

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

Sowing Seeds of Salvation!



Matthew 28:19

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

SATURDAY 2-4 PM

THURSDAY 7-9 PM

WEDNESDAY 6-8 PM

Getting sick isn't
convenient. **We are.**

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MY CARE NOW
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SATURDAY, 2:47 PM



THURSDAY, 7:44 AM



WEDNESDAY, 6:15 PM



MONDAY, 7:02 AM

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NEW NAME

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BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

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"How 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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Altapass Baptist Church

3631 Altapass Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
828-765-0660
altapassbaptistchurch@ccvn.com
www.altapassbaptistchurch.org

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield

Sunday School - 10:00am
Worship - 11:00am
Sunday Evening - 7:00pm
Sunday Youth Program - 7:00pm
1st & 3rd Sunday
(Conductors for Christ ages 5-11)
2nd & 4th Sunday
(Teen Discovery ages 12-18)
Wednesday - 7:00pm

"A Christ-Centered,
Bible Believing Church"

Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

11090 Hwy. 226 South
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.sprucepineumc.org
spumc3@bellsouth.net
828-765-7446

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

Sunday School - 10:00am
Sunday Worship - 11:00am
Choir Wednesday - 7:00pm

The mission of Spruce Pine United Methodist Church is to be a beacon on a hill spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ through: Worship, Fellowship, Education, and Nurturing Service

Horizon Church

500 East Fleming Drive
Morganton, NC
828-437-1212

**Pastors: Senior Pastor
Timothy Fortune &
Associate Pastor Mike Stroud**

Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
Wednesday 6:30PM

www.myhorizonchurch.org
Transforming Lives Through
The Power of Jesus Christ!

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

4527 Hwy 19E
Plumtree, NC 28664
828-765-6919
www.plumtreechurch.com

Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreechurch.com

Sunday School 9:45 am
Worship Service 11:00 am
Life Groups Tuesday-Thursday evenings, 7:00 pm
Fusion Youth Wednesday's, 6:30 pm
Healing Services 2nd Sunday of each month, 6:30 pm

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

St. Lucien's Catholic Church

695 Summit Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone (828) 765-2224

Sunday Mass 9:00 am
Wednesday Faith Formation
6:00 pm
Food Pantry Wed. 1:00-4:00pm

Pine Branch Baptist Church

48 Church Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone: (828) 765-9101
www.pinebranchbaptist.net

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

Sunday School • 9:45-10:40am
Worship Service • 10:45am
Sunday Evening • 6:30pm

A Bible-believing Fellowship
Loving God and Loving People

First Advent Christian Church

211 Lenoir Road
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-8206
www.fccmorganton.org

**Pastor Patrick Bradshaw
Associate Pastor Javier
Guzman**

pbradshawfccmorganton@gmail.com

Sunday School 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship 11:00 AM
Wed: Youth Meal 5:30PM -
Meeting 6:30PM
Adult Bible Study/Prayer 6:30PM
Choir Practice 7:15PM
Sat. Band Practice 4:30PM

Preaching Christ Crucified, Risen
and Coming Again!

The Bridge Church of WNC

207 Pinebridge Avenue
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
TBCWNC.org

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

Sunday Service 10:30AM
Wednesday Service 7:00PM
Church Office M-F
9:00AM-3:00PM

Our passion is to help connect the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the Fire of God transform our community, state, nation and world! (See John 17:21)

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

280 Chapel St.
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-6590
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

Where Everybody is Somebody
And Jesus Christ is Lord!

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC
828-684-8212

Pastor Rick Mercer

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday
Praise, Prayer & Proclaim -
7:00 pm
www.morgantonsda.org

Pleasant Grove Church of the Brethren

1717 Harrell Hill Road
Bakersville, NC
(828)-458-1947

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!

Banner Elk United Methodist Church

486 College Dr.
Banner Elk, NC
(828) 963-6640

Reverend Dan Brubaker

Sunday School - 10:00 am
Contemporary Service - 9:40 am
Traditional Worship Service - 11:00 am
AA Open Step Meeting - Mon. 7 pm
AA Closed Big Book Meeting - Wed. 7pm
UMW & UMM Meeting - 2nd Sat. 10:00 am
English Classes - Tues. & Thurs. 6 - 9 pm

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
Morning Worship 10:00 AM

"Come grow with us"

Grassy Creek Baptist Church

793 Old NC 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC
828-765-4620
www.grassycreekbc.org

Sunday School 10:00am
Morning Worship 11:00am
Sunday evening 6:30pm
Wednesday:
J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) 7:00pm
Seekers (young adults) 7:00pm
Mid-week worship 7:00pm
"That Mitchell County
may know Christ"

West Burnsville Baptist Church SB

222 West Burnsville Church Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828)-682-3990

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Morning Service: 10:50 a.m.
Evening Service: 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday Service 6:30 p.m.

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.
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-2357

For more information,
please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org

Dr. David Mills, Sr. Pastor

8:30am - Early Worship
9:45am - Sunday School
11:00am - Worship
6:00pm - Evening Worship

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

125 Tappan Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-9411
www.sprucepinefbc.com
www.splbc.blogspot.com

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

Sunday School - 9:45 am
Sunday Worship - 8:30 and 11:00 am
Sunday Evening - 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm

Knowing God, Seeing God, Serving
God, Submitting to God!

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

2907d US Hwy 70 E
Morganton, NC
828-475-2040

Pastor Barry MaHorney

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study-10:00am
Sabbath Worship - 11:30am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday - Praise, Prayer &
Proclaim - 7:00pm
www.greatopesda.com

Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.
Mccville, NC 28755
(828)-675-8284
www.ffcn.org
www.fccradio.org

Pastor: David Gillespie

Sunday School - 10:00 am
Worship Service - 10:45 am
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00pm
"The steps of a good man are
ordered by the Lord:
And he delighteth in his way."
Psalm 37:23

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Marlene's Meditations

Redeemed!

By Marlene Houk
Burke County

Genesis 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
Psalms 103:4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;



You are busily poking into an old box full of musty papers when you spy an aged piece of parchment that resembles the Declaration of Independence. Imagine the thrill of discovering that the \$2.48 you paid transforms into \$477,650 because that dusty tattered paper turned out to be the 36th copy of 200 copies that Congress ordered from William J. Stone back in 1820. A hopelessly forgotten document is redeemed out of obscurity and uselessness and into the light and enjoyment of a whole nation, bringing fame and fortune.

Redeemed! What a glorious word that gathers despair and flings it to the farthest corners of the universe! We, as Christians, are rescued, released, delivered, and retrieved from our prisons. No longer a slave to our own minds or the whims of others, we dance to the pulse of His love, throwing back our heads and laughing with the sheer joy of freedom. Christ is our Redeemer, for "in him we live, and move, and have our being" according to Acts 17:28. He not only redeems us from destruction as Psalm 103:4 (above) shouts triumphantly, but He allows the power of it to gild with golden hues the negatives of our lives.

1. He redeems our pain, infusing it with purpose. Jeremiah 29:11
2. He rescues us from vindictive attacks by friend and foe, declaring eternal triumph over them. Exodus 15:21
3. And He delivers us out of our sin when we turn to Him, declaring us a precious jewel to any who would dare malign us and claiming us unreservedly as the apple of His eye. Zachariah 2:8

To be redeemed embodies all of freedom's thrill, the heart-racing surge of being snatched from the jaws of evil, and the breath-taking passion of discovering Him. Psalm 103:4 declares that God redeems our lives from destruction. By definition, "lives" includes our actions, character, innermost thoughts, passions, words, and influences that define us. When God redeems these things, He crafts an heirloom tapestry of our lives that reveals the beauty of His grace and love.

Like the Bargello quilt I saw hanging in a local sewing store, the intricacies and beauties of its design delight the ones who treasure this gift for generations. When God redeems our mistakes, He creates a masterpiece of His grace and mercy, bringing immense value to our lives.

Even in the microscopic details of our poor choices, God redeems that single tiny sinful word that complicates our lives and thwarts His redeeming power. During Eve's conversation with the devil in Genesis chapter 3:3, she added a word to God's instructions about not eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She said that God had told them not to TOUCH the fruit when, in fact, He did not instruct them so. This darkened God's words and may have allowed the devil to accuse God of being unreasonable according to Dr. C. Wieland, Managing Director of Creation Ministries International on his website: www.creation.com

Whatever the reason, Jesus, in His love and mercy, took her word, stained with sin, and redeemed it in the New Testament. Three of the five women whose stories of miraculous healing are told for all eternity involve the use of touch.

1. Peter's Mother-in-Law was sick, and Jesus touched her hand according to Matthew 8:14-15.
2. The woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of His garment according to Luke 8:43-48.
3. And, Jesus laid his hands on the crippled woman in Luke 13:10-17.

How amazing that God decided to include this tiny word in the stories of healed women that He chose for His eternal Word! It is as if He is saying that even though we try to alter our lives in our own way, God redeems our choices, miraculously healing and blessing us when, in fact, we actually deserve His condemnation for twisting His truths to fit our own agenda. God is redeeming Eve's sin in our lives today as we, like her, choose, wrong words, twist the truth, and create our own agendas. He takes our words and changes them into words of beauty and love, awash with His majesty and power. And we walk in the light of the power of redemption!

Just as Michael Sparks, the Tennessee native who redeemed the 36th copy of the Declaration of Independence revealed the magnificence and importance of this rare and valuable find, so our Maker and Savior redeems us from the dust of defeat and the pit of despair, anointing us with His love and mercy and conferring upon us the title of "adopted son"! Galatians 4:5

Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Backstage Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

You Must Obey God

By Franklin Graham



There is nothing more fundamental to the Christian faith than the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul said: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

So, great is our sin that the greatest act in all of history—the brutal crucifixion of our Savior, and the glorious power of His resurrection that proclaimed Christ's triumph over sin and death—was necessary to save us from its penalty of eternal death.

Every New Testament apostle witnessed the risen Christ, along with more than 500 contemporaries.

When Peter stood in Jerusalem immediately following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, he preached the cross of Christ and thousands were converted. Soon after, while preaching at Solomon's Colonnade, Peter was arrested by the temple guard and hauled off to jail because the apostles were "teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:2).

When warned not to speak again in the Name of Jesus, Peter and John replied, "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). There was absolutely no way the disciples of the Messiah would ever stop talking about the most marvelous, supernatural event in history.

When officials sought to obstruct their obedience to Christ, the apostles made it clear that they would always obey Christ rather than man. Their allegiance and loyalty to the risen Savior superseded the laws of men who sought to restrict the clear command of the Lord to go and preach the Gospel to all nations.

So it is today.

While believers in Christ are commanded to pray for all those in authority, and to honor the Lord by obeying the laws of the land, the Scriptures also make it clear that the exception is when those laws violate the principles of God's Word. We are citizens of two kingdoms, the civil kingdom of this world as well as the heavenly kingdom. "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). As citizens of that heavenly kingdom, our allegiance lies with the kingship of the Risen Christ, to whom belongs all rule and authority and might and dominion.

That is the principle that 72-year-old grandmother Barronelle Stutzman follows as she stands by her firm religious conviction to decline floral design services for a gay wedding in the state of Washington. She has employed and served gay people for several years—proving she does not discriminate. However, she does not believe she should be forced to violate her sincerely held religious belief in the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman.

Her case wound through state courts and bureaucracy for several years before finally coming to the Washington State Supreme Court in February where state justices ruled unanimously against her.

I had the privilege of meeting Barronelle last year when our Decision America Tour went to Washington. She is standing up for her faith, based on the clear teaching of Scripture, and is planning to appeal her case to the United States Supreme Court.

I admire Barronelle's resolute faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ and encourage you to remember her in prayer in the days and months to come. If the Supreme Court agrees to hear her case—and I certainly hope they will—the ruling will be a landmark decision for religious liberty. Can Christians hold to their firm convictions without being prosecuted by authorities for doing so? Will the free exercise of religion be allowed in the public square, or only within the confines of church walls?

