for a Sunday afternoon of music with Rhonda Gouge and Samuel McKinney as they entertain us with their unique stylings of our mountain music... we're sure there'll be sing-a-longs!

The Little Rock Creek Baptist Church will be hosting a Community Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday, April 10 at 7:00am. The service will be held on the hill in front of the Mitchell County Courthouse at 128 Longview Dr. in Balsaville, near the landscaped parking area out four. Everyone is welcome and invited to join us as we worship our Lord and Savior. For more information, or if your church would like to participate, please contact Pastor Toby Crowley at 281-248-5848.

Mitchell Baptist Association-Spruce Pine - Baptist Children’s Homes Food Round-Up is April 2017

Many churches are participating and also food can be brought to the associational office by April 26th. For more info call 828-761-9412

The Mitchell County Historical Society announces its First Annual History Bee, scheduled for Thursday, April 6th, 2017, at 7:00 pm at the Historic Courthouse in Balsaville. The goal of the History Bee, and the mission of MCHS, is to help Mitchell County residents, especially young people, become more aware of our rich cultural heritage.

There will be two divisions of competition, one for Mitchell County students under 15, and one for students 15-18. First prize in each age division is $500, second prize $300, and third prize $100. Local businesses and organizations are providing the prizes.

All questions in the History Bee will come from Elizabeth Hunter’s Voices of the Valley, which was published in 2011, the 150th anniversary of the formation of Mitchell County. This publication is already in public and school libraries, and more copies will be made available to libraries by MCHS. It’s also available for purchase from the Mitchell County Tourism Board, the Spruce Pine Public Library, and other sources. Students are asked to sign up to participate in the MCHS History Bee by 3/31/2017, and registration is free. Ask your history teacher for a registration form or find it at mitchellhistorics.com (We have also attached a downloadable copy.)

If you have questions about the History Bee, go to the MCHS website or call 828-385-5464 or 828-688-3471

The 6th annual Spruce Pine BBQ & Bluegrass Festival Calling All Food & Craft Vendors! Applications are now being accepted.

If you would like to apply as a food or craft vendor for the 2017 festival, now is the time to apply.

The 6th annual Spruce Pine BBQ & Bluegrass Festival is scheduled for July 14-15, 2017, and is now accepting applications from food and craft vendors. This year’s festival at Riverside Park across from downtown Spruce Pine will offer the finest BBQ live music, crafts, fun, and family activities in the beautiful park setting near the North Toe River.

The Rotary Club of Spruce Pine sponsors this event with 100% of the proceeds from the event going to benefit local charities through the Spruce Pine Rotary Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable organization. One local project that will be funded by proceeds from this year’s festival will be the biking/hiking path from Riverside Park in Spruce Pine to the Blue Ridge Parkway, along the historic Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. This project is in partnership with the Toe River Watershed Project and the US National Park Service.


Applications will be due by May 17, 2017, but vendors are encouraged to apply early as space is limited. Vendor selection will begin in March and spaces will be available on a first come, first served basis.

Relay Of The Blue Ridge - Start getting ready for this. Mitchell High School on Friday evening, May 19th For more info call 828-765-9265

Run for Holland - A Race for Those with Disabilities

Want to improve your health and serve as God wishes us to at the same time? Start a group to enter the Run for Holland. The Run is on May 6th so start getting in shape. The money raised goes to local organizations that help those with dis...
Local "Princesses" and their Sisters Share a "Bonding" Experience
By Marion Stephan

Relationships between sisters do not always fare well in fairy tales. Cinderella's treatment by her three step-sisters is well known. Disney's Frozen concerns two sister princesses who are separated by one sister's pettish gift.

But the 20 princesses competing in the fairy-tale themed 2017 Little Miss McDowell Pageant found friends to whom they could grow close. These sisters were the female Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) cadets who served as "big sisters" to the contestants.

"You can build a bond with a little sister you’ll never forget," said cadet Eryssal Moore, big sister to contestant Ava Effler. Perhaps fittingly, Miss Effler’s talent entry was a vocal rendition of the song “One Call Away.” The almost 8-year-old said she enjoyed "doing my routine" and found learning the opening number to be one of the greatest challenges.

Big sister Rebecca Browning called her young charge, 7-year-old Gloria Moore, "respectful and quiet." And Miss Moore enjoyed "just having fun" during the pageant experience.

Contestants and their big sisters were interviewed during rehearsals the week preceding the pageant. The girls competed on Saturday, March 11, at East McDowell Middle School.

Big sister Skyanna Flynn called her first year with the pageant "a really good opportunity to bond with my little sister." And Lizzy Pavon liked "meeting my little sister." Skyanna's and Lizzy's little sisters, 7-year-olds Ava Buchman and Nylia Gibson, enjoyed, respectively, "wearing dresses and makeup" and "dancing."

"It's been really good... getting to interact with my little girl," said Stephanie Sams, big sister to Raleigh Freeman. The 11-year-old "little girl" in turn, enjoyed "meeting all the new people and getting to show off your talent on pageant night."

Contestants Alyssa Humpiff (8 years old), Raild Ann Buehner (9), Raelyn Gaye (11), Julianna Olis (11), and Maloly Miller (10) put the big sister experience at the top of their lists. And their big sisters expressed similar sentiments. "I like that we get little sisters and get to connect and bond with them," noted Skyanna Flynn, Alyssa Humpiff's big sister.

Big sister Kayla Davis called it "awesome, helping these kids out and being a role model." Her little sister, 11-year-old Harley Bartlett, loved "having fun with everyone." Like her fellow cadet, Kayla, big sister Reagan Harris "liked helping out with the kids."

Her 9-year-old little sister, Hope Wakefield broadened the field: "I actually like it all."

And the Winner Is... In an interview during rehearsals for the 2017 Little Miss McDowell pageant, Addison Cunningham remarked that if she didn’t win, she would support the people who did win. As it turned out, the "person who did win" was herself. The 11-year-old walked away from the pageant with trophies for Little Miss McDowell and Little Miss Junior Teen.

Addison, a fifth-grader at Marion Elementary, performed a lyrical ballet to "Rain All Around," by Eminem. Winners are chosen based on scores from the talent competition, an evening gown competition, and an interview with the pageant judges.

First runner up Raigan Cummins and big sister Victoria Thomas

Second runner up Kaylan Fairchild has performed lyrical ballets in the pageant the past two years. This year she switched her genre to tap dancing, which she says she has studied "about as long as she can walk." She was a little apprehensive because the slippery stage made the moves inherently difficult.

The 2016 Little Miss McDowell, in her pre-pageant interview with the Blue Ridge Christian News, called her reign "one of the greatest experiences of my life." She expressed, in advance, wishes for "good luck to the future Little Miss McDowell."
A Him Named Hur
By Lana Ellis

In Exodus 17 Joshua’s army went up against the tribe of Amalek. On top of the hill overlooking the battle, Moses, as instructed by God, held the staff and stood with both hands raised. As long as the hands of Moses were raised Joshua’s army advanced but when Moses’ hands grew heavy and dropped, the army of Amalek advanced. Restoring strength Moses lifted his hands again and Israel’s army advanced. We don’t know how long the battle went back and forth before the plan was put into place in verse 12. A stone was placed behind Moses and he sat down on it. Then two men took their places on each side of Moses in order to support his raised hands. In so doing by the end of the day Joshua’s army was victorious and Israel’s enemy was defeated.

Aaron, the brother of Moses, was one of the two men. Much is written about Aaron and the important role he played in God’s plan for Israel. He was basically known as Moses’ right hand man. So I visualize him holding high the right hand of Moses during the battle. Who else held up the other hand? Who else but a “Him named Hur.” Unlike Aaron little is known about the “Him named Hur.” Other than the account of the battle with Amalek Hur is mentioned one other time. In Exodus 34:14 as Moses was preparing to go up to receive God’s instructions for the Tabernacle he told the people that if any legal matters arose they were to bring them before Aaron and Hur. This one statement tells us a lot about Hur. Even though seemingly he lived in the shadow of Moses and Aaron he evidently was endowed with wisdom and discernment and highly trusted by Moses.

The scene at the top of the hill overlooking the ongoing battle paints a beautiful picture of the Trinity. In the center is Moses representing God. This is not too big a stretch since God says in Exodus 4:16 that Moses will be as God to Aaron. At the right side of Moses is High Priest Aaron, a type of Jesus. Just as Aaron was a mouthpiece for Moses, Jesus in the flesh was the mouth of God and now sits at the right hand of God interceding for us as our High Priest. As promised after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, a Helper came in the form of the Holy Spirit – One alongside – portrayed in our picture by the “Him named Hur.”

I was introduced to the “Him named Hur” in a sermon by Youth Pastor Neal emphasizing the responsibility of church members to be available when needed. According to First Corinthians 12:7 as believers and followers of Jesus Christ we have been given spiritual gifts for the common good of the local body of Christ. These include, but are not limited to, wisdom, knowledge, discernment, teaching, giving and helping. So whether we are a “him” or a “her” all of us should be available and willing to come along side as needed and there is no better example to follow than the “Him named Hur.”

Lana Ellis resides in Kingsport TN, next door to grandchildren. Church is West Colonial Hills Baptist Church.
Dear District 46 Constituents, I am excited to share some updates from Raleigh. In this newsletter, you will find information on recent bills that I have filed and learn about some exciting news from across the district. I appreciate your questions, concerns, and the valuable feedback that you send to our office, so feel free to reply. - Sen. Warren Daniel At the Legislature...
Why I Oppose GOP Leadership’s Obamacare “Replacement”

I’ve gotten numerous questions lately on why I would oppose the Obamacare “replacement” bill that the House GOP leadership has put forward in Congress. I wanted to share a little information and explain more about my thought process.

I believe that there is no one more committed to repealing Obamacare than me. I’ve campaigned on it every two years since 2012—it’s one of the top reasons I ran for Congress in the first place.

At the same time, the plan presented by GOP leadership simply doesn’t accomplish the goals needed to improve healthcare for all Americans. For one, leadership’s replacement bill does not repeal all of Obamacare. It leaves much of the current Obamacare model—including multiple insurance mandates and taxes—in place. This is what not we told the voters we would do—we campaigned on fully repealing the law, and we deliver nothing less than that.

Furthermore, my main goal in any healthcare replacement plan is to make sure that we lower healthcare costs and premiums. Having run the numbers, it is clear to me that premiums will go up, not down, with leadership’s replacement bill. If you remove a pool of healthy people off the insurance market but still require insurance mandates to offer expansive plans, premiums go up. Not only that, but the Congressional Budget Office’s score of the bill says that premiums will spike immediately in 2018 by 15%-20%, followed by only a 10% reduction by 2026. This bill does what we need to accomplish—lowering healthcare costs. It would essentially be Obamacare by a different name.

I want to repeal Obamacare as much (or more) than anyone. However, I cannot in good conscience vote for a plan that goes against the promises that Republicans made to the voters. You deserve better than that. For once, you deserve to have your trust validated by your elected officials. I intend to do just that—even if it means being one of only a few who vote against this replacement bill.