In the adjoining state of Oregon, Aaron and Melissa Klein are awaiting a ruling from the Oregon Court of Appeals. In 2013, the Kleins, who owned Sweet Cakes by Melissa in Gresham, politely declined to provide a cake for a gay wedding. The Kleins were sued by the lesbian couple, and an administrative law judge assigned by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries ruled against the Kleins. An egregious fine of \$135,000 was levied against Aaron and Melissa, and their business has since been forced to shutter—all of this simply because they abided by their firmly held religious belief in the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman—the same definition held by virtually every society in the world for millennia.

Those are but two cases where civil authorities have targeted businesses run by evangelical Christians who have taken a Biblically informed stand for their religious liberties and suffered persecution and harassment. In case after case, religious freedom has been trumped by the new sexual ethic that is hostile to Christian doctrine and faith.

Christians are not protesting and interrupting same-sex marriage ceremonies. Yet many Christians do not believe it is right to participate, celebrate or engage in activity the Bible clearly defines as sin. For Barronelle and the Kleins, state laws are forcing them to go against their deeply held beliefs about marriage. They are not hostile toward homosexual persons—they simply don't want to participate in unbiblical conduct.

Like the Apostle Paul, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in front of Nebuchadnezzar, they disobeyed what St. Augustine called an "unjust law."

I believe God has given our nation a brief window of opportunity to come to our senses and protect men and women who want to do nothing other than worship and follow the Lord Jesus Christ and His teachings.

continued on page 8

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Hands That Pray

*A mother knelt beside her bed
With tears she made her plea
Father bless my children
Just the way that you've blessed me*

*Her stature frail and shaking
Her hands were worn and dry
She held them up to heaven
This was her feeble cry:*

*I lived by your instructions
And now they're on their own
You said that if I did my best
They'd make their way back home.*

*These hands are old and feeble now
I pray they've stood the test
Now as they stretch toward heaven
Lord You can do the rest*

Amen

By: Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin



Joy Harwood
Madison County

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 "Jonah's Voice" out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song "Homecoming" will soon be heard by many.



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Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge

The Breath of Life

By Brent Price
Mitchell County

The other morning, I woke up before the alarm and jumped out of bed feeling energized. I made a cup of coffee and got myself ready for work. The weather forecast looked great and everything pointed to an early arrival at the office. I turned up my coffee mug for one last gulp and that's when it happened.

I stumbled away from the computer to avoid spilling coffee all over it. Three or four more steps and I made it to the kitchen sink and leaned there to keep myself standing. Every muscle in my body was straining for even the slightest hint of air. All I could hear was a gurgle, a high pitched wheeze and the pounding of my heart.

My wife ran to my side and stood by me until I was able to move enough air to cough. The coughing diminished, my mind reset and I realized how dangerous the situation had been.

In the hours that followed, every cough and hint of sweet coffee reminded me of the fragile and fleeting nature of life. Perhaps it sounds a little corny or melodramatic. Still, the fact remains. Sometimes it only takes a few seconds to change everything forever.

A life-time, no matter how you define it, is a short time. What happens from beginning to end is a mixed bag. Circumstances and choices give and take, push and pull. An hour or two, a couple of days, a few years or decades--- every life is connected by the first and last breath and every one in between.

In the beginning, according to my faith tradition, God breathes and speaks life into everything. Spirit and breath merge to create all that God declares to be good. We are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of our creator.

This precious breath of ours has the capacity to merge with spirit and create as well. Every word that flows from us travels on the breath of creation--- more powerful, even in us, than we might imagine.

So you've caught your breath. It isn't your last after all. You've cleaned up, breathed a sigh of relief, and stepped out into another day. Boy, have I got a lot of work to do today--- a lot more than I thought, for sure.

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



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Celebrate Recovery

Community Support

By Barbara Harrell
Mitchell County

Praise God, people are beginning to recognize the importance of dealing with the drug issues head on. This region, as well as the entire state and region, are losing too many young people to this horrible disease. What's to be done, though. Many community agencies, churches, and law enforcement are beginning to come together. For some time, I have felt the faith community has been working on their own and the other entities have been doing the same thing. Our community is coming together with a representative panel of interested people to try and come up with some directions we can all go in together.

A meeting for Celebrate Recovery is held each Thursday at 7:00 pm at Bear Creek Church but it is not just a church ministry. It is a community effort with multiple pastors, concerned citizens, users, recovering users as well as family members.

This past Thursday, Doug and I attended and heard a heart-rending testimony from Josh Wise. (We ran his story in the paper this past January.) The response of the law enforcement so touched me. They were Christians and they were such a support for him. If we as the Christian community could wrap our minds around the fact that these are good people. They are God's children. They deserve the love and concern from us that anybody does. We never have to like or love the act, but God does expect us to love and be concerned for the person. We need to wrap our arms around these people. So often we hear from young people, how they feel inferior or left out or ... Many times, this leads to peer pressure to do things they know are wrong. Many times, they start on prescription medicine to make them "feel" better. What if some of these kids on the fringes had a person they felt comfortable with and could go to, to talk to and help them work through these issues. Sometimes parents can fill that role but not always. We as a united community need to fill that role also. Sometimes all we can do is pray, but that is essential to resolving some of these issues.

Get rid of just some of the addictions and you also solve overcrowded prisons, much of the poverty, and lower the number of children in foster care.

Some of the things each of us can do:

1. Help law enforcement --share if you know where some of the drugs are being passed or used. Ask them to help with your loved one if that is appropriate
2. Get involved in your schools and your children's lives--know where they are, and not just physically.
3. Get information on what is available in our area to help
4. Change attitudes on the worthiness of these individuals
5. Donate time to be a mentor to a child who doesn't have that support system
6. Keep prescriptions put up and out of way of children or others



Josh



Chris



Bruce Cannon Pastor Bear Creek Church



Chris Allen Speaker at Celebrate Recovery, Josh Wise leader at Celebrate recovery. Thursday Night meeting of Celebrate Recovery at Bear Creek Church.

Barbara Harrell loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Part owner Blue Ridge Christian News.

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

continued from page 5

Perhaps the appointment of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, which I trust Congress will soon approve, will be a step in the right direction. Gorsuch has been favorable to the cause of religious liberty, siding with Hobby Lobby and the Little Sisters of the Poor in their cases regarding contraceptive mandates under Obamacare.

Ultimately, however, our nation will survive as one nation under God only as true repentance, conversion and faith grip the souls of men. Authentic revival begins with the purification of believers: "For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17).

As the church is strengthened and encouraged in holy living, and a clear witness of God's saving, sanctifying power is provided to our increasingly pagan culture, we can stand boldly for the sake of the Gospel.

In the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ, we live not in the fear of man, but in the holy fear of Almighty God to whom belongs glory and dominion forever. We want to "know [Christ] and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Philippians 3:10, NKJV). ©2017 BGEA

Do you know Christ? Begin your journey with Him today.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. The Scripture marked NKJV is taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version.

Reverend Franklin Graham is President and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief organization.

Open House

Charity House Celebration

By Nancy Rutkowski
Yancey County

Charity House Mission (CH) is a new, non-profit organization in Burnsville. Charity House will be celebrating its two year operations with an open house on May 5th, Friday from 10 to 2pm. Please drop by and help celebrate by getting to know Charity House, and sharing with some treats. Charity House began as a vision of local Christians touched by the needs of local displaced people. Charity House has been tending to needs of Yancey, Mitchell and Avery county folks through food distribution and goods donated by the wonderful members of the local community. When an individual or family is burned out of their home they may receive furniture, appliances and materials to help them re-establish their home. People out of work and living outdoors may receive bedding to keep them off the ground, clothing and references for work. Word is beginning to spread in the community that Charity House and its Director, Jewell Huskins is here to help. No one has unlimited funds, however the Lord only asks us to be His hands and feet to do whatever can be done, even though it be little. Local people have given to Charity House with the vision to help those that are disadvantaged with true Christian charity. The word "homelessness" sometimes provides the picture of begging at street corners. That does not happen in our community. The disadvantaged are not obvious to our eyes, they are as the mist on our mountains....present, moving and changing with the wind and circumstance. Thank you community members for all your generosity to help these folks. It is marvelous to live in a community of caring!

Come by Charity House to see our office and shop at 502 E. Main St., Burnsville to donate or purchase gently used clothes and furniture or to volunteer to help us with serving the needy.

Nancy is the Treasurer of Charity House, and a retired nurse and HIM Manager.



Sowing Seeds

By Doug Harrell
Mitchell County

When you hear the words “sowing seeds”, what comes into your mind? Do you see a farmer out in the field sowing seeds by hand, or with a crank seeder, a gardener in the garden, or does another picture pop into your mind’s eye? I have spent a lifetime sowing all kinds of seeds as a farmer, but today I want to talk about different kinds of seed that we sow, even if we never venture into a fertile field of dirt. Let me take a moment and look at different kinds of seeds that we sow in life. Let’s think about seeds that have a major impact upon the lives that we touch each day of our lives. Do we sow seeds of discord, do we sow seeds of distrust, do we sow seeds of sorrow? There are many kinds of hurtful and harmful seeds that we can sow daily. Most of the time our seeds are sown with our tongue rather than a seed sower. Are we concentrating on sowing positive seeds or negative seeds as we walk through each day? Jesus used a parable of the seed falling on the rocks, in the weeds and in fertile ground. Are we conscious of where we are sowing our seed—that is reflected in who we choose to run around with daily.

What does a seed really do? If you think about it, the seed is the beginning of all things. You need seed money to start a business, you need a seed to start a plant, you need a seed to start a life. Where do we get our seed? I plant bean seed that we call Daddy Dee beans, these are seeds that have been saved for generations, and I guard them closely to make sure that I save a supply each year. When you really stop and think about it, our daily lives are a result of the heritage seeds that we have planted in our minds throughout our lives. We are constantly planting in our own minds, and in fact, in our bodies. If we plant healthy seeds in our minds and bodies we usually grow healthy minds and bodies, if we sow junk and bad stuff in our minds and bodies we get back what we put in. Deuteronomy 22:9 *Thou shalt not sow the vineyard with divers seeds, lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.*

I want to encourage each of us to be conscious of sowing seeds of love in our relationships, in our marriage, and in our families. We can be encouragers in life to those we come in contact with, if we will only try. When we speak to someone with sincere, encouraging words, we help give them strength to continue, in whatever situation they are facing.



The most important seed we can plant is the seed of salvation in the hearts of those around us. This can be done in many ways, you do not have to be a pastor, deacon or other person involved in active church work to sow the seeds of salvation. Our daily life is always the most powerful sermon that can be preached. We need to always be ready, willing and looking for the opportunity to share the word of God and we can

only do that if we, you and I, take the time to learn and study God’s word daily. If our lives are a shining example, others will be asking for the fruit. Several places in the Bible it talks about the fact that you can tell a tree by its fruit. People will be attracted to you if you are genuine in your faith and have the love of Christ shining through your countenance. We need to plant the seeds that yield the harvest John talks about. John 4:35 *Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.* Our most important task here on earth is to continually be sowing the seeds of salvation to our families and our fellowmen throughout the earth, starting with our backyards.

Doug Harrell is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, Owner of Harrell Hill Farms, Inc, a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church and Publisher of the Blue Ridge Christian News.



Faith and hope can help you handle life’s challenges

Q: I am devastated, because the doctor just told us I have an incurable disease that slowly but surely is going to make it more and more difficult for me to get around. This is really hard to accept, because I’ve just retired and we’ve always looked forward to lots of travel. Why is God doing this to us? — L.K.B.



A: I don’t know all the reasons why God has allowed this to happen to you — but I do know this: God knows all about your situation, and He has not abandoned you. Nor will He abandon you in the future! God’s promise is true: *“Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you”* (Isaiah 46:4).

How, then, should you deal with this challenge? First, deal with it with faith — faith that God loves you, faith that He will be with you, faith that even as your strength fades, He’ll help you face each day with peace. Then deal with it with hope — hope that someday all the limitations of this life will be over, and you will be with Christ in Heaven forever.