Please know that I am in frequent discussions with President Trump’s administration—including me with the President himself—on how we can fix this bill to make sure House Republicans actually follow through on their promises. President Trump has taken a lot of heat for so far keeping his promises to you—it’s time Congressional Republicans follow suit and do the same.

Senators release tax proposal

Last week, leading Senators released a plan to further cut income taxes for our state’s hardworking individuals and families.

The proposal would cut $1 billion in income taxes for North Carolinians. People who earn low incomes and middle class families would primarily benefit.

Building on the General Assembly’s work in recent years to flatten and lower the state income tax rate, the plan would decrease the personal income tax rate from 5.499% to 5.35%. The plan would also increase the standard deduction for taxpayers in every filing category—again, building on work in the past few years to increase the standard deduction, which has more than doubled since I took office.

Gov. Roy Cooper wants to increase state government spending by $1.1 billion, and the Senate wants to cut your taxes by $1 billion. Which do you prefer?

The proposal has several other provisions that would benefit the people of Haywood, Madison and Yancey Counties. As we continue to move through the legislative session, I will provide more information on the Senate’s tax reform proposal and any other that may arise.

Firefighters host reception

Firefighters from Western North Carolina hosted members of the General Assembly last Tuesday for a reception in Raleigh.

Last week in Raleigh, right down the street from the Legislative Building, a large fire quickly grew and burned down a multi-story building. Had it not been for the courageous work of firefighters in Raleigh, the General Assembly and many people’s homes and businesses could easily have burned to the ground.

Instead, the fire was contained quickly with minimal property damage considering its initial size, no one died and there were only a handful of injuries.

Firefighters had their hands in the places we visit are owed a debt of gratitude for the work they tirelessly perform.

This week of pressure from Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs began providing reimbursement to veterans suffering from illnesses caused by contaminated water at Camp Lejeune.

I want to thank Master Sergeant Jerry Essminger for his work on behalf of the Lejeune veterans and their families. Jerry’s daughter was born on Camp Lejeune and died at nine years old as a result of exposure to toxic chemicals in the water. Because of his tireless work, Lejeune veterans are finally getting the compensation they deserve.

The government negligently poisoned the men and women who served at Camp Lejeune. These service members sacrificed for our nation and have earned this care and support.

Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more from 1953 to 1987 and are suffering from a service connected medical condition like kidney cancer or Parkinson’s disease are eligible to receive disability benefits. The VA estimates that more than 800,000 service members could have been exposed to toxic water. Many veterans still call North Carolina home.

I encourage all veterans in NC who may be eligible for compensation to contact my office for assistance making a claim.

The Senate has been working hard this week on continuing the President’s cabinet. This week we voted to confirm Housing and Urban Development Secretary Dr. Ben Carson, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross.

President Trump also delivered his first joint address to Congress on Tuesday.

In his speech, the President outlined a blue print to improve our economy and keep our country safe. Americans were clear about their priorities in this past election, and he believes it’s time to work together on issues that are critical to the American people.

At the same time, I am encouraged that Congress can work together with the President to pass legislation that will get our country back on track with a stronger economy for all Americans. It is clear that our citizens want to real in government spending, create jobs, fix our healthcare system, and strengthen our borders. The President, in keeping his promises, has made significant gains in reinforcing these critical policy areas.

I look forward to working with the President to solve the real, everyday problems that face the American people.

Next week, the Senate will continue to confirm the nominees for the President’s cabinet. The President needs his team in place so that they can begin working on behalf of the American people.
Emergency Preparedness

Clothing, Bedding, Shelters, and Pets

By Nancy Yancey

Listen to the local radio or emergency channel for information. A Watch, Alert or Advisory means that conditions are mild and are not expected to cause serious damage. A Warning means that conditions for a disaster are occurring or will occur in 12-18 hours.

Whether stranded in your own home or going to a shelter, warm, durable clothing is necessary, also durable shoes, boots, or work boots with warm, heavy socks. For outdoor a heavy warm coat or jacket, hat or scarf, and gloves should be included. Thermal underwear might also be desirable. Rain gear or ponchos should be included.

If told to evacuate, do so immediately and take your supplies. If you have time, shut off the water, gas, and electricity before leaving, keeping in mind that a professional will have to turn the gas back on later. Lock your house. Use the travel routes specified by the local authorities. Don’t use shortcuts that may be impassable.

Warm heavy blankets, large bath towels and sleeping bags should top the list to take to shelter. If you must leave your house. A change of clothing, socks, and shoes should be included. Don’t forget to take your disaster kit with you. Shelters may not be set up for large numbers of people. Sunglasses, sun block, and a local map may be important.

The shelters in Mitchell County are designated by the Department of Social Services and are located at the Biltmore Elementary School, Tipton Hill Elementary School, Bowman Middle School, Mitchell High School, Harris Middle School, Spruce Pine First Baptist Church. Go to the shelter closest to you or your area of emergency. If necessary, call the Emergency Management Director at 828-3104 or 828-910 for information and location of other shelters.

Animals and Pets

Ask your Veterinarian about animal care during and after a disaster. Remember pets are not allowed inside emergency shelters because of health regulations, but separate facilities will be set up with cages in a trailer or separate room. The Animal Shelter may be overwhelmed with other pets and you may not be able to get to the area, so you may have to make your own arrangements.

• Be sure animals and pets are confined and cannot run off to get lost or follow you when you leave.

• Keep dogs and cats in a house or a shed or garage or barn for shelter from the weather.

• Carte usually stay outdoors well.

• Horses, sheep, pigs, goats will need some sort of shelter

• Animals do not lick snow or water if thirsty

• Provide water for the animals. Large containers or the type that dispenses water slowly are good.

• Horses need water at room temperature, not cold.

• Provide food for your animals - dry dog food, dry cat food, hay or straw, etc.

• All pets must have up to date rabies and distemper vaccinations.

• Be sure your animals have their name tags and rabies tags on, if this is applicable.

• A picture of you and your pet(s) would be helpful in claiming your pet.

• It’s a good idea to have your animals chipped.

A list of emergency telephone numbers should be posted by your phone for any emergency:

• Police .......................................................... 911

• Fire .......................................................... 911

• Ambulance ................................................. 911

• Sheriff ...................................................... 911

• Emergency Management ............................... 828-3104 or 911

• Doctor ....................................................... Name

• Dentist ....................................................... Name

• Hospital ................................................... Blue Ridge Regional 755-4201

• Health Department ....................................... 828-337 or 2183

• House Health .............................................. 828-1421

• Health Supply ............................................. DSS (Dept. of Social Services) 828-2175

• Electric Company ....................................... French Broad 828-6211 or 688-4115 or 42-42

• Duke Energy Progress 1-800-422-7777

• Water Company ........................................ Hays Company 828-1804

• Gas Company ........................................... 828-4115 or 42-42

• Telephone Company ............................... Frontier 1-877-422-8188

• Bell South .................................................. 1-800-612-6544

• School ...................................................... 828-1421

• Minister .................................................... 828-1421

• Veterinarians ........................................... 828-3104

Next Month: Children, Disaster Plans, Important Papers, Neighbors

Paul and Nancy Yancey moved to NC in 1996 and are very happy in Red Hill with their dog. She served as the Chairperson for the MCHP for nearly 12 years. She focused on the emergency readiness programs as that is a real concern in these rural areas.
Wimps or Warriors
By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County

We are living in a world where it looks like everybody in the world is standing up for what they believe in. You have Democrats, Republicans, you have the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and the Transgender, The Left the Right etc... They all have their opinion on what they think is right and what is wrong. We see they are willing to stand up and fight for sin and perversion. It’s time for Christians to take a stand today and put on our Battle Armor for God. The Bible tells us in Romans 13:12 “The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.” The Armor of Light is God’s Word. God’s Word is the only True Light in this dark world. Paul tells us also in Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. (Word of God) for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” It’s time for God’s people to stand and become Warriors for Christ instead of becoming Wimps in this World. What has happened to Christians today? I hate to say it, but many God-Fearing Christians are scared they are going to offend someone by what they believe. Christians need to quit worrying about offending people and start Proclaiming God’s Word. Let me ask you a question. Do you think the worldly groups or organization seem too worried about offending you? No they don’t, they just keep pushing their agenda. It’s time for Christians to put on the Armor of Light, like Paul did in Romans 13:12. Too many Christians are afraid we will hurt someone’s feelings. We are afraid if we do that, our churches will decline, if we talk about people’s sins and short comings. Folk’s I’m here to tell you that God’s Word will offend people. Folk’s, I’ll be the first to tell you that it offends me. It’s time for God’s people to take God’s Word and stand firm on it. So, if God’s Word offends people, it’s just going to have to offend them. The truth of the matter is; it’s not that God’s Word offends them, but it’s that God’s Word is Convicting them of their sins. And they don’t want to believe what they are doing is a sin. Paul knew it was the Word of God and the Power of God’s Word that changed his life in Acts 9.

We need more Warriors like Paul. Who have been transformed to the image of God, instead of deformed to the images of this world; Who are not afraid to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit of God, instead of always shaking it off, as if God is talking to someone else. We need more Warriors who are not afraid of meeting and speaking on issues head-on, instead of worried about hurting feelings.

There are Three Great Truths in God’s Warriors, and they are also seen in Paul’s Life. First, Paul had a Boldness Like a Bull. He said in Rom 1:16 he was not ashamed of the Gospel. Paul stood on the Gospel, Paul shared the Gospel, and Paul was Sure of the Gospel, because it had changed his life. Paul let people know that he was a satisfied customer of the Gospel of Christ. Why? Because the Gospel had the “power of God unto salvation.” Second, Paul had the Assurance of a Surgeon. The Bible says in Hebrews 4:12 “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” So, it was God’s Word that performs surgery on Paul’s heart and life. To put Paul’s Surgery in perspective, this is what he is saying happened to him when God saved Him. In Hebrews 4:12 the word Quick means, living, alive, relevant to that moment. The word Powerful means: able to move the immovable things. The word Sharper means: When God’s word cuts you it brings tears not blood, it brings with it conviction, not scars. The word Piercing: It can penetrate the hardest of hearts. The words Dividing Asunder means: Crystal clear with no gray lines. The Words Discern the Heart means: God knows the Truth about you. The Bible says: “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it. I, the Lord Search the heart.” Third Paul Believed on The Gospel. Folk’s, when you believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ you automatically receive this boldness & power. The problem is, we fail to develop God’s Word in our lives, and when we fail to develop God’s Word we will lose the Boldness and Power God give us and we will become Wimps instead of Warriors for God.

Words of Warriors:
- If you’re standing on anything less than the Word of God you’re standing on Shaky Ground.
- If people keep whistling away at themselves, pretty soon there won’t be anything left to whistle away.
- You can never win war until you step out onto the battlefield.

Just a Thought:
- If people believed in God, the way they claim to believe in God, they would be Warriors for God, Wouldn’t they?