In addition, deal with this challenge with thankfulness — thankfulness for your family, thankfulness for each day God gives you, thankfulness that you still have a measure of health. I often think of the Apostle Paul’s words: *“Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

How can faith and hope and thankfulness become real to you? They’ll become real as you turn to Christ, asking Him to come into your life and cleanse you from all your sins. They’ll become real too as you pray, and read God’s Word, and gain strength from other believers. If you have never asked Jesus Christ to come into your life, do so today.



Constant worry won’t do you any good

Q: I know we’re supposed to trust God instead of worrying all the time, but I just can’t help it. Our budget is very tight as it is, and I worry constantly about what will happen if one of us loses our job or something. How can I stop worrying so much? — Mrs. R.M.

A: It’s not wrong to plan ahead or budget our money; if we don’t, we easily end up spending money we don’t really have on things we don’t really need — which is wrong. The Bible says, *“The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways”* (Proverbs 14:8).

But planning ahead isn’t the same as worrying about the future. When we worry, anxiety about the future takes root in our minds and hearts, and we become more and more fearful and unsettled. Constant worry also leads to doubt — doubt in ourselves, but most of all doubt in God and His love for us. And yet worrying never changes anything; as Jesus said, *“Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”* (Matthew 6:27).

How can you overcome your worries? First, understand just how much God loves you. If God didn’t care about us, we’d have every reason to worry about the future. But He does care for us — and the proof is that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to give His life for us. If you have never done so, invite Christ into your life today.

Then commit your worries to God. When worries grip you, don’t let them fester and grow; immediately turn them over to God in prayer. Let the Psalmist’s words be your guide: *“Trust in him at all times ... pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge”* (Psalm 62:8).



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No Regrets Family Ministry- Super Mom

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County



Who works 7 days a week, is on call 24 hours a day, holds down more than one job, rises early and goes to bed late, cooks, cleans, nurses, chauffeurs, teaches, referees, pulls teeth, is a philosopher, and theologian? You guessed it, a mother. Mothers do everything and they have to wear all kinds of hats. And what amazes me; they do such a great job doing all the things each day requires. One moment they are fixing a broken toy or putting batteries in a flashlight, and the next they are soothing a hurting child putting a band aid on a scratch. That is why moms are super heroes and I am thankful we set aside a day to honor them. As others have often quoted "the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world."

God made mothers to do all the things fathers cannot do. We have five children so I know firsthand there are things Pam can do with the children that I can't. Mothers have a way with children that are very special. One gift I have noticed is patience. Mothers have a lot more patience with children than fathers. I was ready to explode after seeing one of our children's art work inscribed on our wall. The little tike was so proud of what she had accomplished. Moms are patient and understanding that they are just learning to scribble and need some place to practice those fine motor skills, while I am frustrated that they do not know the difference between a piece of paper and my newly varnished wood wall. Praise the Lord we still have evidence of these precious little drawings on our walls. Today, they are reminders of how fast children grow up. Our walls are safe now that the kids are older and have learned they are not interior decorators. Mothers teach us that children are a precious gift from the Lord and that with a little patience they will grow up and all the little things they got into will be stories we laugh about when they are grown.

I always liked the way my mom and my wife would fight off a pack of lions for me or for our children. When it comes to protecting children there is nothing more furious than a mother's wrath. I get tickled when I am at a ball game and the dads are watching calmly, but the moms are ready to go onto the field and tell the ref a thing or two. My mom always made sure I respected adults and if I was in the wrong you better believe mama was going to spank me. However, if mama thought I was not being treated fairly, she was there to defend me. That is a mother's instinct to protect her children. I remember one time when I made a mud pie and it fit perfectly onto a neighbor's face. The only thing you could see was the poor kid's eyes peeping out through that mud. I thought I was going to get into trouble because with child in hand the other mother came down to the house to discuss what had just happened. I was looking out the window to see if I could tell what mama's reaction would be because the boy's face was still covered in mud and mama could see what I had done. Mama came in and started to laugh at the mud mask my neighbor was wearing. Mama knew what had happened and that I was taking up for my little brother. I connected with my mom that day because I knew that no matter what happens mama would have my back. Mama would make me mind and respect adults, but she would also be there for me when I was in the right.

A mother's love is incredible. I believe it is the closest expression to God's love. I will never forget a picture I saw in the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. We were looking at the documentary of atrocities of the Holocaust (Hitler's persecution and annihilation of Jews during World War II) and I saw a picture of a mother holding her toddler in her arms caressing the child's cheeks making him laugh. Little did the child know he was standing in a massacre line of Jewish families just before they

were riddled with bullets from machine guns by German soldiers. But this brave mom facing the firing squad not concerned about her own life, but for a little bit of joy she could bring her child before death. I left the museum crying, knowing that a mother's love for a child is somewhat comparable to God's love for us.

God gave His only Son for us. Jesus died so we might have life. I know that my wife and mother would give their life for their children. A mother has a self sacrificing love. I think about Mary the mother of Jesus. Even though the birth of Christ is a miracle, I cannot help but think how Mary must have felt to see Jesus suffering on the cross. And while Jesus was on the cross he looked at John and said "behold your mother", and the Bible says that disciple took Mary into his home and took care of her. Praise the Lord for God's incredible love we cannot explain but a love we can know through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Upon receiving Christ as Savior and Lord, the Son looks at the Father and says behold your child, and the Father receives us into His family and patiently cares for us, protects us, and loves us unconditionally.

I would like to pay tribute to my mother-in-law, Inez Self. She is with Jesus now and we miss her terribly. Thank God for all godly mothers. We love you. Mothers, you do a wonderful job, and that's why you are my superhero, because nobody can do your job better than you. Live life with "No Regrets."

Happy Mother's Day



Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.

"Grief, A Battle of The Mind"

By Jacob Willis
Yancey County

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12. We sometimes don't really see the town for the houses as the old adage says. When we are in the middle of grief, all we may see is doubt, depression, despondency, and a foreboding sense of doom. Seldom do we identify the source of these feelings. We can't help our feelings, but we can help what we do with them. These feelings are normal, but when not examined and dealt with, they can lead to long-term problems. Grief that is not examined in the context of God's word leads to false beliefs. These false beliefs can be varied, but usually include the following: God doesn't love me; I am never going to get through this; I will never change; and I am all alone. These thoughts come from feelings that can dominate a person's life and paralyze them with fear and depression.

So where do these thoughts come from? Some thoughts come from ourselves. Some thoughts that we have are perfectly normal responses to grief. Some thoughts we have come from people, well-meaning people offering "help". Some thoughts come from Satan. I don't want you to go look under your bed for the devil tonight, or to be afraid, but at the same time you need to be aware that every thought is not your own. The thoughts that lead to suicide, self-harm, harming others, or chemical dependency come from the pit of hell. So what are we to do with these thoughts during the most difficult time of life? Well, the last source of our thoughts are God himself. God gives us His thoughts in the Bible. So how do I replace negative, destructive thoughts with God's life giving message?

2 Corinthians 10:4-6 gives us specific instructions on how to fight this battle in our minds, "4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." The battle begins in our minds. Before we believe everything we think, we need to follow the instructions that God gives us especially at times when we are grieving.

Step one: Believe. "Our weapons are mighty". My God is able to do above and beyond what I ask or think. God can enable me to conquer my greatest fears, help me through my grief to a place of healing and acceptance. I place my grief in the hands of my God who created heaven and earth. He is all powerful, He is all present, and He is all knowing. He and Satan are not equals; He is mighty to save to the uttermost, those who cry out to Him.

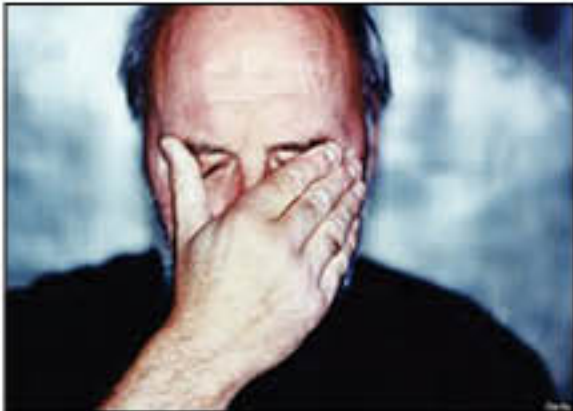
Step two: Battle. "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." We must be willing to do spiritual battle with how we think. Fear is the opposite of Faith. When I place my Faith in God, then I must take the facts and tear down erroneous, destructive thoughts. When I examine what is plaguing my mind and cast that down as false, I begin to take charge of my mind. Remember what you believe in your head becomes what you feel in your heart. That is why the Bible says, "As a man thinks in his heart so he is". Wrong thinking produces wrong actions. Right thinking produces right actions. Examine in your head what you are feeling and thinking, then cast down, or in other words throw away negative false beliefs. My question should be- does this thought reflect the knowledge of God, and His love for me? If it doesn't throw it away.

Step three: Bring it. Bring it to Jesus. Take Gods word and examine what He says, because he is the final authority in your life and not your feelings. Jesus is the great Counselor. Jesus is the great Emancipator of the faith life. Through studying His word you can change how you think and take control of your feelings. You do not have to be driven by feelings, you may be driven by facts: "and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" We need to put our faith in the facts. God loves us unconditionally, God did not intend for us to suffer, but uses suffering for our good, God is in sovereign control of this world and the world to come, and God has a plan and purpose for your life.

Your life is like a train. You need to place your faith in the facts, and let your feelings be the caboose. Faith is the engine (your mind); what you believe is the direction your life goes. Facts (God's word to you through His Spirit) are the fuel which makes the engine go down the tracks. Feelings are the caboose, they need to follow behind.

You and I are in a Spiritual battle every day. If Satan can get us to belief falsehoods then he can get us to harm ourselves or others. When we take every thought captive and place it under the authority of God's word, then we will begin to see change amidst the most difficult circumstances. Remember God is on your side, fighting on your behalf.

Jacob Willis is an ordained pastor and Bereavement Coordinator for Yancey County Hospice. You may contact him at jacobw@hospiceofyancey.org.



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The Promise of My Father...

By Timothy W. Tron
Burke County

"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem[i] until you are endued with power from on high."-Luke 24:49

Nothing excites me more than when someone brings up the power of the Holy Spirit.

In my life, there has been nothing as real and as powerful as the feeling when one is endued with the power on high. It is understood that for some, this statement is only that, a statement of words that are indescribable since there is nothing for which they might perceive to compare it with. Now before I go any further, I want to reiterate with the utmost integrity, that this is not being boastful or prideful; it comes from the perspective as one awakening to a new feeling that until now, might have been missed or even overlooked. To understand what I mean, I must begin at the beginning. Then, and only then, we might come to have a basis for what it is to "Receive" the Holy Spirit.

In Jesus time, he repeatedly spoke to the disciples of how they would receive the Holy Spirit, the Helper, as he called it, who would be with them after he was gone. *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."*-John 14:26

Their eyes seemed to always be on the present, unable to grasp the prophecy to which Jesus was constantly alluding. Who can blame them? Here they were in the midst of the true Son of God, the Messiah, the miracle worker. Daily they witnessed the unbelievable, every day they saw gross deformities become healed, the demon possessed cleansed, and the dead arise from their deathbeds. How could they look beyond when there were so many amazing things happening right before them? It's ironic that today, unlike those of the disciples, we are distracted by the plans of the coming day, the week ahead, the calendar, and all that must be done in the days' time. We are so focused on what is next, we too often miss what is right before us, and this is where we begin to overlook the obvious, the miracles in our lives that appear and are gone before we take the time to reflect upon them. Unlike the disciples, we cannot focus on the present, when all we do is look ahead. They were the opposite, unable to look ahead due to what was before them.

Call it the irony of God.

What is the common thread between the two ironies; the presence of Jesus Christ of course?

When He is with us, we are relieved of our daily burdens. The future is a distant memory. Those distractions that kept us from our daily scripture slowly fade to dark as the light of the Word illuminates our hearts with the truth. Like those disciples, we have little concern for the future when all we need is here with us.

Yet, too many times, we slip in our walk of faith and fall back into that daily rut of trying to keep pace with the world around us. At this same time, we also miss the opportunity to accept and to recognize when we are in the presence of the Holy Spirit. We rush from one appointment, one event to the next and miss what often matters most. In these precious moments, we too often fail to accept the power from on high. When, and only when, our minds are one with God, can we fully embrace and receive Him. It is then when we are still and listening to that small voice that we are suddenly flooded from head to toe with a power so incredible, so electrifying, that one can barely keep their feet upon the very ground upon which they trod. It is then when we are overflowing with the Spirit that we find ourselves at a new and higher ground in our spiritual walk with God; greater than ever before.

Yet, this is not just something we can call upon, for it to happen. It is a power from on high, and as such, is only Heaven sent. That's why Jesus told his disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait; wait for the Holy Spirit. They were instructed to call upon the Spirit, but to wait. Although their eyes had been opened to the scriptures, they still were required to wait for the Spirit.

One can have all the knowledge, knowing, and understanding of the entire Biblical encyclopedia but without the Holy Spirit, it is just that, only knowledge. The true power to go and do His will is when the two are combined as one: The Holy Spirit with the mind of the disciple. This is what Jesus had prepared his followers for, once he was gone. He knew that without the Helper, they would be fearful of what they did not know, they would be hesitant to journey to those distant lands; therefore, they needed something that was greater than they were capable of conceiving, the Holy Spirit.

Walking with Jesus each day, we now have Him within us, as we carry the Word. With our understanding comes wisdom. Yet, it only takes us so far, we must also wait for that Spirit to be endued within each of us, lest we fall and stumble before we are ready to set out on our mission.

So now we are ready to speak of what it is to receive the Holy Spirit.

As we continue our daily walk in faith, we learn more and more about what it is to be a Christian or Christ-like. When we do, journey in our faith, we slowly awaken or become aware of things we might have overlooked that we now understand. Scriptures we once read as a matter-of-fact take on new meanings. The world around us becomes brighter, for in everything we see, we see the Creator's hand. Our senses become heightened to new realities we never understood. One of these is when we are filled with the Holy Spirit; whether we believe it or not.

Now for some, the realization, or the indwelling of the Spirit comes as a shock. For them, it is an instantaneous blast of heavenly power that is absolutely, positively, without-a-doubt, the Holy Spirit. Sometimes these people, in that moment of receiving the Spirit, lose their conscious minds and fall to the floor. In these cases, there is no mistaking when that person has received the Holy Spirit. I've witnessed these before and just to be there in their presence is as powerful as their receiving; it is a moving and emotional experience for all.



Then there are the subtler occasions when we have only been induced from without by the power so subtly that one might mistake it for a chill, rather than the Spirit. Those moments when we see the unexplainable, like the light from spirits moving before a camera when there were just seconds before and saw nothing. Or the time when someone spoke a word, then the door blew open and a cold breeze wisped across your feet. Or the time when you felt the hand upon your shoulder pull you back, just as you were about to step off the curb just as the out of control car blew passed where you were about to step. When you turned to thank them, there was nobody there. These are the events that might escape our perception if we are not one with Him. Many explain them away as mere coincidence while others bring in the pagan beliefs of ghosts or hauntings. The realization of the truth escapes them. It is not until they call on His name, do they start to realize what it is to be overcome with the Spirit.

In time, we eventually awaken to the Holy Spirit. It is then, in those rare moments when we finally recognize that surge of voltage through our core, that shakes the nerve endings into a tingling sensation that almost lifts us off the floor; these are the God knowing moments when your world changes forever; the ending. Those who have felt it sometimes cannot explain it. Like Ezekiel trying to explain what he couldn't understand in the vision of the Heavenly being, there are God things that are beyond our comprehension. We only can explain what we know, and in that manner, our words are sometimes not enough.

Many have felt the presence of the Lord, and in various forms. Their stories are a testimony to the power of believing.

A good friend and brother in Christ, Doug Stuart, experienced the power of the Spirit at a time when he needed it the most; his mother's funeral. Doug was preparing to sing and speak at her service when he was suddenly overcome with doubt and fear. I've known Doug for several years, and to hear him say that he would be unable to speak or to perform would be unbelievable, yet there he was, moments away from failing his mother's dying wishes. At that moment, he knew there was only one thing he could do; to pray to God for strength. It was then he described what it was to feel the power of the Holy Spirit come over him, like a gentle warmth of the Heavenly Father, wrapping him in love, lifting him up and giving him the strength to carry on. Yes, God was with my friend, and within my brother. He not only sang but spoke at length of his mother's wonderful life. The son testifying for his mother, a love known like no other.

My cousin Davetta got the phone call from her mother telling her that my father had awakened out of the coma he had fallen within during one of the later hospital visits in his life. I remember that day as well. It was a miracle in and of itself. The doctors had said that they should call the family in since the end was near. Davetta said that she felt the power of the Holy Spirit come over her after that phone call. She remained lifted up from that feeling for the remainder of the day. The same thing happened when her Aunt had the same experience, she once again was endued from on high and was renewed with a feeling of Spirit so great that it literally changed each of those days in her life. She was blessed each time by the hand of the Lord.

Personally, I had felt the power of the Spirit before, but it was something that I didn't understand or able to recognize. It wasn't until I openly committed my life to following the Lord that I became aware of when the Spirit was with me. It started when I was serving at the Trail of Faith. Again, and again, there would be the tour where we would be witnessing about the story of the Waldensian people, when suddenly, never at the same place, never at the same time in the tour, the power of the Holy Spirit would come down upon myself and those around me. It wasn't something that I singularly felt because those before me would speak, shout, or sometimes cry with joy. It was an utterly rapturous experience, time and time again. There was one tour in particular that I will never forget. Pastor Rick was there with his wife and a friend. We started out early that day because the visitor had to be heading back to Michigan. Something about the tour was different from the start. We began the tour at the map inside the Visitor's Center, which was not uncommon. For special guests or tours, we often would begin the tour with a prayer. That day, the Holy Spirit came on us immediately. We continued feeling blessed already, but it wasn't the end of the story. Sporadically as we made our way down the trail we would stop and pray, each time, once again, the Spirit came down. Each time it happened, the power grew greater. The final time, we stopped in the parking lot as they were about to depart and said a final prayer. It was then I felt as if I were being lifted off the ground, so great was the electric

continued on page 13

surge through my body. The hands of those I held could feel it through me as well. It was something to behold, and something that I'll never soon forget.

However, this was not to be the last. God's plan was not yet finished.

Before I knew it, the place I thought was to be the fulfillment of my calling turned out to be just a stepping stone.

Whenever, and wherever God leads, once you begin the journey, you must go. No matter the circumstance, no matter the location, there is purpose in everything we do.

So, when they day came that I found myself employed part-time at the Ski Slope in Blowing Rock, I had to shake my head in bewilderment. Somewhere in that place, there was a purpose for my being there other than to pay for affordable ski lift tickets for my children. Within a few hours of my second day, the purpose was unveiled, and eventually, I would find a brother in Christ in need. Week after week, we came to know one another and in that time, when we would spend extended lunch sessions studying scripture, there He was once more with us. In that dimly lit corner of the ski lodge, brother's in arms became united in spirit, being filled from on high by the one true Spirit. We found purpose and another brother found his calling. More than once as we witnessed to each other, and soon, those around us, we both felt the power of the Holy Spirit moving in one of the unlikely-est of places.

In my journey, there is one thing I have discovered. You may never know when and where it will happen, but one thing is for sure, to witness to others is one of the best ways to make it happen.

As one of the last final commands by Jesus to his disciples was to fulfill the great commission, to go unto all foreign lands after having been endowed with the Holy Spirit, making disciples for Christ. *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* — Acts 1:8

We too, are to go out into the world once we have truly received Christ into our hearts, and having been filled with the Holy Spirit. It is our purpose and our calling as Christians to go and witness the wondrous truth of God's love and the victory we have over death when we follow the one who died for all our sins.

We have a choice. Allow the Holy Spirit to fill you to overflowing, and when you have received, go forth and share.

You'll never look back.

Thanks be to God.

Timothy W. Tron is the Executive Director of the Waldensian Trail of Faith. He lives in Valdese with his family. He is the author of, "Bruecke to Heaven," and an active blogger, artist and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from UF, is an Eagle Scout and is Vice President of the Valdese Merchants Assoc. He has been Ordained to perform weddings at the Trail and attends several area churches seeking to serve the Lord every day.

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Sudoku Solution

2	4	5	6	3	8	7	1	9
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7	1	2	9	5	6	8	3	4
3	7	8	4	1	9	2	6	5
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SAF-T at Mitchell County SafePlace

By Tracy Black
Mitchell County

Mitchell County SafePlace was established 22 years ago as a safe refuge for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Since its beginning SafePlace has been sensitive to the need for victims to be able to save their animals from the retaliation that is often inflicted on them by the abuser after the family flees. We had an agreement with Mitchell County Animal Rescue to board these pets while the family was in shelter as we feared liability issues surrounding having these animals at the shelter. That all changed in November of 2007.

Marsha Welch was a frequent caller to our 24-hour hotline. Often intoxicated, (many DV victims self-medicate with alcohol or drugs to try to escape the pain) Marsha would talk about the abuse she was experiencing at the hands of her live-in boyfriend. She never asked for shelter or any type of intervention, and it seemed to many of us that she just wanted someone to know she was there. Many times, SafePlace staff became so concerned for her that we called law enforcement to go and check on her. In the summer of 2006 Marsha was assigned to do community service at SafePlace due to a recent DUI conviction. One of our advocates worked shoulder to shoulder with her cleaning out the basement of our offices. Little by little, Marsha began to open up to this advocate and soon Marsha admitted that she was indeed a victim of domestic violence, but she was unwilling to come into shelter because she could not be separated from her beloved dog. At the end of that summer Marsha had completed her required service, but she continued to come by and visit bringing baked goods for the staff.

In late November of 2007, we received word that Marsha was missing. Her boyfriend told law enforcement that she had left him and he didn't know her whereabouts. Law enforcement was immediately suspicious because Marsha would have never left without her dog. After months of diligent investigation and rigorous interrogation the boyfriend admitted that Marsha was indeed dead and where they could find her body. After a three year delay the case finally came to trial, the boyfriend pled guilty and he was sentenced to over 30 years in prison.

Soon after Marsha's death, Patricia Beam of MCAR approached us with the question, "Would it have made a difference if Marsha could have brought her dog with her to the shelter?" "Sadly, we had to admit that it may have. So, we set about researching how we could alleviate those liability issues and setting up our protocol. Patricia arranged for the donation of a kennel and by the end of 2008 Mitchell County SafePlace was certified as an official SAF-T (Sheltering Animals and Families-Together) program. There are only 4 in the state of North Carolina. Although Marsha's death was tragic, she lives on in the hearts of all of us who knew her, and she is directly responsible for many women and children surviving domestic violence. In the words of the mother of our first SAF-T Client Sparkplug, "After all the love he has given me, I owe it to Sparkplug to not give up and to go on."

Tracy Black is the Associate Director of Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-765-4015 or tracyblack@bellsouth.net.



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Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story:

This was the second Funny Farm Story that Clint wrote back in 2010. He was just getting his sea legs, so to speak, on writing these articles. As I read back through them, I see the supper table, a big home cooked meal that Barbara had prepared, and usually a cake of some kind to finish off the meal. This is where we had the pleasure of listening to Clint's tale of the day and the adventures he had been subjected to, in reality, had created for himself. One of his enduring qualities was his ability to poke fun at himself without reservation, and to revel in telling the story. I have often thought he would have been a winner at the story telling contest over in Jonesboro, Tennessee. I would have loved to have seen him participate in something like this. He was such a competitor in every walk of his life that I have no doubt that he would have been a winner here as well. It was always a laugh-a-thon around the supper table just listening to the events unfold. His description in real life was just as full of life, if not more so, than his written stories are. I hope you enjoy this one as much as I did when I reread it today. Have a blessed day.

Farmer Doug

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 GTE Corporation (now Verizon) and Doug was a technology marketer. A "country boy" who done good is the way I often thought of me.

Well let me tell you, I have learned some valuable and unforgettable lessons since arriving in the real 'country'...I've worked on the farm now for nearly six months and experienced things which could only happen in a Chevy Chase film – or to me.