Steve Williams is the Pastor of Berry Chapel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine.

Hospice and Palliative of Blue Ridge

Thrift Store

One of the area’s largest Thrift Stores. Located in Ledger NC.

We offer a Huge Selection of:
- Furniture Antiques Books Art Clothing Shoes Home Furnishings Jewelry Electronics Tools

Closed on Sunday and Monday, Open Tuesday thru Friday 9:00-5:00, Saturday 9:00-12:30

What customers are saying about our Thrift Store:
“I think the Thrift Store is the best in the county. It is always affordable and has the friendliest staff”
Alice Harlow Laughlin

“I love the senior citizen discounts on Wednesdays. I can’t believe the prices on furniture.”
Gloria Coffey

Shop~Donate~Volunteer~Support

(828)-688-6400

www.brcnews.com
Bits 'n Pieces
continued from page 29

attnines. For more info go to rutronthailand.com.
Spruce Pine Farmer's Market Moves Indoors! - We will have baked goods, fresh eggs, fresh bread, and more. The market is inside the Pizza Shop and Dry County Brewing Company from 12-6pm. The indoor market will be open each month the 1st Saturday of the month from December through April. Come shop with us.

Summer 2017 Workshops at Penland - Say hello to Penland's Summer 2017 workshop catalog, now online as a full PDF! We're beyond excited to have 97 great workshops on offer this year. Take a look and come join us in the studios to build bikes or books or brooches or ... Tipton Hill Community Foundation (Tipton Hill) - Country Breakfast, the first Saturday each month, 7:30 - 10:30 am, at the Old Methodist Church, across from Jerry's Store. Come join us for homemade sausage, scrambled eggs, gravy, jellies, juice and coffee. Eat in or take-out, all funds support the Tipton Hill Community Foundation.

Women's Prayer Breakfast: If you would like to join a group of women who are dedicated to praying, learning about God's will, and fellowship, come join us for breakfast at Helen's Restaurant in Bakersville on April 14th at 8:30am. We will be ending by 10:00am. Open to all for more information call Barbara Harrel at 828-467-3444 or email at barbara@bcnews.com. Yancey County Calvary Chapel Asheville - Spruce Pine Calvary Chapel Church in Asheville is sponsoring a homespun service and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm at 785 Sein Dr. (Elintra off Brush Creek Rd). We are studying the Gospel of John currently. Call John Jackson 700-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

Clinch Mountain Gospel Sing Friday April 7th at 7:30pm Doors will open at 6:00pm at Mendota Community Center in Mendota, VA. Singing will be the Singing Holbrooks and the Wayne Hubbard Family. Come out for an evening of Bluegrass Gospel and Southern Gospel music. No admission, but Love Offering will be taken. For more info call 828-624-5924.

Higgens Memorial United Methodist Church - Buncombe Community Easter Sunrise Service on the Square Join us on Sunday, April 16, at 6:30 am for a multi-denominational Easter celebration. Please see your church program for the specific details. A covered dish breakfast will follow at First Baptist Church of Bunville. The Fellowship Hall will open at 6:00 am if you would like to drop your dish off beforehand.

Join one of the churches on the square for worship afterward!

Holy Week Services at Higgins Memorial United Methodist Church 101 N Main Street, Burnsville, NC Palm Sunday, April 9 at 9:30 am or 11:00 am Wednesday, April 12 at 6:00 pm (Appoint & Baptism) Good Friday, April 14 at 6:00 pm Easter Sunday, April 16 at 8:30 am in the Family Life Center or 11:00 am in our Sanctuary

Laurel Branch Baptist Church (Burlasage) - Seeking bi-vocational pastor, please email resume to forccupcas@frontier.com.

Jungle Book Kids: Swing into Parkway Playhouse - BURSVILLE, NC: Elephants, monkeys, and tigers... oh my! Parkway Playhouse Junior opens its spring season with Jungle Book Kids. Ramished by the ferocious tiger, Shere Khan, a human boy named Mowgli and his panther friend, Bagheera, are on the run in the deepest parts of the jungle. On their journey, the two meet a snarver make named Baloo, a herd of elephants and a giant bear named Baloo, who teaches them the swinging animal rhythms of the jungle. After surviving a dangerous encounter with 1 band of monkeys led by King Louie, Mowgli and Bagheera are forced to run for their lives. When Shere Khan returns, his heroes must rally their fellow animals into action to save their peace throughout the jungle.

This production features 21 talented actors ages 4-12, and is sure to impress with its high energy dance routines and memorable songs. Performances take place on April 7th and 8th, 6:00pm at Parkway Playhouse. For more information about Parkway Playhouse, performances, volunteer opportunities, classes, auditions, and more please visit www.parkwayplayhouse.com, or call 828-628-4285.

Shen Creek Baptist Church Burnsville, NC - Saturday April 15 @ 3:00 PM - Kids Easter Celebration
Sunday April 16 @ 6:45 AM - Sunrise service followed by breakfast! Morning worship with our Choir at 9:00 AM

Trac Gift Shops Jury In New Artists - A few weeks ago, seven people sat down at the table to review the work of three current artists and three current artists submitting in different mediums, into the group of over 150 Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey county gift shop artists who exhibit and sell their work in the TRAC Galleries. The Gift Shop Exhibition, April 5 through May 6, showcases the results of the annual selection process that keeps the art fresh and gives talented artists a venue to show and sell their work locally. Many of the artists have been in the area for a while, others are already familiar presence in our vibrant arts scene, some have a generational tie to the area; and still others have only been creating commercially for a few years. All have a passion in their art.


Current TRAC artists jurying is with different medium:
- Susan Garrigues (Yancey): Mixed media-oil paper clay
- Jane Elsa (Yancey): Wood
- Laurel Lovett (Yancey): Jewelry-handmade bands
- These talented new TRAC gift shop artists will leave a lasting impression. The exhibition continues through May 6 in Burnsville. Come down on show, see what’s new on the walls, on pedestals, and in the cases at your Arts Council. TRAC’s Burnsville Gallery is located at 102 West Main Street. The Spruce Pine location is 269 Oak Street in Spruce Pine. The Art is Tuesday-Saturday, 10:30am to 5:00pm. For more information, call 828-682-7215 or visit www.teerivarts.org.

The Toe River Arts Council is a not for profit organization promoting the arts in Mitchell and Yancey Counties, and supported by donations, memberships, local government, the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, a state agency, and supporters who understand the benefit of art in our community.

Yancey County Meals on Wheels (Burnsville) - Volunteers needed to deliver meals to Yancey County shut-ins, any weekday, 10:30 am - noon. If you would like to volunteer, please call the Yancey County Senior Center at 828-652-5011.

Mayland Community College SMALL BUSINESS CENTER
The Mayland Small Business Center (SBEC) offers high quality training and confidential counseling for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Whether you are considering launching a new business or managing an existing one, the small business center provides resources tailored to fit your needs. If you would like to schedule a free confidential business counseling session or sign up for a free small business seminar, contact Mayland SBEC Director Allen Cook at 828 766 1295 or email him at acok@mayland.edu.

Check out our March classes:
- Small Business Classes for April
- The Mayland Small Business Center (SBEC) offers high quality training and confidential counseling for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Whether you are considering launching a new business or managing an existing one, the small business center provides resources tailored to fit your needs. If you would like to schedule a free confidential business counseling session or sign up for a free small business seminar, contact Mayland SBEC Director Allen Cook at 828 766 1295 or email him at acok@mayland.edu.

Check out our April classes:
- How to Start and Finance a Small Business - Gain knowledge of the basics of starting a business. Learn essential business tools that take you from ideas to operation.
- Customer Service - Learn key strategies for start-up, financing and marketing as well as important information about legal issues, licensing, zoning, and operations. Learn the importance of a self-assessment and how to evaluate the feasibility of your business.

Discover resources available to help start and successfully operate your business.

- 4/1, 7:00 p.m. - Mayland Campus
- How to Write a Business Plan - A business plan is vital to starting and operating a business. Learn how to turn ideas into a solid plan for financing and long-term success. This seminar teaches the important components of a business plan and helps students understand the planning process. Discover how a business plan is used by potential lenders, the do’s and don’ts of writing a plan, and steps for making the process easy. You will also learn to introduce yourself and your business with confidence and clarity with your personal “Elevator Speech”.

- 4/11, 7, 3:30-5:30 p.m. - Mayland Campus

NEW! Get Your Studio Found by Customers - As we approach the season of studio tours, it is of utmost importance that customers have the ability to locate and navigate to your business using their smartphone or computer. Learn how to list your business on the Google map and create a free Google page for your studio. Free Google Gear!

- 4/12, W, 3:30-7:00 p.m. TRAC Resource Center Spruce Pine

Pinterest for Business - Learn how to pin your way to new sales! This hour-long seminar will cover how to create a Pinterest business page and how to market your product on Pinterest.

- 4/13, TH, 5:00-6:00 p.m. Mayland Campus

Instagram for Business - Learn how to build a business Instagram page, set up your account and best practices for Instagram. Visually communicate your way to increased sales and business awareness!

- 4/13, TH, 7:00-8:00 p.m. Mayland Campus
Bits ‘n Pieces

Marketing, Public Relations, and Advertising – This class discusses how to build a customer base. Business location, layout, signage, pricing, service, traditional/social media, direct marketing, promotional material, and trade shows will be discussed to help entrepreneurs effectively communicate and market.
4/18, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Mayland Campus

Business Financials: Indicators of Business Health – This class will discuss the four most important financial statements in business: the balance sheet, the income statement, and the cash flow statement. The class will also cover basic bookkeeping and record keeping skills. Attendees will gain a workable knowledge of how to properly record financial transactions for a business.
4/23, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Mayland Campus

Financing Your Small Business – Are you in need of a loan to start or expand your business? The Carolina Small Business Development Fund can help you navigate the process. Tommy Denison, Business Development Officer, will be discussing what the CSBDF looks at in order to render an approval on a loan. Topics covered will be the 5 C’s of Credit, types of loans available, what you will need to apply, and a typical loan timelines.
4/26, W, 5:30-7:00 p.m. Avery Campus

How to Sell Your Arts and Crafts at Shows – Learn how to properly select and register for shows, set up your booth, attract customers, and take credit card payments. Applicants will receive a free Excel spreadsheet that will estimate potential income from your booth sales.
4/26, W, 7:30-9:30 p.m. TRAC Resource Center Spruce Pine

LinkedIn for Business – LinkedIn Company pages help build brand awareness by providing a channel to promote your products and services to customers and prospects. In this quick course, learn how to create a LinkedIn company page to promote your business.
4/27, TH, 5:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Mayland Campus

Twitter for Business – Tweet your way to more sales! In this quick course, learn how to create a business Twitter page and strategies to use Twitter as an effective means to market your small business.
4/27, TH, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Mayland Campus

A Meditation

Be True to Self

By Timothy Ellen
McDowell County

Smith Wigglesworth once said, “May the Lord help us to be true to God first, then if we are true to God, we will be true to ourselves.” Very insightful words from a man who was a plumber by trade, who could not read a newspaper and could read only the Bible. Shakespeare has been noted for his statement “to thine own self be true.” Most people today live in a shroud of deception. People are not honest about anything. Most people desire to continue to live in a fairy tale world where they look at life through rose colored glasses, seeing things the way they desire to see them. Sin has a way of clouding judgement. People must have a sincere desire to be true with the Lord in their relationship with him. Finding a place where we can have power with God, comes from finding a place of intimacy with God where we are aligned with his holiness and heart. In the middle of God’s will is found peace, contentment, and joy. Without Holiness, no man shall see the power of God truly work in their lives. When church again truly becomes about Jesus and not about politics, pride, or unspoken agendas will we have revival.