Anyway, if y'all will 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

A Beast in The Beans!

'Twas a beautiful day at Harrell Hill Farms, crystal clear sky, a torrid 93 degrees as I headed for the garden to harvest a couple bushels of blue lake bush beans. I had been nearly devoured by ticks and yellow jackets the day before – the most aggressive microscopic critters on earth. So, I donned my overalls, long-sleeve shirt and high boots for an adventure in the bean patch.

Now what I found growing there I thought was a string bean but have since learned that there is no longer a string, just a snap. That was a pretty big disappointment to me, although I'm not sure why. Just so many new farm facts in my head these days I can hardly catalog them all!

Doug told me this was backbreaking work – that I might want to take a three-legged stool along for more comfortable picking. Well I did that but we'd had an inch of rain overnight and the three legs kept getting mired in the dirt so it was breaking my back moving the stool around; I tossed it aside. Besides, I've been on the farm 3 months now, have lost 63 pounds of chubby and ten inches in the waistline. I am fit like a fiddle, strong like a bull, poised and ready to again demonstrate my agricultural prowess.

I was hunched over piles and piles of bush beans, enjoying solitude with the Lord, the land, and the garden. A gentle breeze cooled my sweat soaked clothes, and I was humming praise songs and talking to Jesus. What a wonderful day He was giving me.

It is important, mind you, that I remain vigilant while harvesting these succulent little pods. For I know that bees, spiders, snakes and other killer vermin can attack without warning. It's simply one of the hazards of being Farmer Clint, yet one I gladly embrace. I chuckled to myself as I thought of the Scripture, "Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1Peter 5:8. Not that I expected a lion, although a hungry bear was not out of the realm of possibility. Regardless, a farmer cannot be too careful.

Somewhere, about mid-bean-row, I heard a soft rustling in the sorghum cane field. I figured it must be a deer since they had been eating virtually every other crop we'd planted at Harrell Hill Farms. I never knew deer are such destructive beasts and was praying that he wouldn't come over and eat all the beans. It was such a glorious day, I continued to pick and pray, to pick and hum, to pick and thank God for the joy of being one with the farm.

Then, from nowhere and from everywhere a HUGE monster burst from the perimeter of the cane field...I heard it coming, running, stomping, growling, moaning – inhuman groans akin to those portrayed in Steven King novels. I stood my ground, poised for war, girded for battle, prepared to lose my life for the blue lake bush bean patch...then I FELT IT, it was on me!

My head dropped quickly, so quickly in fact that my straw hat fell to the ground. And there, I mean right there, moving across my steel-toed boots was the ugliest monster I've ever met. It was BIG...it was BROWN...it had teeth like a SHARK...I screamed like a girl...it looked at me, made some guttural sound and



darted away. My friends, in the midst of picking beans and praising God I stood shoulder to shoulder with my very first KILLER GROUNDHOG. (Okay, maybe not shoulder to shoulder but he was a whopper!)

I always thought groundhogs were like prairie dogs, or tiny and cute like Chip and Dale. Well, now I know...they resemble Simba, or Aslan, or King Kong, or any number of other prehistoric beasts. (You laugh yet you are reading this from the comfort of your easy chair, not staring Godzilla in the face).

I had spilled beans from one end of the garden to the other; lost my three-legged stool, tripping over and destroying many tomato plants, stumbling through young broccoli spears and squishing most of the tender beet sprigs... I jumped into my farm truck – an 1801 vintage Jeep but that's a story for another day – and slammed the door.

My heart was pounding like a sack full of angry opossums, my blood pressure sky high, I'm not sure I had taken a breath during the battle for the blue lake bush bean patch. Yet after a half hour or so, I again sensed the peace of the Lord; all was well with my soul; the monster had slithered into the woods.

I dismounted my jeep and resumed the harvest of blue lake bush beans – confident that I had survived yet another test on the Funny Farm.



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Authentic Life And Liberty

By Rev. Mark H. Creech

Few Americans truly understand to what degree our way of life is being challenged. We are threatened by forces from without, but worse still by forces from within. Our greatest problems are intellectual and moral. Now more than ever we need to connect with those principles that made us who we are, and one of the most important is freedom.

Too often we have consciously and unconsciously misinterpreted freedom. We seemingly have come to believe it means we can do whatever we want, whenever we want, and wherever we want. We have come to believe that it means no limitations on our thoughts, our words, our behavior, and that this lack of limitation is the essence of freedom.

Jesus spoke about freedom. The Scriptures say, *"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31, 32).

Nothing speaks to the issue of liberty more than the Gospel of Christ. Central to its message is that Christ is the great Emancipator. His sacrifice on the Cross provides an internal freedom – freedom from the enslaving power of our broken inner natures – freedom from sin and its penalty, which is death and judgment.

Jesus also said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath sent me...to set at liberty them that are bruised"* (Luke 4:18).

Our nation's founders were keenly aware that both the moral ethic of civil liberty and the Christian reality of spiritual liberty were interlocked. History reveals that stable democratic republics in the West were largely drawn from the well-spring of minds and hearts who had embraced the internal liberty that they had come to know in Jesus Christ. The liberty of the Gospel was essentially the spark that lit the fires of the American idea.

Constantly today it seems that a new revolution of some kind is being announced. What we really need in this country, however, is to get back to that driving force which was behind the American Revolution.

What was it? The answer comes as a surprise to many. It was the firm conviction that if Christ would die to set men free to live for him – what right did the King of England have forcing people to live and die for the British crown? Thus, one of the great cries of the American colonies was, "No King, but King Jesus!"

When Daniel Webster in 1851 was reviewing the great history of our nation, he noted this connection between the spiritual and the civil. "Let the religious element in man's nature be neglected," he wrote, "Let him be influenced by no higher motives than low self-interest, and subjected to no stronger restraints than the limits of civil authority, and he becomes the creature of selfish passions or blind fanaticism...On the other hand, the cultivation of the religious sentiment represses licentiousness...inspires respect for law and order, and gives strength to the whole social fabric, at the same time that it conducts the human soul upward to the Author of its being."

A hundred years after Webster, Charles Malik, Ambassador to the United Nations from Lebanon affirmed the same, saying, "The good in the United States would never have come into being without the blessing and the power of Jesus Christ...I know how embarrassing this matter is to politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen and cynics: but, whatever these honored men think, the irrefutable truth is that the soul of America is at its best and highest Christian."

There is an old story about a kite that wanted to be free. He was thrilled the day his master took him out, and he caught the wind and was raised high above the earth. But before long he realized he could fly only so far. His master had quit letting out the string.

"Why am I held back like this?" he fretted. "If you think I am high in the sky now, if I could only be let loose and be given my freedom, then I would show them how high I could go."

One day while the kite was fretting in this manner, the string broke. The kite wavered for a minute or two, was blown from side to side, then suddenly it turned topsy-turvy and came floating down, unable to right itself. Finally, it was swept by a strong wind against an electric light line and there it hung helplessly suspended, all tattered and torn. Its freedom was its ruin.

It is a false freedom that leaves people at liberty to do whatever they want, whenever they want, wherever they want; true freedom is being tied tightly to our moorings.

Jesus taught that there is a framework to liberty – a group of principles and laws within to which we must adhere. More importantly, Jesus said that he was the embodiment of those principles and the very fulfillment of those laws. To know him is to know the truth, and to know the truth is to be free indeed.

William R. Inge has wisely said, "Christianity promises to make men free, but it never promises to make them independent."

The sacrifice of our own wills, death to ourselves, for God's sake and that of our fellowman is what results in authentic life and liberty.

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-0606



Remember when...

By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

Located in the Northern part of Mitchell County is a community called Tipton Hill. I'm certainly not being disrespectful when I say this, but its one of those places that if you're not a local you probably won't even realize you have driven by it. Sort of like the Estatoe community where I grew up. The only reason most people would realize they were in Estatoe was that one green state sign that had the name written on it!

Though it's closed now, at one time, there was a school in Tipton Hill. Across from this now empty school building is the Griffith family General Store. This general store has been a landmark in that community and in our county for many, many years. The business was owned by Frank Griffith and is now operated by his son Jerry. This has been a family business as far back as I can remember. The store carries some power equipment, fertilize, farm equipment, garden seeds, canning supplies, weed killer, and many items that you just will not find in a big chain store. Most importantly it carries a reputation for honest dealings and friendly service to all who patronize the business. Every time I have ever visited the store there is always a smile and "What can we help you with?" Frank seemed to me to be a softer-spoken



man when one would come in the store. Jerry, however, is quite different. He will greet you "plum" across the store and has a laugh that can be heard in the parking lot. There is much to be said about a rural business where people greet you by name and go out of their way to help find what you need. You just don't find that much anymore.

The other day Michelle and I visited the store to pick up some things we needed for the garden. We always enjoy browsing around to see what unusual items they carry that you don't see much elsewhere. We were looking around and my eyes fell upon something that brought back a flood of memories. There on a shelf was what I call an ol' timey butter churn. Now that's not something you'll find at the local chain store!

In my heart and mind I immediately went back to when I was a boy. In my grandma's kitchen, next to the door sat her ol' butter churn. There were many mornings before daylight had even broke, that I woke up to the sound of Mammie churning butter and humming or singing while she worked that stick up and down. There was a certain rhythm that she always had while she worked: Chunka, chunka, chunka, chunka.... I know that's probably not a word, but that's what it sounded like. Seeing those butter churns brought back memories of Mammie's Kool-Aid, cornbread, pickled beans and corn, her tattered aprons that she kept patching up, the way she wore her hair in that little bun on top of her head, etc, etc. I can see her in my mind, leaning upon that crutch, walking out the path to the little Church of God where she worshipped her Savior. She would sit for the longest times in her living room and play her piano and sing the beautiful old hymns. My heart remembers all those prayers I heard her pray for her family and loved ones. Many nights I would wake up and see light shining under my bedroom door. Upon opening the door, Mammie would be sitting there at the kitchen table with her head down on her Bible where she had fallen asleep reading the Word of God. What a way to drift off to rest!

On the way home, we talked of the many memories we have of the past. Michelle has a cast iron pan and a dough roller of her grandma's that makes her think of her every time she uses them. On the wall in our den hangs one of the crosscut saws that my Pa and Daddy used when he was a boy. There's a wood cook stove in my basement that belonged to my Daddy and Momma which I will keep for the years to come to remind me of who cooked on that stove and what they mean to me.

Michelle and I recalled on that drive home of how when we were younger we thought bigger was better. We would travel every weekend to the bigger cities and thought that was the stuff. The older I get I realize how much we have lost. The small town feel of people knowing your name means something to me. Being in a community where everybody comes together in their hearts to pray for someone is a blessing. Just the other week we ran into an old schoolmate who shared with us how they decided to move back "home". Now I know that there will be many who read this and won't agree with me, but for me, I'm happy that I live in a place where I can see an ol' butter churn and it helps me to "remember when."



Preacher Chris Rathbone serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.

Mothers - Then and Now

By Lana Ellis
Kingsport, TN

She had protected him as long as she could. If she didn't do something soon her baby boy would die. With shaking hands Jochebed gently laid him in a basket beside the river in hopes that he would be protected. In Vietnam the baby was sick and needed care that her mother was not able to give her. The Vietnamese mother placed her baby girl at the door of a mission in hopes that someone would rescue her.

With compassion the Princess looked into the face of baby Moses lying in the basket beside the Nile River. Giving in to her motherly instinct she convinced her father, the baby-killing king of Egypt, to allow her to keep the baby as her own. Likewise in east Tennessee my daughter-in-law, mother of three, still had an empty spot in her mother-heart. She and my son became the parents of Jenna, the same baby who had been placed at the door of the Vietnam mission a couple of years before.

Her name was Mary. She was pregnant. How was she to respond? Choose God's way or the world's way? She chose life for her child and as a result she became the mother of Jesus, the Messiah. She raised him according to the laws of God. She taught him the importance of meeting with other believers and watched as he became a teacher of the Scriptures. Then Mary stepped aside to allow him do the work he was called to do but she remained his faithful mother all his days on the earth.