Tim Ellen graduated from Carolina Graduate School of Divinity and has been involved in prison and jail ministry for the past fifteen years. Currently he is operating in the capacity of a servant of Jesus Christ.

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April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 37
Busy Days in February
By Gretchen Blackburn
Avery County

On February 2nd, 2017, Lane Richardson of the Avery County FFA Chapter participated in the State FFA Truck Driving Career Development Event in Raleigh, NC. Lane placed 9th in the state in this event. Lane is a junior at Avery County High School and his parents are Michael and Vicki Richardson of Old Black Mountain. This event requires members to safely operate a truck through a given course. “It provides students the opportunity to showcase their talents and skills while providing real-world application,” says Jason Davis, State FFA Coordinator. Participants were judged on their knowledge and demonstration of safety practices and skills in the operation of a pickup truck. This event is one of 41 different career development events offered to North Carolina FFA members on the state level. The State Truck Driving Event is currently sponsored by Southern Shows, with kind support from Capital Chevrolet. This event was held in conjunction with the Southern Farm Show at the NC State Fairgrounds. It was a great opportunity for some other FFA members to visit the farm show as well as cheering Lane on in the competition.

On February 16th, 2017, a group of Avery County FFA members traveled to Raleigh for the NC FFA Legislative Day. These students were able to go to the Senate Building to watch the NC Senate and NC House of Representatives in session. The FFA students had the opportunity to personally visit Senator Danne B. Hall and House Representative Josh Dobson. There was a lunch and FFA members watched a live production of NC Spin (Balanced Debate for the Old North State) with a panel discussion about current issues in the senate and house. President’s Day kicked off FFA Week. The Avery FFA had a “Question of the Day” where all students had the opportunity to answer the question and a daily winner was drawn. Each day the Avery FFA Officers also helped faciliate an activity. The activities varied from a mail-hugging contest to a member gathering where this year’s officer team made masks and served them to all members and guests. Over 80 students and guests participated in the member gathering on Thursday.

The North Carolina FFA is a youth organization of 19,721 student members preparing for leadership and careers in the agriculture, science, business and technology of agriculture with 203 local chapters across the state. FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for tomorrow's leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. Visit www.ncffa.org for more information, or contact Dewayne Krege or Gretchen Blackburn at Avery County High School to learn more about our local chapter.

Avery County FFA Members: Hunter Huffman, Lane Richardson, Ariel Horney, and Cherley Uary, enjoying the Southern Farm Show at the NC State Fairgrounds.

Milk Chug Winners

Avery County FFA Members, visiting Deanna Ballard, NC Senate and Josh Dobson, NC House of Representatives for NC FFA Legislative Day. Front- Brie Cuthbertson, Senator Deanna Ballard, Ashley Poore, Ariel Horney, Kyle Daniels, Lillie Wiseman, Madison Clark, Gretchen Blackburn, Representative Josh Dobson, Back- Hunter Huffman, Dewayne Krege, Dawson Suchman, Jared Jynais, Lane Richardson. Another picture outside of legislative blog.

Working. Where ya at Wednesday (camo day)

Flannel Friday

Gretchen Blackburn is an Ag teacher at Avery High School and works with FFA

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April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 39
Grace Upon Grace

Ian Nero
Avery County

My heart and mind raced in panic as my young son’s fevered brow, chills, coughing, and labored breathing persisted. I had never experienced a night like this. I didn’t know how to help him. That night was daunting.

My son attracted him, my voice spoke reassuringly, and songs of Jesus love for him flowed from my worried heart. In the darkness of the night...with my hand upon his head...I prayed that the Lord would take his fever and give him rest.

Miraculously, I felt the heat leave his body, his breathing became even, and he drifted off to sleep. I wept tears of thanksgiving and praise. God had graciously gotten him over a critical period.

The next day, the doctor diagnosed him with whooping cough and taught me to run the shower and create steam to loosen the phlegm. We drew pictures on the steamy mirror as relief, instead of panic took over.

Time and again, God put me in circumstances where I had nowhere to turn but to him. He never let me down; like the time our picket fence crumbled...again.

We were settled securely in our tiny, affordable apartment till the landlord’s unexpected announcement that personal circumstances meant we had to move. I was speechless.

Searching for apartments we could afford showed me one thing: there weren’t any!

We were led to a place way beyond my means, but not God’s. My single parent status gave me eligibility for financial aid. That monetary provision allowed us to have a larger apartment for less! God had done it again. I remember saying, “I wish I had trusted him more.”

God is so trustworthy.

I embraced this truth once again when I came across thoughts from George Mueller’s life. He demonstrated his trust in God by caring for orphans and not letting their needs be known to anyone but God. Then he watched how the Lord miraculously provided.

But, I loved his words that said, “...because I was enabled by His grace to trust Him. He has always appeared for my help. I delight in speaking well of His name.”

I needed that reminder recently. For, it is how I have always felt. By God’s grace, I am enabled to trust Him and He never disappoints me. It is why I write, sing and delight in speaking well of His name.

As it says in John 1: 16, NKJV, “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.”

Grace is the unsolicited favor of God that He lavishes upon His children.

Pure Grace

Blossoms gently descend into bud, filled with promise...
like snowflakes falling from a burgeoning sky.
And, so, it is with us.
Through God’s pure grace
we can display His beauty in a world
awaiting the promise that is only in Him.

“...and this is what He promised—eternal life.”
/ John 1: 23

Pure Grace by Ian Nero

Ian and Jane reside in Land Harbour in Avery County, where they have moved in retirement because they love our mountains. They have written for us in years past.
Put on the Whole Armour of God

By Teresa Young
Yancey County

Ephesians 6:10-18 “Put on the whole armour of God” became a visual reality to those who attended Faith Fellowship Church of Newland during Vacation Bible School (July 10-12, 2016). After previewing several VBS curriculum themes to purchase and not confirming a choice, Director Deacon Mr. Jeremiah Johnson was given the “Armour of God” theme directly from the Lord, and immediately detailed plans began coming into place about how to carry out the massive task. Jeremiah, along with the support of his creative wife, Angela Johnson, in no way wants to take all the credit for this amazing undertaking because it took so many volunteers from the church and surrounding community to make it happen. For weeks prior to VBS people were busily painting wall murals that depicted each piece of the “armour” and described its purpose. Each elaborate suit of armour was creatively designed and created from recycled materials.

LIONS air with blade (Beats), into guard fabric, and painted decorative accents came from church mission rummage sale and thrift store BREAST-PLATE of righteousness (Denise Bobbe Fold Insulation) FEET shod with the gospel of peace (Shaul sole-cut from from sewing mats/ides and strap-Foil insulation) SHIELD of faith (wall-board cut, soaked, and dried while strapped to a form for shaping) HELMET of salvation (prototype mold of silicon, then fiberglass)SWORD of the Spirit (wooden handles and blades cut out by the Mountain Heritage Company Class) SIEGELT (Foil bubble insulation). The full suit of armour was then completed by red T-shirt, and peppers that represent praise and prayers of the saints, that CHRIST, in turn, uses to fight our battles and to strengthen us in the thick of our enemy, Satan, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, so that we can vitally combat the spiritual wickedness that surrounds us! Each student took the materials that had been prepared and worked to create their own personal suit of armour. Over thirty outfits were assembled and taken home by the students! A special thanks to all volunteers who worked so diligently to make this such a memorable VBS and to the families of our community who allowed their precious children to attend.

We were so blessed to know that some of these young men and women of faith took this teaching, dressed in their personal armour, and shared God’s truth at their homes and other churches. This summer, God’s truth marches onward as a church in Avery County will be borrowing all the murals, curriculum, etc. as they continue to share this powerful message of how to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

Teresa Young is the Principal at Tri-County Christian School in Spruce Pine.

Blue Ridge Partnership for Children

AMY Wee Trade 2017 Spring/Summer Consignment Sale

By Ruthie Styles

What has great things you need for the kids at amazing prices and supports a great cause? The AMY Wee Trade Spring & Summer consignment sale, of course.

We all know how quickly kids outgrow clothes, toys, furniture and all the other stuff they need— and how expensive it can be to keep those things. AMY Wee Trade can help with some of those expenses as this consignment sale features the very best in “gently used” and new children’s spring and summer clothing. We also carry gently loved toys, furniture, bedding, equipment, nasturtium clothes and much, much more. This sale is shaping up to be full of quality items at great prices.

Not only does the AMY Wee Trade consignment sale offer quality kids related “stuff” at great prices but, because of our generous consignors who donate 30% of their sales, it also supports the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children’s Imagination Library project in Avery, Mitchell and Yancey counties.

Imagination Library is the program started by Dolly Parton where a child who is age born to five years old gets an age appropriate book once a month at no charge to their family when they are enrolled in the program. Numerous studies have shown how much children benefit when they are read to on a regular basis from the time they are born, and it is a great way to get in a daily dose of sunshine time. Last year the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children celebrated 100,000 books distributed by Imagination Library in our counties and, with the support of the AMY Wee Trade planning committee, community, shoppers and others, we are well on our way to reaching 200,000 books distributed.

The AMY Wee Trade Spring & Summer Consignment Sale is at the Cross Street Commerce Center, located at 31 Cross Street, Spruce Pine, NC. Preview day is Thursday, April 6th, 8:00 am until 6:00 pm and admission is $5.00. Join us for the preview day to shop early and catch the best bargains on the best stuff. Friday hours are 8:00 am until 6:00 pm and Saturday hours are 8:00 am to 12:00 pm with many items marked down to half price on Saturday. There is no admission charge for Friday and Saturday.

If you have questions about the sale, how to consign items, or if you would like to volunteer, please contact us at amytrade@gmail.com or call one of the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children offices at (828) 682-3717 or (828) 713-2099.

Ruthie Styles is Community Development Manager for Blue Ridge Partnership for Children serving Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties.

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April 2017 • Blue Ridge Christian News page 41
Called to Prayer
By Marlene Ford
Burke County

Daniel 9:19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Quietly they tread solemnly, ascending the rock steps to an old courthouse lawn. The spring grass bows under the weight of casual and professional shoes as citizens gather under broad southern oaks and settle into metal chairs christened with the sun.

At five minutes till 12:00 PM, a bagpipe’s stirring sounds fade as the haunting and commanding notes from the ancient Jewish shofar command the crowd to attention. It’s time.

On Thursday, May 4, 2017, at 12:00 PM, at the historic Burke County Courthouse, graced with history and carefully preserved, citizens in and around the county will assemble to pray during the National Day of Prayer. They will be led by representatives from different facets of society in prayers that pour forth with gratitude, with supplication and with a sense of approaching a mighty throne. It is a reverent time, acknowledging our human inadequacies and beseeching the favor of Almighty God for our nation.

Prayer is our recognition of the chain-of-command to our Commander-In-Chief, God Himself. It empowers, mobilizes, and enlivens the armor that God has bestowed upon us to serve Him. As such, prayer becomes the impetus that drives us to victories as we dress in the armor of Ephesians 6.

This year’s theme for the National Day of Prayer is “For Your Great Name’s Sake! Hear Us... Forgive Us... Heal Us...” Taken from Daniel 9:19 which says, “O Lord, Hear! O Lord, Forgive! O Lord, Hear and Act! For Your Sake, O My God...” According to the website, www.NationalDayOfPrayer.org, “...thousands of individuals, churches, and communities will be working to rally millions of Christians to once again heed this call...” Scripture tells us again and again that our fervent prayer is effective. That our loving God responds to His children’s earnest pleas in mighty ways that still much, and ultimately determine the course of history.

Leading up to the National Day of Prayer, and to support the national chairman of the task force, Annette Lott, the Burke County National Day of Prayer Team will host a Ladies’ Luncheon on Tuesday, April 4, 2017, in the Fellowship Hall of the First Baptist Church of Morganton. The speaker will be Sonya Schweighardt, founder and President of Hope Ministries Uganda, http://www.hopenumi.org.

Sonya will be speaking about love a prayerwalk of faith and obedience are intertwined. She will offer God-stories from her personal experiences in following God into the ravaged county of Uganda, Africa and carving out a ministry to an enslaved tribe called the Batwa. She says, “Even though the big picture is obscured, we go forward. We pray and do the things He has called us to do. Just as He led the Israelites to cross the uncharted dried seabed of the Red Sea, so He leads us to go where we’ve never been before. God takes us on a journey to become mighty warriors of God, fearlessly crossing our own Red Seas as we follow Him.”

According to the website, Sonya and Russell have been adopted and orphan advocates for many years with 15 children of their own (6 birthed from the womb, 12 birthed from the heart). Her heart is passionate about hearts and hasing the gospel message through being the hands and foot of Jesus. With over half of her children from Africa, the Lord has drawn her and Russell to international missions in Africa. With her background as an occupational therapist, orphan care advocate, Daring Daughters leader, and teacher of the Proverbs 31 Woman, God has given her passions that run deep and a heart to serve in a special way.

After a year of praying with Russell, God directed them onto the path to meeting Gerald Tugume and his wife Barbara with Hope Ministries Uganda.

Their answers to prayer echo the National Day of Prayer and its mission to “mobilize prayer in America and to encourage personal repentance and righteousness in the culture.”

Join others on May 4th at the Historic Burke County courthouse as we call America to “personal repentance and prayer and to intercede for America’s leaders and families.”

Footnote: Tickets for National Day of Prayer Women’s Luncheon may be purchased by contacting Nancy Whalley at (828) 413-2543 or at Catawba River Baptist Association, 1812 US Hwy 70 E, Morganton, NC (828) 437-0137, rtec@hopenui.org

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April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 42
The Big Picture

I never tire of staring at macro photos. Their microscopic detail mesmerizes me, and the stunning beauty and richness of their workmanship captures my heart. And yet the unsaid question beckons me. What is the big picture of which this tiny fragment is a part? The answer always surprises me, and I delight in the pursuit of it.

Sometimes we, as Christians, may lose sight of the bigger picture of God’s plan for our lives as a whole. The beauty of Philippians 1:6-15 can elude us in the dark corners of the night when the what-ifs slither from under the bed and scarce us. We may be confused and disoriented by grief, anger or betrayal and forget the remarkable truth of Colossians 1:16.

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power, to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

As a result, we follow our emotions, hoping to find our way out of the tunnel and back into the light of normalcy. But the rock wall of our efforts looms ahead, forcing us to realize that the solutions we sought were not within ourselves. When presented with unsurmountable problems in life, focusing on God’s master plan for our lives restores the Big Picture in our hearts. Learning God’s grand scheme calms our storm emotions and brings peace to the horizons of our lives. Looking into the macro treasures in His Book with only 783,258 words that can be read in a mere 6:10 (or less), we discover stunning worlds of truth tucked into the microscopic stories. He gives the Big Picture repeatedly, but protagonists and protagonists in His stories lose sight of it many times as they become blinded by their own agenda.

God told Abraham that Sarah would become a Mother of Nations. He told Mary, the mother of Jesus, the Big Picture and her role in offering the Savior of all mankind to the world. And Jesus Himself gently guided Martha toward the Big Picture when He said that her sister Mary’s focus on Him was the better part.

What is the Big Picture spiritually speaking?

Colossians 1:10-15 gives us the answer. It says, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

The Big Picture is how our lives relate to God and His plan for us. We are created by Him and for His pleasure according to Colossians 1:16. Our lives exist and are maintained by Him, and our focus and allegiance belong to the Kingdom of God. The Big Picture exists outside of us and within the vast heart of God. His Philippians 1:6 plan for us will be carried out by the tiniest glorious detail, resulting in a thrilling macro photo of God’s grace and truth, complete with the iridescent orbs of wisdom and the glistening threads of eternity.

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The Big Picture includes majestic biblical themes such as the following.

1. The beauty and value of our lives last far beyond our earthly existence.
2. “Lovely wonder of old.”
3. God has a plan for our lives regardless of our attitude, our fragility, and the brevity of our days. We do not deter Him from His focus. Looking beyond her weaknesses, He gave Sarah, Abraham’s wife, her long-desired baby Isaac.
4. We represent the King of Kings whose Kingdom will never end. We are trophies of His grace.
5. We belong to a priceless throne who love the LORD, follow Him and will dwell with Him forever.
6. The Big Picture is that, although we are saved, our earthly lives are in the process of righteousness in order to appear before God as His Spotless Bride.

Once we know the Big Picture, we can put on the whole armor of God, protecting every vulnerable spot in our spiritual lives. Using every piece is critical to our spiritual health.

Marlene Hoek is a regular contributor to The Blue Ridge Christian News. She and Sid, her husband, attend Mount Home Baptist Church.
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Nonprofit Leadership Attributes: Speaking and Supervising

By Susan Larson

Two area workshops for nonprofit executive directors, staff, and board members will be offered in April under the sponsorship of WNC Nonprofit Pathways. The first will be “Public Speaking” taught by Neela Munoz on Thursday, April 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Mayland Community College in Spruce Pine. It qualifies for credit as part of the Duke Certificate Program in Nonprofit Management.

This innovative course allows the speaker to discover and use his or her natural strengths while engaging one person, a mid-sized audience or a large group. Especially designed for those working with non-profit organizations, it covers the unique challenges and opportunities everyday people in getting their message heard. Participants will get techniques for learning about audiences in advance in order to tailor a speech. They’ll also learn how to develop customized openings and closings for different presentations, create and use visuals in a successful way, reduce preparation time, and make effective presentations using a proven outline form.

Neela Munoz brings an extensive theatre background to her work as a facilitator and coach. She is a seasoned director, Equity actor, and educator with more than twenty years’ experience in professional theatre. Neela shares with clients the proven tactics and techniques of public speaking to make them more self-confident and impactful. Her unique training coupled with her passion for coaching and developing clients allow her to creatively communicate the art of self-presentation to a wide array of individual clients from non-profit advocates, veterans, students, pediatricians, politicians, to large firms across the United States and beyond. To access registration and scholarship information about the Public Speaking class, go to April 13 on the event calendar at www.nonprofitpathways.org.

The second class in April will be on Friday, April 28, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Mayland Community College section of the Banner Elk School. Called “Leadership Skills for the Nonprofit Supervisor,” it will be taught by Sally Loftis. Leaders at all levels will learn to supervise teams and staff, for the good of themselves and their organization. Topics covered will include basic personnel law, the budgeting process for personnel, managerial procedures for recruitment, performance management, and staff transitions, negotiating difficult and sensitive conversations, and finding sources of ongoing support for leaders.

Sally Loftis has worked in the field of human resources for 20 years, first in banking, then as a consultant, and now as Human Resources Director at Deasland School of Crafts. Using her knowledge of compensation best practices, she has served on the board for the Recognition Professionals International, formerly known as the National Association for Employee Recognition. She has volunteered with the Executive Service Corps, Pat’s Place, Council for Children’s Rights, Second 2 None, and The Crossnore School. A resident of Avery County, Sally lives with her family on the campus of The Crossnore School.

The cost to attend “Leadership Skills for the Nonprofit Supervisor” is $15 for the first registrant and $10 for up to three additional registrants from the same organization. Lunch is included. For a link to register for “Leadership Skills”, please send an email to sjlarson@gmail.com. Registration is limited and must be completed by April 24.

Susan Larson is Director of WNC Non-Profit Pathways.

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Studio Tour-Kids Rule

You're Never Too Young
By Kate Groff

It's not too early to start thinking about summer and being out and about in the mountains of Western North Carolina, wandering the many narrow roads, crossing over and following the Toe River. And it's never too early for kids to start helping out moms and dads with their work, especially if they're artists and participating in the studio tour. The two early starts come together during the TEAC Studio Tour this June 2-4 in Mitchell and Yancey counties when some of these kids take part...with their parents.

Last tour, Grae Ceci (age 5) decided to participate in the studio tour...to help out the local animal shelter, make a few dollars, and brew fun with her mom in the studio. Her "mom" is Courtney Martin, well-known ceramicist in Bakersville.

At the same time, about 5 miles away, Roby Summerfield (age 10), veteran tour artist, worked in her mom's studio. And her mom is Liz Summerfield, educator, ceramicist, and long-time tour participant.

During tour weekend last December, both Grae and Roby set up their tables, made signs, and stood and smiled as everyone who came by. Both of them sold out! Roby also works in theater, giving buyers an even bigger choice. Those were gone also!

John Groff and Courtney are Grae's parents. He's a glass blower, the builder of functional pottery. Their studio is separated by their solar heated house, about 10 minutes from Penland School of Crafts. Liz and Scott Summerfield, also a glass blower, work at different ends of one large outbuilding with a showroom in between.

Grae and Roby are growing up in the mountains of North Carolina, both have attended arts-related events since before they could crawl and both have an appreciation of craft and the amount of fun they have working alongside their parents in their studios.

Continued studies show the benefit of experiencing art at a young age. Perhaps now more than ever—as the country becomes ever more diverse, the world more interconnected, and the workplace more oriented around technology and creativity—arts education is key to such a system and to ensuring students' success in school, work, and life. And what better way to get that interaction than to experience it with a parent.