Her name was Ruth. She chose to give birth to me and five other children. She taught us by example the ways of the Lord. Faithfully she involved us with Christian believers and saw us grow as students of the Scriptures. Always staying within reach and constantly praying she stepped aside and allowed the six of us to do the work we were called to do as adults.

Thank God for the examples of these six mothers and those like them:

Jochebed and the Vietnamese Mother who sacrificially loved their children.

Adoptive mothers like the Princess and my Daughter-in-law. Mary and Ruth, mothers who chose life and lovingly raised their children.



Lana Ellis resides in Kingsport TN, next door to grandchildren. Church is West Colonial Hills Baptist Church.

Godly Mothers

By Rev. Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

What would be a very worthy topic to write about during the month of May? Spring is bringing forth new life. The flowers are blooming, trees are leafing out and the weather is wonderful. But the Lord did not lead me to write about any of those topics this month. Instead, He brought to my heart the blessing of having Godly mothers. May, as you know, is the month we celebrate Mother's Day. How blessed is a home to have a Godly mom who nurtures her children, loves her husband and who puts God first in her life!

Abraham Lincoln is given credit for this quote: "All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." That can be said for so many whose moms taught of the Lord to her children and who lived out His life before them in her daily walk. She is the worthy woman of Proverbs 31 whose "husband doth safely trust in her" and whose children "rise up and call her blessed."

What confidence she instills in her children! She should be credited greatly for helping them make wise choices, live productive lives, get a good education and, most importantly, helping them to come to know Christ as their personal Savior!

How can moms be this kind of mom? By making sure her priorities are placed in the right order. The Lord must have first place in her life and in everyone's life. She, if her husband is still in the home, should put him second with the children coming in next. So many times, husbands and wives get this wrong. Their children come ahead of their love for their spouse. The very best way to raise children who will be secure, feel deep and personal love from parents, and who can accomplish great things in life is to raise those children with the knowledge that mom and dad love the Lord and that mom's and dad's marriage is extremely secure. Raising our children out of the overflow of our love for Christ and love for one's spouse will model before the children how to have priorities in the right place and help them to be able to succeed greatly, spiritually, emotionally and otherwise.

For those who do not have a husband in the home, just put the Lord first and the children second. He, the Lord, will make up the difference. Psalm 68:5 says He will be a "father of the fatherless."

Mom's, we wish you a very Happy Mother's Day and say, "We love you and thank the Lord for you!"

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 Bladen Baptist Association and has served on the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.



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Onward Christian Soldiers . . .

By Mike Stroud
Burke County



Most people want to be in the Promise Land, but most don't want to fight the giants. We always want the goods, without the efforts. We are in the days where we must fight the good fight. The good news is, it is a fight we win, or should I say He has already won. The battle is the Lord, and He is the Lord of Host. The Bible says endure hardness as a good soldier. We should never gripe and complain like the children of Israel did in the wilderness. You will die there, like they did. If we believe like Joshua and Caleb we will enter in the promise land and conquer all the giants and foes of our generation. This world needs you to be the best you can be in Christ, so we can shine the light to a lost generation. We are commissioned to go into all the world, preaching the gospel. Jesus went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. That is our example, to be like Christ. He has given us power and dominion. We have the ability to break the chains off people's lives. People need hope for tomorrow and we can bring that to pass. Preach Christ and him crucified. That will pierce their hearts and give them hope for a future that is filled with joy, peace, and love.

I think about the recent movie about Lee Strobel. The Case for Christ. It was a powerful movie of him trying to prove Christ was not a factual event. He was an atheist and was very upset when his wife became a Christian. He set out to prove it was a fraud. All his research as an investigative reporter at the Chicago Tribune come up short and he realized that he could only believe after everything he tried to disprove. His wife fought the battle to love him no matter what and that is what won in the end. Who can resist the Love of God?

That is the message we need to be living and speaking. Our fight is not with flesh and blood, but with powers of darkness. We are called to tread upon serpents. Resist the devil and he will flee. We have the power in the name of Jesus to do just that. Walk in your authority in Christ and be the Ambassador of Christ to this World. Lift up the name of Jesus so all men can come unto Him. That is our calling. We should be about the business of our Heavenly Father. Take up our cross and die to ourselves. That is the victory we have and what will save those around us. When we are the Bible they see in motion. Onward Christian Soldiers.... Stay the Course.



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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Three Commitments That Will Make This Summer Unforgettable

By Jason Koon
Burke County

It's the time of year when everyone is thinking about what they need to do to make this summer exciting and memorable. How do I lose those last 15 pounds? Where are we going on vacation? How are we going to pay for it? What am I going to do this summer to make sure that it is one I'll never forget? After all, we only get so many summers and life can be so uncertain, we're not promised the ability to enjoy another one. One of the saddest realities is that so few Christians are as concerned with the greater spiritual realities in the same way. Too many of us are stuck in a perpetual state of immaturity with no desire to do anything about it. We say we know that time is short. We say that our relationship to God is important, but honestly another summer is about to come and go without any lasting change. Here are three commitments you can make this summer that will help you break out of this cycle and truly make this a summer like no other.

Read the Word Every Day

Start small, that's the key to staying in God's Word. Read a chapter a day – or half a chapter – and don't feel like you have to understand everything, just try to pick out one thing that seems to jump out at you or make sense to you. If you read and understand one thing from God's Word each day this summer, you will be surprised at the enormous changes God will make in your life.



Sacrifice Something

Where did we get this idea that we can follow Jesus and never be called upon to sacrifice? Jesus said, "Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it." In fact, I think that lack of sacrifice may be the biggest reason that we see so many American Christians living in perpetual immaturity. So, sacrifice something this summer. Maybe you need to sacrifice your golf outings to spend time with your kids or sacrifice some of your family time at the lake to spend some family time in the word or serving at a local soup Kitchen or mission. Maybe God is calling you to scale back your vacation and invest some of that time and money into His Kingdom. Whatever it is, we will never grow to maturity in Christ, if we don't first learn to lay ourselves down.

Go Somewhere

Admittedly, this may not be something you can accomplish by the end of this summer, but you can get the wheels turning. The world is bigger than Western North Carolina and God is bigger than just what He is doing in our part of the world. Going to another context can help us break out of that cycle of immaturity in so many different ways; seeing God move in another culture can be life changing. Seeing the day-to-day lives that many of our brothers and sisters have to live can be eye-opening, and more than likely the cost of a Mission trip will force you to reevaluate your finances and call you to sacrificial giving for the sake of the Kingdom.

Life is too short to let another summer go by trapped in a perpetual cycle of immaturity. God is too big and time is too short. Do something this summer, that will make a difference in you and your family's life, not just for the summer, but for eternity.

Jason Koon is Pastor of Bridge42 Church in Morganton, NC.



Building Leadership

By James Nipper
Avery County



Youth Leadership, Christian Mentoring, & Wilderness Adventure!

If you have a teen, grandchild, or other youth friend from ages 14 to 17 ready to take that next step toward their spiritual growth and understanding their identity in Christ, then check out the unique Created For Purpose, two week wilderness based leadership training program hosted by Appalachian Mountain Leadership (AML) in July.

Please visit AML's website at www.amlnc.org. As you will see, AML's emphasis is on servant leadership, and they link wilderness activities with their mentoring skills and training, creating a unique experience that cannot be matched by any organization in the Southeast. Please click "Adventures," then the "Created for Purpose" tab to learn about this exciting program!

The "Created for Purpose" program consists of 10 days of backpacking through the Pisgah National Forest in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina; two days of rock climbing, and two days of local service as missions. The program requires a serious eleven month commitment from a church mentor to work closely with, guide, and encourage these youth participants to assess their personal and spiritual lives and learn how to value and implement the concepts of servant leadership and become future leaders in their respective communities and churches.

AML's "Created for Purpose" program is truly a transformative experience, as reflected in this student review as recorded in Day 11:

Day 11: "These past few days, I have been truly blown away by how beautiful and awe inspiring everything is. From the smallest plant to the biggest mountain, everything seems so much brighter. Colors are more vibrant, and I suddenly seem so small. I have pushed through this journey, troubles, pleasures and all. I have pushed onward in a spiritual journey as well. The Lord is teaching me great things in every breath I breathe. Purpose is something I have always struggled with, and I had hoped my purpose (where the Lord is leading me) would suddenly become clear to me on this trip. I feel like I am just picking up the pieces that will one day lay out to make the bigger picture. I just have to be patient and have FAITH. We ALL have wonderful purpose and I can't wait to continue my journey of life to see what it is. It all leaves me breathless, I have no words great enough to describe how a life with the Lord feels."

You can see from this testimonial that the Created for Purpose program has a very powerful effect on youth, and assists them in their search to find their own "purpose" in life, and helps equip them to become leaders in their own churches and local communities.

For those church youth that may be ideal candidates for this wonderful program but whose families cannot afford the cost, AML has two sponsored spots for those students that may qualify.

Don't miss this exceptional, unique opportunity for aspiring church youth! Go to www.amlnc.org now, and learn more about "Created for Purpose!"

James & his wife started the Jason Project in honor of their son. The AML is similar to the Jason Project.



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HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

Helps Community with Over \$31,000 In Grants

By Adam Burleson

Hundreds gather annually for Run For Holland's 5K and 10K race each Spring. The race is designed to both raise awareness and funds for the local disabled community. To date, over \$31,000 have been granted to various organizations. The size and purpose of grants differ based on the need of the organization. Here are just some of the amazing projects made possible through their grants: Camp Funshine was able to put on four seasonal events for the disabled community, Intermountain Children's Services, Inc. used a grant to purchase screening tools to assess learning and maximize each child's abilities, Gouge Elementary and Greenlee Primary both were able to purchase SMART



Boards to aid in creative lessons that can adapt to individual learning styles, while Mitchell-Yancey Partnership For Children received a grant to acquire toys specifically designed to promote sensory stimulating activities. These were all made possible by the generous local Sponsors and proceeds from the race fees. Run For Holland was started by Adam and Brooke Burleson in 2014. Just five months into their pregnancy they received a test result that indicated a 99% chance that their baby girl would be born with Down Syndrome. Scared and uncertain, with support from family and friends they pressed on with a new outlook. One of the resources their Genetic Counselor provided was a short story titled, "Welcome to Holland" By Emily Perl Kingsley. It's a story that describes their journey like that of a couple who planned a dream trip to Italy only to find themselves in Holland. While at first, the couple was questioning why they were sent to Holland while all their friends were celebrating their trips to Italy, they realized that Holland wasn't a horrible place. It was just a different place. Everyone they knew was busy coming and going to Italy. "And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss. But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland." And with the reading of that story, the Burleson's decided to name their lovely daughter Holland. But when you run for Holland, you're not just running for their Holland but for every family that has and will travel to Holland when they thought they were going to Italy. The Run this year is May 6, 2017. For more information call 828-385-2341 or email runforholland@gmail.com.

Adam & Brooke are Holland's parents & they started the Run for Holland.

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Evergreen Church

How to Build a Home and a Church Psalm 127

By Rev. John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee



There is much talk today of finding new ways to make the Church strong and vigorous. The reason being, "the more we are together the stronger we will be." This makes good sense in the eyes of the world. This is good business practice, companies uniting to pool their resources and to cut down their overhead expenses. This would be an excellent idea, except for one fact - the Church is not a business. In the eyes of God, and in the light of the Scriptures, it is the Body of Christ. The unity already exists within the Body. The Church is not an organization but an organism. There is also only one Body. Just as Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life so the Church is the Body. Improvement to a body does not come from without, but from within. A good medical doctor does not treat the symptoms of a man's illness as individual items to be dealt with one at a time. He examines the symptoms and uses them as a guide to help him diagnose the illness. Successful diagnosis is essential to successful treatment.