The arts council has always put arts in education top of their community agenda, and the tour has always welcomed generations of artists. Any artist under 18 can participate in the tour for free. They show their work in these participating parent's studio. And it seems these entrepreneurial, creative children are getting younger and younger. We can't promise Grae or Roby will continue to "do" the tour, but the outlook is promising. Perhaps, they'll bring their young artists to bring that studio door. Both will be 3 months older in June, and we hope they haven't outgrown their desire to funnel their creativity into a way to learn, help others, spend time with mom and dad, and have fun.

The Toe River Studio Tour runs from Friday, June 2 through Sunday, June 4 with the "meets-the-artists" reception that night from 5:30 to 7:30 at the Spruce Pine TRAC Gallery (269 Oak Avenue). Hours of the tour are 10 am to 5 pm each day. An exhibit will begin May 13 at the gallery with a showcase of participant work arranged geographically. For more information, please check the website, www.toeriverarts.org or call 828-682-7215.

BLACKSMITH EXHIBIT HEATS UP THE SPRUCE PINE TRAC GALLERY

SPRUCE PINE, NC: On Saturday, April 1, and for the 11th year, the Toe River Arts Council opens its exhibition of blacksmith and metal work from around the country. Held in conjunction with Fire On The Mountain Festival, the exhibition will give visitors an opportunity to view these metal arts and crafts in a gallery setting and to learn more about the nationally acclaimed smiths. With seemingly unstoppable foot traffic, the exhibit has grown to 3-dimensional "how did they hang that?" pieces, the gallery will be filled with forged, welded, pounded, and pinned copper, iron, steel, bronze. An always-free pizza and beer reception will be held at the gallery on the Festival Saturday, April 1, from 5 to 7 pm. The public is invited to share in the event and meet these talented artists.

TRAC has been displaying blacksmith work for over a decade and recognizing one master blacksmith each year. This year's Master Blacksmith is Lee Sauter from Lexington, VA. In his words: "Here's what I do for a living: I dig up iron and I put it back together to make it metal by the ancient and long-forgotten art of Noe EMSHON. Then I try to forge something beautiful out of the iron I've made."

One could say that Sauter grew up with a lead foot. He began forging when he was 12, back in 1973, with an apprenticeship with Larry Mann. He moved around the world working with well-known blacksmiths, finally planting these feet in Lexington, VA, where he opened Sauter Ironworks.

The pieces showcased during the Blacksmith exhibition are of the highest aesthetic caliber, inviting profound artistic contemplation from viewers. Other works bring back to life the hand-made uniqueness of the utilitarian items of past centuries: candlesticks, animal, torch, howsors. All the smiths have taken a concept and brought it to completion with unparalleled artistry.

Another favorite, Seth Gould, resident at Penland School of Crafts and first place winner of last year's Blacksmith Show, will be demonstrating and ex-

KATE GROFF IS THE PROGRAMS COORDINATOR FOR THE TOE RIVER ARTS COUNCIL.
Christian Action League of NC

Racism Bad, But Lawlessness Worse
By Rev. Mark H. Creech

"Prejudice, said Martin King, "is the ink with which all history is written." [1] We've certainly felt the import of these words with the Michael Brown case in Ferguson and the Eric Garner situation in New York. Riots, looting, entire city blocks burned to the ground andstanding protest have resulted. The charge leveled by many and the justification given for the disorder is racism.

Racism is a terrible thing. Alveda King provides an excellent definition, saying, "Racism springs from the lie that certain human beings are less than fully human. It's a self-centered falsehood that corrupts our minds into believing we are right to treat others as we would not want to be treated." [2]

Wherever we see racism and prejudice described in the Scriptures, it is always colored with condemnation. Whether it's the Egyptians' hatred and oppression of the Jews, Jonah's bigotry of the Ninevites, the Jews detesting the Samaritans, Peter's unwillingness to share the Gospel with the Gentiles, the notion of racial superiority is inconsistent with the grace of God and His commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Certainly racist attitudes continue in various ways and degrees. Although the Civil Rights movement did much to improve the racial climate in this country, it didn't eradicate the problem.

Most would concede this point. But for this author, despite the common cry that the circumstances surrounding both Brown and Garner and the resulting chaos are about race, there is no direct connection.

There is, however, in both cases an absolute connection to lawlessness, which I suggest is the root of the matter.

In his famous commencement address at Harvard University in 1978, Alexander Solzhenitsyn cautioned us as to a deeper problem facing our country both then and now. Solzhenitsyn said, "Indeed sometimes the warnings are quite explicit and concrete. The center of your democracy and of your culture is left without electric power for a few hours only, and all of sudden crowds of American citizens, order and law, are gathering about... The smooth surface must be very thin, then, the social system quite unstable and unhealthy." [3]

The counsel in Solzhenitsyn's speech didn't deal with surface issues, but went straight to the core. He declared it was time for citizens to think less about human rights and more about human obligations. He argued that the time had come for citizens to take responsibility for themselves and their own behavior, and that all people, every class and race, should stop looking for the government to save them. [4]

For some time Americans have felt this country was on the wrong track. We seem to be drifting further and further away from our moorings. Solzhenitsyn spoke of this as well, when he contended, "This tilt of freedom toward evil has come about gradually, but it evidently stems from a humanistic and benevolent concept according to which man - the master of this world - does not bear any evil within himself, and all the defects of life are caused by misguided social systems, which must therefore be corrected." [5]

Granted, when there is corruption and injustice in government, law enforcement, or any other form of authority, the problem needs to be addressed swiftly and corrected. But in contrast to those with whom we have jumped aboard the "racist" train recently and argued that special concessions need to be made for blacks because of slavery, that law enforcement needs sensitivity training in dealing with minorities, that people should be sympathetic with the rooting, pillaging, and burning by rioters because of acts of racism, I cringe with sharp disagreement. It is these contentious, I suggest, that exacerbate the divide, not help or heal it. These assertions do nothing but frustrate the efforts to full equality.

Interestingly, it appears that the people of color who achieved the greatest success and made the most positive impact on society were not those characterized by a victim mentality or a spirit of entitlement, but just the opposite. Whether we are talking about Joe Louis, Jesse Owens, Jackie Robinson, Maya Angelou, Oprah Winfrey, Morgan Freeman, Booker T. Washington, Coretta Scott King, Alex Keyes, Allen West, Ben Carson, or Clarence Thomas, these highly influential people took responsibility for their own lives, overcame their imperfections, and defied odds significantly greater than most today. They, and so many others like them, triumphed because they worked hard, were industrious, made good moral decisions, and were not turned inward but outward - desirous not only to make their own circumstances better, but committed to making a better world for others too.

Milan-David once wrote, "If you have me because I am ignorant, I'll educate myself. If you hate me because I am dirty, I'll clean myself... But if you hate me because I am black, I can only refer you to God who made me black." [6]

The point here is that before we start blaming others, before we start pointing fingers, before we start accusing people of racism, it may serve better to first look within. It may prove a better strategy to do as Michael Jackson admonished in his song, "Man in the Mirror.

"I'm starting with the man in the mirror. I'm asking him to change his ways. And to message could have been any clearer. If you want to make the world a better place Take a look at yourself, and then make a change."

Racism is an egregious sin when committed. But greater still, so matter the race, is the sin of him who will not govern himself and demands that he be served rather than to serve.

Indeed. And may God hasten the day, as Martin Luther King Jr. said, when all men will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

Resources:

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at mcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-737-0605

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16"
Avery County Schools

Spring in School
By David Burleson
Avery County

In Avery County, we can never say winter is over while we are still in the month of March. With the mild January and February, we thought that an early Spring was just around the corner, but winter has come back around. Changing weather and cancellations always present challenges. As we meet these challenges, we express our sincere appreciation to everyone for their patience and support as we strive to make decisions that promote safety.

As of Friday, March 17, here is where we are with days missed due to inclement weather:
1. 8 days have been missed.
2. 10 hours missed for delays/early dismissals.
3. The extended instructional time has allowed us to not make up the 9 days we have missed and if the additional time is continued until the end of the year there will be 2 or 3 more days that can be used to makeup time.
4. We still have our entire Easter and Spring Break in place.

I know we are all hopeful that Spring is now here and we can look forward to the warmer temperatures and the beauty we experience in Avery County during this time of the year.

This is the time in which we welcome our new class of kindergartners and have the opportunity to get to work with another group of parents and students. As a school system, we are very excited to announce our schedule for the 2017 kindergarten and Pre-K registration. The registration process is designed to provide necessary information for parents and to answer any questions they may have.

A child is eligible for kindergarten in North Carolina if the child is five years old on or before August 31, 2016. A child is eligible for Pre-Kindergarten in North Carolina on or before August 31, 2016 and meets the NC Pre-K guidelines for eligibility. Please contact your local elementary school to put your child's name on the upcoming kindergarten or Pre-K list.

At kindergarten and Pre-K registration children and parents will explore the classrooms, meet teachers and administrators, make new friends and enjoy a short ride on a school bus while learning about school bus safety. All kindergarten and Pre-K children are invited to have a free lunch in the school cafeteria compliments of a local business.

During the kindergarten registration dates at the respective schools, currently enrolled pre-K and kindergarten students will not be attending school. This allows our kindergarten staff to meet with parents to welcome the class of 2020.

Items to bring to registration:
- Immunization certificate
- Current up-to-date immunization record
- Current kindergarten health assessment. Must be current within one year
- Proof of residence (Complete all forms that are mailed to you by your school principal)

Immunization Information

Students entering Avery County Schools for the first time must be up-to-date with the required immunizations for North Carolina. For more details, please visit www.immunize.org for a list of immunizations required for public school entry. Note that the 30th calendar day for 2017-2018 will tentatively be September 19, 2017; therefore, any student who is not up to date with the required immunizations will be excluded from school until the immunizations are up to date or the proper exemption statements are in place. These are not considered to be excused absences. (North Carolina General Statutes of North Carolina, Article 6).

Kindergarten Health Assessment

Kindergarten Health Assessment must be completed by a health care provider on first time admission to kindergarten in North Carolina. If this is not on file by the 30th calendar day of school the student will be excluded until this KHA is current. Information can be found at this website: http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/cdc/kha/...
This is SO typical of what happens over and over, in every Christian’s spiritual life. We do not usually get to “sit on your laurels” even when you experience a victory with your kids’ behavior. Let’s look at a “new” crisis: working around the kids’ rooms; not having a vacation since 2019. It’s not that this new crisis is any more or less stressful, but it is a new challenge. Or God’s “high” right into a time of testing, as an example for us in our spiritual lives as well.

1. I. The “Mountaintop” Before the Wilderness—Can you imagine the “spiritual highs” that come in your life? You know the flood of emotions that come when you experience something new and you are excited. 

We need to understand that the same thing happens in our spiritual lives as well. Every Christian gets some “spiritual highs” when you experience God in a fresh way, or take a special “leap forward” in learning and growing in Him—but we also need to learn that the “spiritual highs” don’t typically last very long. Here in Matthew 3 and 4 we see that Jesus, who modeled so much for us about what it means to walk with God, went through the same thing. He went from “God’s high” right into a time of testing, as an example for us in our spiritual lives as well.

2. The “Mountaintop” Before the Wilderness—Can you imagine the “spiritual highs” that come in your life? You know the flood of emotions that come when you experience something new and you are excited.

Every Christian gets these “spiritual highs.” It is the initial “high” of conversion. We all have had the thrill, when Jesus was in our lives. It is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved. This is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved.

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5. The “Mountaintop” Before the Wilderness—Can you imagine the “spiritual highs” that come in your life? You know the flood of emotions that come when you experience something new and you are excited. Every Christian gets these “spiritual highs.” It is the initial “high” of conversion. We all have had the thrill, when Jesus was in our lives. It is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved. This is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved.

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8. The “Mountaintop” Before the Wilderness—Can you imagine the “spiritual highs” that come in your life? You know the flood of emotions that come when you experience something new and you are excited. Every Christian gets these “spiritual highs.” It is the initial “high” of conversion. We all have had the thrill, when Jesus was in our lives. It is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved. This is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved.

9. The “Mountaintop” Before the Wilderness—Can you imagine the “spiritual highs” that come in your life? You know the flood of emotions that come when you experience something new and you are excited. Every Christian gets these “spiritual highs.” It is the initial “high” of conversion. We all have had the thrill, when Jesus was in our lives. It is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved. This is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved.

10. The “Mountaintop” Before the Wilderness—Can you imagine the “spiritual highs” that come in your life? You know the flood of emotions that come when you experience something new and you are excited. Every Christian gets these “spiritual highs.” It is the initial “high” of conversion. We all have had the thrill, when Jesus was in our lives. It is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved. This is the thrill of being saved, of knowing you are going to heaven, of knowing you are eternally saved.
It is very revealing that we see here in the temptations that follow in the next verses, that the devil tried to get Jesus to doubt what God had just told him at His baptism. What did God the Father say in 3:17 when His voice sounded from heaven? He said: “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.” God told Jesus, “You are My Son, and I am totally pleased with you.” Now notice how Satan begins his temptation of Jesus in the wilderness in Matthew 4:1: he said to Him, “If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” “If you are the Son of God”! Jesus knew that He was God’s Son. And God had just told Him that He was His Son, is that amazing baptism experience. But new Satan was testing Jesus, in the very thing that God had just told Him was true. Jesus was tested in the wilderness, on what He had just experienced on the “mountaintop.”

And that is what happens to us as well. When we have had times of spiritual growth on the “mountaintop” with the Lord (whatever form that “mountaintop” spiritual growth takes), God then allows us to come into a time of “wilderness,” of trial and temptation, where Satan will try to get us to doubt what we know God has told us about Himself, or what we just learned about His word, or our ministry, or His call on our lives. It is not a “fun” thing to go through, but it is an important element of our spiritual growth, because that testing helps us to consolidate what God has just accomplished in our lives.

It is the process of strengthening your body through lifting weights. Most people don’t lift weights every day or at least they don’t lift with the same muscles every day. They’ll lift weights one day, and then the next day they will rest, and let those muscles build back up again, and strengthen and then the following day they lift again. And that process of lifting and then resting builds the muscles and strengthens them over time, and incorporates into the body the benefits of the exercise.

A smaller kind of thing happens to us spiritually. God will draw us near to Him, in a “mountaintop” experience whether it is salvation, or baptism, or a retreat or reviv, or even a special prayer and Bible time or an especially effective ministry experience. But love much of that have we really learned? How much of it will we really retain? God “leads us up” by His Spirit into a “wilderness” where we get tested and see how much of that we really kept and we find out maybe we didn’t “keep” all of that. But hopefully we did some. Maybe we did indeed learn something, and we did grow. But we show how much we really learned, and how much we really “kept” by how we live and act in the wilderness of testing afterwards. So, hopefully we did indeed grow a little bit. So now God will take us into the next “mountain top” to another lesson, to another close walk with Him and yes, then He’ll allow us to be tested in the wilderness again after that.

So listen: although it may not be pleasant to hear, I am not here to “lick your ears”, I am here to tell you the truth. And the truth is, You WILL be tested. It IS coming. You will NOT stay on a “spiritual high” forever. Most of you know that already. Maybe you are in a spiritual “wilderness” now. And maybe you feel like you did something wrong: “What have I done to get myself into this ‘wildness’?” Maybe you are questioning if you were really saved, because you’re thinking this wouldn’t happen to you if you were really a Christian.

Don’t let the enemy mess with you like that. Every Christian experiences this “indulgence”, this “up and down.” Everyone has “spiritual highs” and then goes into the wilderness again. It may be helpful for you to realize that this WOULD happen to you; it is NOT unusual; it is more likely not your fault: it’s a normal part of every Christian’s experience. You are being tested to see how much you just learned; to see how much of that truth you are going to really hold on to. There is a good old saying: “Don’t doubt in the darkness what God has shown you in the light.” Don’t doubt, in the wilderness of testing, what God clearly told you on the mountaintop of the spiritual high. But you WILL be tested on it; you can count on that.

So when will all these “wildernesses” end? When will all this testing stop? It won’t stop until you cross the last “river” to get into Heaven. The last test, the last enemy you face is death. You will find out then, how has your whole Christian life prepared you for that? What have you learned from your whole life of walking with God that has prepared you for this hour? Some people grow, unfortunately, that they didn’t learn much. (I remember years ago, watching with dismay while a person, who was a “guitar” of this church, was carted away into a minor surgery writhing and crying because he was so afraid that something might happen to him and he might die). Others face that hour with confidence: they know that just like God has been with them through their different wilderness experiences, He will be with them as they cross this last river as well.

But your wilderness experiences won’t end until then. As long as you live, God will continue to bring you through times of spiritual growth, and spiritual testing, over and over, to test and to consolidate what you have learned into your spiritual life.

Your challenge right now is: Don’t be surprised when you are brought into the “wilderness.” It WILL happen to you. It is a law of spiritual growth. Be ready for it, stand firm in it. Live out what you learned in it. Don’t give up in the middle of it. AND . . . (this might be comforting to you) know that it won’t last forever. Remember: just as the spiritual “highs” of the mountaintop doesn’t last forever, neither does the spiritual “low” and test of the valley last forever. You won’t be in “the wilderness” forever. If you are “in the wilderness” right now, be faithful, and endure this test until it’s over. It can help you to get through this time when you realize that soon this test will be over, and God’s gonna have you back up on the mountain top again before too long!"
Town of Valdese

McGalliard Falls Park
Morrisia Angi
Burke County

The Town of Valdese is excited to announce that on the first Saturday of each month from April through October, Valdese Public Works will have the waterwheel at McGalliard Falls Park running. This is encouraged to mark their calendars for these special Saturdays.

McGalliard Falls Park has been a favorite gathering place for Valdese citizens and visitors alike for over a century. The Meyre Grist Mill was originally built in 1806 to serve the Valdese community by processing the corn and wheat by Fred Meyre. A large flood in 1916 obliterated the original waterwheel and the mill then changed to a turbine power. The Meyre Grist Mill was closed in the early 1940’s as the original owner aged and could not operate it any longer. The town government now manages the property.

The mill is located next to McGalliard Falls which is a 40 foot high waterfall with a beauty rating of 8 out of 10 for North Carolina waterfalls. The mill was rebuilt when McGalliard Falls Park was created in 1982. Most recently, the Meyre Grist Mill has served as a favorite backdrop for family photos and a reminder of yesteryear.

Most recently, the waterwheel was replaced in 2016 after a tree damaged the previous wheel beyond repair. The repairs andrenovations were completed with the support of Historic Valdese Foundation, Reston Family Foundation and donations from citizens. The renovations would not have been possible without the efforts of Valdese Public Works Department and the services provided by the Young Offenders’ Forest Conservation Program (BRIDGE).

In an effort to enhance Valdese, chairman Gary Belp, his wife Rhylee, and Friends of the Waterfall River conceptions Gary Belp, his wife Rhylee, and Friends of the Waterfall River conceptions Gary Belp, his wife Rhylee, and Friends of the Waterfall River conceptions Gary Belp, his wife Rhylee, and Friends of the Waterfall River conceptions Gary Belp, his wife Rhylee, and Friends of the Waterfall River conceptions Gary Belp, his wife Rhylee, and Friends of the Waterfall River have worked together to create a Bird Sanctuary at the McGalliard Falls Park. The scouts chose to do the Bird Sanctuary as their Silver Project for the Boy Scouts. The project began by setting up a booth at the Valdese Festival in Valdese to sell sponsorships for the bird houses. The money that they made, and with a contribution from Lowe’s Hardware, Morganale, were able to build and paint 35 birdhouses. In addition to the birdhouses, with plants made by the community, the town has been able to create a two different areas of the park, complete with a sign reading “Every Bird Welcome Here” to mark the entrance. The completed project was unveiled to the public on Saturday, September 17th, with the ribbon cutting of the Grist Mill.

In honor of the renovations and new additions to the park, the public is encouraged to bring a picnic, and spend the afternoon enjoying the new and historic Valdese gems! McGalliard Falls Park is located off Main Street on NW Church Street.

For further information call 828-879-2129 or go to visitvaldese.com

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

When You Are Weak
By Anne Graham Lotz

When have you been in a situation where you desperately needed help? Who did you turn to? I was recently admonished by a very well-meaning person, “Anne—take care of yourself. No one else will.”

Seriously? While I understand the challenge to be prudent about practical matters, I have confidence that God will take care of me as I was the only person He had to be concerned with. Because God is my Help...I can turn to Him. And He is your Help, too.

WHEN YOU ARE WEAK
In what way, or area of your life, do you feel weak?
List God’s promises found in Isaiah 41:10.
Write each promise in your own words, inserting your name.
Which promise is most encouraging to you, and why?
How does God promise to hold you up when you are weak?
Besides upholding you, what else is associated with God’s right hand?
See Exodus 15:6; Psalm 10:11; 17:8; 113:4; 85:2; 85:13; 90:1-9; Isaiah 48:13; Mark 16:19; Romans 8:34.
What caused Daniel to be overcome with weakness in Daniel 10:15-17?
How was he given strength? Read Daniel 10:18-19.
What have you been confronted with that has caused you to go weak?
When you are weak, whether physical, emotional, mental or spiritual, would you ask God to give you His strength as you turn to Him for help? Then open your Bible.

Bible WHEN YOU ARE WEARY
What was the psalmist worried about in Psalm 4:2?
How did God help the psalmist when he turned to God? See Psalm 4:7-8.
What was Jehoshaphat worried about in 2 Chronicles 20:1-7?
How did he react to the alarming news, according to 2 Chronicles 20:3-13?
In Matthew 6:31-34, what did Jesus command us to do when we are worried?
How does the Apostle Paul underscore turning to God when we are worried? See Philippians 4:6-7.
What is the antidote for worry? Read Proverbs 3:5-6.
What are you worried about? Who have you turned to? What has been the result?
When you are worried, would you ask God to give you His peace as you turn to Him for help? Then open your Bible.