One other important thing to remember is that the Lord builds His Church with families - and not with individuals. This is something we seem to have forgotten these days - the importance of the family in the life of the Church. I have been much impressed lately, as I have been in the Orient, to see the way many of the pastors and missionaries have been gripped with this idea. They concentrate on winning families to Christ. This is their aim, their prayer and their whole purpose. A church is as strong as its families are strong. Notice the importance of the Christian home in the days of the early Church - the home was the Church. They had no special buildings set aside to be used for church worship and church activities. The church met in the home. Romans 16:3 and 5 We need to distinguish between the Church, the one Church, the one Body of Christ and the church, the local group meeting in the local building, which is a part of the Body of Christ. Recognizing then the importance of the home, we need to find out what the Bible has to say about it. Any truth and teaching from the Scriptures which will help strengthen the home is vital to the life of the church. Psalm 127 has much to say in this connection. We can link this Psalm once more with the words of our Lord. If we can only get the risen Christ in the home, and keep Him in the home, and see His relevance to the day-by-day running of the home - then blessing is inevitable in all areas. This Psalm begins with the most important truth in building a home: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." It is a truth so simple in its telling, but so difficult in the doing. This verse is teaching us that there is only one builder in the home, and that builder is God. In like manner, there are those who are called laborers - the husband and the wife. It is at this initial point that we can see the seeds of all future failure in a Christian home. There is only one builder. He devised the plans because He is the architect as well as the builder. He knows exactly what He wants to do in the lives of the Christian couple. So often in the early days of a marriage there is a silent, secret struggle for power. Failure is inevitable if there is not one Builder and two laborers. Because God is always building, then we must be always laboring. If you do not keep on laboring, then it will be in vain. The only way to build a successful Christian home is to work at it, and keep on working at it! I want to suggest three special areas in which the laboring must be absolutely sincere and kept up to date.

First there must be "a continual application to the task at hand letting the Lord be the builder. The second special area is in "a continual adjustment to circumstances." These are the circumstances that make up the stuff of daily living. The adjustment can be a development in the boring things of life, a continuing experience in the ordinary. Faith can always claim and hold fast the promises of God. In Corinthians 15 Verse 58 of this same chapter provides an appropriate verse for our present line of thinking: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Notice, it is the work of the Lord - the One who is the builder, and your labor is not in vain! There is a third special area in which the laboring must be constant. This follows on from that with which we have just been dealing. It is "a continual acceptance of situation." Psalm 127: 1 says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." The Lord is always building, but are you always laboring?

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



Hospice of Yancey

Play Me a Memory

By: Debbie McCraw
Yancey County

Music. Chances are, when reading that word, a memory pops into your mind. Music often brings back wonderful memories and emotions for us all. Whether it is a certain song, listening to your favorite genre, attending a concert of your favorite artist, or singing by a camp fire, music is an important part of our lives. We never seem to forget the tunes we listened to growing up.

Music can also awaken a person struggling with Alzheimer's, dementia, and other cognitive and physical challenges. It can help them to reconnect with the world through music-triggered memories vastly improving their quality of life. By introducing personalized music into the lives of these folks through digital music, many seem to come alive again.

Over the last several years as a Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care volunteer, I have had the pleasure to sing for and with many of my clients. They were such precious moments; moments of joy, happiness, and reminiscing; some non-communicative clients seemed to find peace with music. There is a power in music that we may never fully understand, but I do know this: music speaks to our souls and our minds.

Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care, located in the mountains of Western North Carolina, was first established in 1982 by a group of volunteers working from a basement. In 1983, these volunteers gained the corporate non-profit status for the organization and have provided quality medical, emotional, spiritual, and social support for our communities for over 30 years! Although much of the support provided to community members is covered by an insurance benefit, Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care is proud to provide a "Higher Standard of Care" to help clients and their loved ones during one of the toughest times of life. They have been able to provide these additions with the support of their community members.

We are again in need of our communities' unwavering support! I am partnering with this amazing group of caregivers to raise funds and equipment to bring music back into the lives of our patients. After watching the movie, "Alive Inside", which I highly recommend, I was stirred to begin this journey of helping the "lost" reconnect with the world around them through music. With this campaign and your support, we are hoping to establish a program, "Play Me a Memory", that will allow us to provide an MP3 player or iPod with a genre of music that will stir the souls of each of our patients.

The concept for the program is simple. Each MP3 or iPod will be loaded with a specific genre or listing of music. After conversations with the patient or the patient's loved ones, we will determine which genre would fit the patient's taste. From this point, we will begin utilizing music to hopefully bring the patients back to us or give them back a lost joy.

In order to get this program up and going, we are in need of equipment and music. We have set a campaign goal of \$3,500 to fund the development of this program for our patients. If you are unable to donate financially, we are also accepting donations of equipment! If you have new or gently used MP3 players, iPods, or ear-covering head phones and would like to donate these, please do! We are also in need of a new or gently used laptop to house the music, and donations of CDs are more than welcome to help us build our music library.

Donations can be made online at <https://www.gofundme.com/PlayMeAMemory> or at <http://www.hospiceofyancey.org/donations.html> (please be sure to designate the donation as "Play Me a Memory" in the comment box).

If you are not computer savvy, please mail any donations, cash or non-cash, to:
Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care
Attn: Play Me a Memory
856 Georges Fork Rd
Burnsville, NC 28714

Please label the donation "Play Me a Memory" to ensure it is processed appropriately. All donations should be addressed to Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care and are 100% tax deductible under IRS code 501c3.

Music has been such an important part of my life. I was raised with music and I can't imagine not hearing any of it ever again. Please, won't you help us and donate to Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care so, through the gift of music, we can bring some life, joy, and peace to so many in our communities?

All of us at Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care THANK YOU immensely for contributing to the "Play Me a Memory" campaign!

If you have further questions feel free to contact a representative at 828-682-9675 or email at info@hospiceofyancey.org. Check out the below link for a clip from the movie "Alive Inside" if you are further interested in this concept and the movie. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw7Y78aqf_I

Debbie is a volunteer for Hospice of Yancey County.





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By Marcus Benfield
Mitchell County

Hello, my friends, I trust you all had a very blessed Easter and took some time to celebrate the Resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I also hope you are looking forward to Mother's Day. If your Mother is still living I want to encourage you to contact her this Mother's Day and if possible visit her. I plan to spend time with my Mother as well. I owe a lot of whom I've become in the Lord to the prayers of my Mother.

This month I want to deal with a subject that we all can learn from and do a better job of putting this Scripture Truth into practice. Paul says in Philippians 4: 11&12 *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."*

I find it interesting that Paul says, *"both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need"* How can we be full and hungry and abound and suffer need at the same time? The answer is simple, Paul is teaching us on a spiritual matter with a human example. We may feel as though we are spiritually full of God's will for our lives but we should always hunger for more. Also, we may feel we have all the abundance of God's blessing and provision but we should always realize we still have needs. You may ask if I am enjoying abundance why should feel as though I have needs? This element is of a spiritual and a physical nature. We can always use more of God in our lives and we can if lead by the Spirit use more materially to be a blessing to others who may not have physically or spiritually what we enjoy. In other words, why not be satisfied with what you have, a relationship with Christ, a home, a car, a job, and probably some other toys and say God if I enjoy abundance beyond these things I want to share them with others. We live here in America and enjoy so much that often we forget to be thankful. We become selfish and self-centered almost without realizing it.

On a spiritual level, we will never be satisfied with any level of Spiritual fullness. We should always desire more, not for our own pride or recognition, but in order to help others know our Precious Saviour!

By the world's standards we live in the richest Nation on earth and we should be thankful. However often we are not. Many times, we live our lives trying to buy things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't really like. We are live wires, all right, most everything we have is "charged." Why not ask God to give us a heart like His? A heart of love and compassion, one that desires to give for the good of others.

In February, myself and 18 others went on a mission Trip to Jamaica. We went



to preach the Gospel, build a church, offer medical supplies and care, as well as other humanitarian aid. What we experienced there needs to be experienced there needs to be experienced by every Christian in America. If so it would change our perspective entirely. We would be ashamed to complain or feel as though God had not given us what we deserve. (By the way we should be thankful He doesn't give us what we deserve or we would all be in Hell!) I saw many people who had absolutely nothing trying to help others to survive. They don't have fine Church buildings with padded pews, climate control, carpeted floors, and large education wings. They are fortunate if they have a 1 room shack to worship in and yet they are thankful and hungry to work for Jesus. Most of their homes we wouldn't use for chicken coops or hog pens and yet they are thankful for a roof over their heads. Many of the children where I preached had never seen a real pizza, let alone tasted one. The team worked to build a church for a community who literally live in, out of and with a landfill. This community is known as Riverton City, Jamaica. They are literally surviving on trash and yet they are thankful for a 1 room facility and are proud to work for Jesus to win people to the saving knowledge of Christ. They gave of themselves to see the work go on. God help us to be content with such as we have, stop our complaining and look for ways to be more hungry and empty for Jesus! Many of the people of Jamaica are fortunate if they can have 1 meal a day. Many don't get that and yet they come to Church and Praise the Lord for His Blessings. We as God's people here in America ought to be ashamed to complain about anything! God truly has blessed us and we should be willing to share Him both at home and around the world!

Here are some pictures of a small church in a mountain community, a home in Riverton City, as well as the church being constructed in Riverton.

Three hundred people accepted Jesus during this mission trip.



Dr. Benfield is the Senior Pastor of Altapass Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. He formerly pastored in Alexander County, NC for 20 years before coming to Altapass in October 2011.

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Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

Your Works Testify

By Shawn Thomas
Burke County

"But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish — the very works that I do — testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me." (John 5:36)

Jesus was speaking to the Jews who were seeking to kill Him because He claimed to be equal with God, and He was giving them "evidence", in a sense, that He really was who He claimed to be. He referred to the testimony of John in :33, but then He added here that there was a greater testimony to who He was: "the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish — the very works that I do — testify about Me ...". Jesus was able to point to His works to prove that He was who He claimed to be.

This should occasion some soul-searching among those who claim to be God's people today. Are you really what you claim to be? Are you really a Christian? How will you, and those who observe your life, know? The same way that Jesus was known: "the works which the Father has given (you) to accomplish", they will "testify" about you!

If you are really a Christian, your works will back up your profession. Jesus said in Matthew 7:20-21, "So then, you will know them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."

If this is true, what does it say about the validity of your claim to be a follower of Christ? Just like Jesus, it's not merely what you SAY about yourself that proves who you really are, but what you DO. Jesus' works testified clearly and consistently that He was truly the Son of God. What do your works testify about you?

Shawn Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. His messages and devotionals are available at www.shawnethomas.com



Grace Community Church— Enough for Today

You Did All That For Me And I Don't Care That Much

By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County

As I read this I remember John Newton's apt words: "Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior."

Bible scholar and pastor N.T. Wright retells the following story about an archbishop who was hearing a confession of sin from three hardened teenagers in the church. All three boys were trying to make a joke out of it so they met with the archbishop and confessed to a long list of ridiculous and grievous sins that they had not committed. It was all a joke. The archbishop, seeing through their bad practical joke, played along with the first two who ran out of the church laughing.

But then he listened carefully to the third prankster, and before he got away told the young man, "Okay, you have confessed these sins. Now I want you to do something to show your repentance. I want you to walk up to the far end of the church and I want you to look at the picture of Jesus hanging on the cross, and I want you to look at his face and say, 'You did all that for me and I don't care that much.' And I want you to do that three times."

And so, the boy went up to the front, looked at the picture of Jesus and said, "You did all that for me and I don't care that much." And then he said it again, but then he couldn't say it the third time because he broke down in tears. And the archbishop telling the story said, the reason I know that story is that I was that young man.



There is something about the cross. Something about Jesus dying there for us which leaps over all the theoretical discussions, all the possibilities of how we explain it this way or that way and it grasps us. And when we are grasped by it, somehow, we have a sense that what is grasping us is the love of God.

Jerry Lewis is Senior Pastor at Grace Community Church in Marion.





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God's Design for Marriage

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County

Mark 10:7-8 "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh."



God has a design for marriage. When you get ready to build a house, you find the proper blue-print that sketches out the design you have in mind for your dwelling. God's plan is always best. Though men may cling to plans devised in their own mind, the wise person will seek to discover what God's arrangement might be by looking into the Word of God.

Actually, God reiterates the truth of Mark 10:7-8 in three other passages. It is found in Genesis 2:24; Matt. 19:5; and Ephesians 5:31. This statement is found once in the Old Testament and three times in the New Testament. The Holy Ghost sees to it that there is one mention of it before man fell into sin, and three times after the fact.