Bible WHEN YOU ARE WEARY
What have you experienced weariness physically? Emotionally? Mentally? Spiritually?
What encouragement do you receive from Isaiah 40:27-28 if you are physically weary?
What encouragement do you receive from Galatians 6:9-10 if you are spiritually weary?
What encouragement do you receive from 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 if you are emotionally weary?
What encouragement do you receive from 2 Corinthians 1:2-5, 16 if you are mentally weary?
What inner resource for believers does Ephesians 1:18-21 reveal to be available? The next time you are weary to the point of collapse, would you ask God to give you His resurrection power as you turn to Him for help? Then open your Bible.

The writer to the Hebrews exclaimed with emphatic confidence: The Lord is my help...And He is my help...How can He not help you? because that’s what He is. He can’t be less than Himself, and He is our Helper. Rely on Him and experience His strength when you are weak. His peace when you are worried. His resurrection power when you are weary.
He will help you. I know. ©2017 Anne Graham Lotz

Anne is the daughter of Billy and Ruth Graham and a speaker and Bible teacher in her own right.

www.brcnews.com

April 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 50

Hope in Him

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Graham Children’s Health Services Celebrates 20th Anniversary With A New Name, Logo, and Website!

By Schell McCall, Executive Director Mitchell and Yancey Counties

Burlington, NC (3/16/17) — For 20 years, Graham Children’s Health Services (GCHS) has served Mitchell and Yancey county residents for programs and services designed to improve the health of our community. Since 1997, these initiatives and collaborations have included: Toe River Dental Clinic, Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force, four permanent drug drop boxes, Summer Food Program, Sinclaire Summer Series, and the renovation/construction of many recreation facilities (including the old Burlington Gym, Kid Mountain playground, Ray-Cort skate park, countless walking trails and sidewalks, and recreation facilities at Canoe River Park) to name but a few!

In 2013, GCHS was awarded a grant through WCN Nonprofit Pathways and the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina that enabled the organization to engage Tappor Consulting to conduct stakeholder surveys and develop a strategic plan. According to Schell McCall, Executive Director of GCHS, “One of the findings that came as a result of this process was the realization that while many community members are familiar with the results of our work, they don’t necessarily realize WHO is responsible for these great projects. Many of the survey respondents said that they’d heard of Graham’s, but they didn’t know exactly who we were.”

According to Oscar Weinheimer, Board member and past Board Chair, “When we meet people who are unfamiliar with our work and have to spend the first few minutes explaining that we are NOT from Graham County, and we are NOT a children’s health clinic... by that time we’ve lost the opportunity to tell them who we ARE and about all of the great stuff we do!”

With the goal of choosing a name that best fits the organizational mission, GCHS sought and received a small grant for developing a new name, logo, and website. “Our new name – Partners Aligned Toward Health – encapsulates who we are, what we do, and how we do it. We focus on community health, and all of our initiatives are partnerships,” says Ron Powell, Board Chair. In order to honor the organization’s rich history and to provide visual consistency, the new logo incorporates the artwork designed many years ago by John Doyle for Healthy Yancey (a program of GCCHS/PATH). PATH’s new website, found at www.path-wnc.org, is user-friendly and provides a wealth of information about PATH and programs.

On March 16, 2017, at the Burnsville Town Center, the staff and Board of Partners Aligned Toward Health (PATH) officially unveiled their new name and logo to the community, expressing deep gratitude for the partnership and support of all of the local organizations, volunteers, funders, staff, and board members (past and present) who have made the past 20 years of community health initiatives such a success. Ms. McCall shared, “We couldn’t think of a better way to celebrate our 20-year anniversary than by taking a moment to thank the many partners whose support, ideas, and encouragement have made our work possible. We are looking forward with excitement to the next 20 years of serving our community!”

To learn more, support our work or get involved as a volunteer, contact PATH at (828) 892-7899, info@path-wnc.org, or visit www.path-wnc.org.

Schell McCall is Program Associate for Yancey County 4-H.

McDowell Tech

Phi Theta Kappa Inducts New Students

By Michael Lavender
McDowell County

The Beta Zeta Lambda Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society induced 22 new members to its ranks in a ceremony held Monday evening at McDowell Technical Community College. Phi Theta Kappa is one of the two primary honor societies which recognize two-year and junior college students across the country.

Students inducted into Phi Theta Kappa must be recommended by their academic advisor and must have completed at least 12 hours of course work toward an associate degree with a grade point average of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. Membership in the society is voluntary.

Congratulations to these new members:

Donna L. Allison
Autumn M. Boyles
Madison A. Cauthen
Maggie L. Effer
Jacob M. Frey
Emily L. Hamilton
Richard W. Hughes
Thomas R. Lindsey
Katelyn N. Lowery
Destiny R. Mader
Katlin A. Mathieson
Sydney E. McIntire
Shana N. McKinney
Mills Ortiz
Louis R. Parrow
Abal R. Rivera
Adrianna J. Shetton
William C. Smith
Grace V. Sword
Alexandra N. Thomas
Stacy L. Waldes
Lee A. Wampler

Chapter officers Mackenzie Silver, Raymon Oyer-Joneson, Garrett McPeters, Nhan Nguyen, Lauren Worley and member Andrew Smith.

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The Nail Didn't Hold Him to the Cross

IT WAS HIS LOVE FOR ME!
The college provides apprentices and develops training modules for Continental Teves Inc., which makes advanced brake systems; trains all workers in advanced manufacturing processes for Borg Warner, a sock company owned by Gateway; and trains welders and train workers at SAFI Americas, a manufacturer of batteries for the military, trains employees at Electrolux, a high-end leather furniture company, on Gerber CNC cutters, high-speed sewing and advanced modularized frame systems; trains employees in advanced robotics used in the electronics and automobile production at Molded Fiberglass, a company that manufactures large truck cabs and bumper systems; and trains employees for Leviton, a manufacturer of electrical devices for home and industry, Siegwerk, which manufactures printing inks, and Ice River Springs, maker of proprietary and custom bottled water. WPCC is also assisting Manhattan Specialty Yarns to convert a traditional textile mill into a state-of-the-art dye operation.

"Western Piedmont is developing the next generation workforce. We are also establishing credentials that will meet the needs for worker right now but creating stackable credentials to develop workers for long-term educational credit," said Dr. John Boyd, president of Mayland Community College (MCC), one graduate moved from an hourly to salaried position in the design department at Altex. The second graduate worked on the manufacturing floor at Altex, then received an offer for a full-time engineering position on another local company upon graduation. That student opted to stay at Altex and has applied for a position in the design department. The third graduate interviewed with three local employers, Baldor Electric and Weaverville, Advanced Superabrasives in Mars Hill, and GE Aviation in Highlands. He received a full-time position with full benefits at GE Aviation.

"These graduates landed full-time jobs right out of college," said Boyd. "After reaching permanent status, Altex employees on the manufacturing floor make around $15 per hour. Employees in the design department move into the $40-45 per hour range. The graduate hired at GE started making around $18 per hour with full benefits and received a defined pathway to reach $30 per hour."

Baldor Electric, Weaverville, Advanced Superabrasives, and GE Aviation are all known for having a high-quality advanced manufacturing economy. Also pictured is MCC President Dr. John Boyd, who is pictured during a North Carolina's Northwest Prosperity Zone meeting highlighting community college impact on the local economy. Also pictured is MCC Board of Trustee Member Henry Stacy.

Mayland Community College President Dr. John Boyd speaks during a North Carolina’s Northwest Prosperity Zone meeting highlighting community college impact on the local economy. Also pictured is MCC Board of Trustee Member Henry Stacy.

Mayland Community College Board of Trustees member Henry Stacy speaks during a North Carolina's Northwest Prosperity Zone meeting highlighting community college impact on the local economy. Also pictured is MCC President Dr. John Boyd.
**Mayland Community College**

Dr. Keith Mackie, executive vice president of Catawba Valley Community College, spoke about the new Alexander County Academy located in CVCC’s Alexander Applied Technologies Center in Taylorsville.

The Alexander Furniture Academy is a public/private partnership between major Alexander County furniture manufacturers and the college to prepare students for skilled positions that are in high demand by some of the largest employers in our area. The Academy’s founding partners are Craftmaster Furniture, Keasbey Furniture and Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams. In the 24-week training, expert craftpeople teach a learning track of Swig Rig Operator and Upholstery Craftsmen.

CVCC also offers the Manufacturing Academy, an industry-driven training course to prepare students with necessary skills to succeed in manufacturing, and Apprenticeship Catawba, an exciting new partnership between local advanced manufacturer, Catawba and Alexander County Schools and the college.

Monday’s meeting was held in honor of North Carolina Community College Day, which will be celebrated statewide on March 29. With 35 colleges located across North Carolina and nearly 710,000 students, the North Carolina Community College System is the third largest institution of higher education in the United States and is internationally recognized for its programs supporting economic and workforce development.

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**Burke County Schools**

**Music Classes Study Local Legend**

By Cheryl M. Shaffer

By Cheryl M. Shaffer

Burke County

The smooth, ragtime rhythms of a string instrument is piped through the speakers in Margaret Smith’s classroom.

“Can anyone guess what instrument this is?” the Drexel Elementary School music teacher prompted the students sitting in near rows on the floor. Eager hands flew up in the air. “A guitar,” one student shouted with assurance. “Right, a guitar,” Smith acknowledged.

In this era of Taylor Swift, Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez, the music and life story of a woman who died three years before they were even born captured those third graders. The woman is Etta Baker (1911-2006), the acclaimed Piedmont Blues musician who called Morganton home, and third graders throughout Burke County learned about her the week of Feb. 20. The lesson served several purposes as it came during Black History Month, is about local history, which is part of the third-grade curriculum, and is a precursor to the unveiling of the Etta Baker statue at the City of Morganton Municipal Auditorium on May 25.

In addition to this lesson on Etta Baker, every third grader in Burke County was given a booklet about her, a guitar pick with her name and years of birth and death engraved on it, an invitation to attend, for free, the May 25 concert in her memory. CoMMA and Burke Arts Council were instrumental in providing the lessons and booklet. Jim Smith, executive director of CoMMA, said, “Our purpose is to educate our current generation, and generations to come about the life of Mrs. Baker.”

Baker was born in Caldwell County, but grew up in Morganton. She came from a family of musicians, and her father put a guitar in her hands when she was a mouth shy of turning 3 years old. She learned the Piedmont Blues guitar finger-picking style, which only involves the thumb and forefinger, from her father who learned it from his father.

Baker raised her nine children and worked in a Morganton factory until she was in her late 70s. Throughout her life, she played her music locally for family and friends, but didn’t cut her first album until she was 78. She died at age 93, and was still picking a guitar up to the end.

Cheryl Shaffer is the Public Relations Officer for the Burke County Public School System.

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