God gives a once and for all blue print for having a good marriage. It is one thing to have a marriage and another thing to have a good one.

Too many marriages today are experiencing unhappiness, hostility and turmoil. It is true not only of lost people, but also of people who say they are saved and love the Lord. Their failure to follow God's blueprint is a major reason why so many relationships are not working efficiently today.

Our text verse can be divided into three different levels of study. If we summarized these three areas and divided them up, these words would apply: leaving, cleaving, and weaving.

Leaving

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother"

Does this verse teach us we forsake or abandon our parents? Certainly not...the Bible teaches that children are to "honor" both father and mother (Exodus 20:12). To "honor" is the opposite of forsaking or abandoning. You do not have to move a thousand miles away from your parents.

What does it mean to "leave" your parents when it comes to a marriage relationship? It suggests that you establish an adult to adult relationship with your parents. You must be more concerned about your mate's ideas, opinions, and practices than those of your parents. One must not be overly dependent upon his or her parents for affection, counsel, approval or assistance. A person needs to remove all bad attitudes toward parents or you will be emotionally tied to them no matter how far away from them you live. Leaving father and mother means you stop trying to change your mate just because your parents do not like him or her.

Living close to parents at the start of your marriage gives opportunity for nosy and over bearing parents to interfere in a marriage. A parent can be so involved in

the life of a child that the child becomes an emotional cripple; however, that is a mistake.

Parents, when your children are married, you should not try to run their lives. Encourage him or her to make their own decisions and to look toward the marriage partner as his primary resource of guidance, companionship and affection.

Too many today look for divorce as an easy way out. They say, "If our marriage doesn't work, we can get a divorce." There is nothing easy about divorce, especially when children are involved.

The word "leave" is also translated "forsake" in our King James Bibles. The word suggests to us there is a priority relationship once two people are married. That relationship is the husband and wife relationship.

Cleaving

"and cleave to his wife"

The word "cleave" is an interesting word. The word means "to glue or adhere or stick to something or someone." It can also mean "to bind."

Before a book is bound there are a number of separate pages. Most books are glue bound at the spine. With the glue, all of the separate pages become one book. That is a picture of what is to happen when two people are joined in holy matrimony.

God's preference is that a marital relationship last. I believe the Lord gives an exception clause in Matthew 19:9- "except if be for fornication" or sexual immorality. Some couples find a good marriage counselor to seek to heal a broken marriage. If there is any way possible, a couple should seek to work out differences and dissension. I recognize that sometimes it is not always possible due to deep seated emotional problems on the part of one of the marriage partners. Children should not be subject to scenes that can contribute to their emotional instability due to seeing parents fight, fuss and fume all the time. The kids have to be considered when one evaluates the longevity of a relationship.

Cleaving speaks of dependence. Marriage partners are to be dependent upon one another, not their parents, for the stability they need for daily living.

Cleaving speaks of devotion. Married people are to be devoted to each other in good times and in bad times. There is a loyalty that must not be broken as long as there is a workable relationship between a man and a woman.

Cleaving speaks of determination. People often give up too easily on relationships. It helps to possess a resolve you are going to do all you can do to make your relationship what it ought to be by God's divine assistance. Determination alone is not sufficient, but it does help promote longevity.

Weaving

"And they twain shall be one flesh, so then they are no more twain but one flesh"

Knitting is a form of manual weaving. My dad worked for years in a cotton mill where the cotton strands were woven together to make material by a machine. But, there are those who knit by intricately weaving strands together by their hands. It is called crocheting.

Recently I was in a rest home and one of our members was sitting in her chair manually, with her own hands, weaving or crocheting a baby blanket. All the strands were becoming one beautiful baby blanket.

How does this come about in marriage? First, the couple should realize they are a team. Do what you do for the sake of the other person. Be concerned about the other persons needs, whatever they may be.

Secondly, they should share as much as possible together. They share their possessions, bodies, ideas, abilities, problems, successes, sufferings, failures and whatever else might be added to this list. Sharing is an evidence of caring.

Thirdly, don't let differences hinder your unity. Husbands and wives can be different in so many ways. Differences should not hinder unity in marriage because it is God's will and plan that there be unity in the marital bond.

Fourthly, live a holy life and avoid sinning. Sin destroys relationships. It will not bring you together, it will certainly divide. When sin entered the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve hid in the garden. There is no need to try to hide sin from the Lord. He has an all-seeing eye- He knows. Sins like pride, selfishness, bitterness, ingratitude, harshness, cruelty, unhealthy speech, impatience and a host of other things destroys the oneness of husbands and wives.

Realize God's design for marriage and work within that divine plan.

Tom Walker is President of Foothills Baptist Bible College and Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Marion, NC.



Agribusiness Program begins Fall 2017

MCC's new Agribusiness Technology Program will prepare students to manage agricultural businesses and agriculturally related operations. The Sustainable Agriculture component will focus on agricultural principles and practices.



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Studio Tour

By Kate Groff

The deadline has past and the tour is cranking up to be another great adventure for visitors. We have 53 studio sites with 83 artists, including eight who have never participated or participated over three years ago. In their own words, they introduce themselves.

First on the list is Garold Amsberry (#74) of Midnight Sun Pottery in Micaville. "The story is in the clay. What I get from clay is the challenge. There's always what the clay, glazes and kilns are doing and what you're trying to get them to do. I'm constantly thinking of what the clay can become within form and function."

Lisa Clague is well known in ceramics. She'll be showing in her Bakersville studio (#17) after several years' hiatus. "My work evokes a place between the subconscious and the intangible...They may bring delightful fantasy or feverish fear, fusion of overlaying images reflects desire, anxiety and the poetic lure of many inner worlds...images in a passageway between what is dreamt what is lived, what is remembered and what is to come." Also, in Lisa's studio, her mother, Sarah, will have her own clay work up for viewing. "As a graduate from the Cleveland Institute of Art, I've taught and worked in clay for over 50 years and am looking forward to an exciting event this June."

Galen Sedberry is another following in a parent's "footsteps." Galen will be showing in his new studio—Sedberry Pottery—with Ken (#51). "My interest in clay peaked during a year off from college when I began helping my father in his studio and learning the basics of throwing, glazing and firing. I returned to college, received a degree in Appropriate Technology, and after several years, my hands have found their way back to clay."

From the Penland area, Tom Jaszczak (#79) joins the tour in his resident artist studio at the Barns on the Penland School of Crafts campus. "My pots are minimal and are rooted in the traditional Minnesota pottery I grew up admiring. I want my work to be paired down to the essentials emphasizing the fundamentals of pots and be truly useful. Form communicates a pots gesture; it speaks of utility, my pots reference common shapes and engage one's imagination."

Stone cutter, Collene Karcher, returns to the tour at her studio, Stone Crossing (#99). "As a sculptor living in these mountains, I've always been interested in and inspired by the work I saw in tiny local graveyards. I learn something new every time I run my hand over an old grave marker. I have always practiced letter carving alongside my three dimensional work and at some point it began to cross over—letter carving on sculpture, sculpture mixed in with letter carving."

Tori Motyl is new to the the area and new to the tour. She will have her work in Selena Glass and Metal's studio (#52) on the outskirts of Burnsville. "I began making and selling pottery in 2011 in Rochester, NY, and moved to Burnsville last year to be part of a larger and thriving craft community. My work exemplifies minimalist simplicity. It is my desire that my work promotes a sense of calm and present mindfulness in the users every day life."

Finally, the tour welcomes another new Burnsville resident and artist, Robert Alvin Crum (#75). "I am a full-time professional oil painter and muralist and paint still lifes, portraits, and figurative work using the same materials and methods used by the Old Masters. En plein-air landscapes are completed when I travel, and large landscapes are developed from these in my studio."

An exhibit will be displaying work from the tour participants at the Spruce Pine Gallery from May 13 through the tour's end on the 4th of June. This is an opportunity to view some of the riches of this area and plan your weekend of travel and search. Tour guides containing maps and locations of



Tori Motyl, ceramic yarn bowl



Tom Jaszczak, ceramic and wood shelf unit



Robert Alvin Crum, oil painting

participating artists are now available at both TRAC galleries, participant studios, local businesses, and online at the website, www.toeriverarts.org in May.

The Toe River Studio Tour is Friday-Sunday, June 2-4, from 10am to 5pm daily. Join the TRAC staff, volunteer participants and many of the other tour artists for a grand reception on Friday, June 2, from 5:30 to 7:30pm at the Spruce Pine Gallery located at 269 Oak Avenue. Come lift your glass to this magnificent area home to verdant landscapes, gravel roads and 4-lane highways, rivulets and gushing rivers, and hundreds of talented artists.

For more information about the Arts Council, please call 828-682-7215. For information about the tour exhibition, please call 828-765-0520. TRAC is a not for profit organization dedicated to connecting the arts and the people to improve the life in the Toe River Valley. It is supported, in part, by people who believe the arts are vital to a thriving community.

Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.



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Avery County

Avery County Chamber - Avery Chamber Golf Classic Thursday, May 11, 2017
For more info contact Avery County Chamber of Commerce, Banner Elk at 828-898-5604 or www.averycounty.com
May 13—Ramp Festival, Old Hampton Store & Tavern, Linville
May 13-15 Naturalist Weekend, Grandfather Mountain
May 27-28 Art on the Green, Historic BE School, Banner Elk

Burke County

News from the Burke Chamber - Enroll Now for Summer and Fall Classes at WPCC
You can now enroll in Western Piedmont Community College (WPCC)'s Summer session and Fall 2017 semester! Summer courses offer an excellent opportunity for current university or college students to take classes this summer to transfer back to their home institution.

New students planning to attend WPCC this summer should submit an application for admission now. For a full list of summer classes and steps on how to enroll and begin earning college credit, new and current students may also visit wpcc.edu/summer for more information. You may also call Student Services at 828-448-6046 for more information about enrolling at WPCC.

Summer curriculum classes begin on Tuesday, May 23 and Fall classes begin Monday, August 14.

Cybersecurity Conference -

May 24 - Durham Data breaches across the U.S. have hit an all-time high, causing serious and expensive problems for companies large and small. But what does a real cyber-attack look like, and who would do such a thing? Why?

Manufacturing Summit - Federal Trade Policies & Your Business May 9 - (Half-Day) - Charlotte

Are you aware of new and upcoming federal trade policies that are sure to impact your business? With 95% of the world's consumers living outside the borders of the United States, international trade is vital to the success of the manufacturing industry.

The North Carolina Chamber is proud to host its redesigned Manufacturing Summit at the Harris Conference Center in Charlotte, N.C., on May 9. At this event, Linda Dempsey, vice president of international economic affairs at the National Association of Manufacturers, will discuss changes in trade policy that will affect your ability to compete globally.

Join us for a half-day event that includes a full networking breakfast, an impressive exhibitor lineup and an agenda that covers the most critical topics in manufacturing.

Dave Buster, global portfolio director for cybersecurity at Global Knowledge, will answer these questions at the North Carolina Chamber's Cybersecurity Conference on Wednesday, May 24, at the Sheraton Imperial Hotel & Convention Center in Durham, N.C. Registration is open and an early-bird discount is currently available.

Catawba River Baptist Association

May

- 2—Church Security Seminar @ 6:30 p.m. @ Walker Road Baptist
- 21—Association Missions Offering
- 23—Why They Stay Seminar with Dr. Steve Parr at 6:30 p.m. @ Mulls Grove Baptist Mission Trip

West Virginia Mission Trip

We will be taking a group to Fayetteville, West Virginia July 23-28 where we will do VBS, Nursing Home ministry, Block Parties as well as some light construction. This is a great trip for adults and youth as well as families with children. The cost of \$200 per person includes food, lodging (sleeping on air mattresses at New River Baptist Church), and supplies. For more information, registration and medical release forms please call our CRBA office or email me at rsmith@crbanc.org

Catawba River Baptist Association will be leading a mission trip to Cuba September 16-22. This will be an exciting trip where we will do construction, prayer walking, personal evangelism and preaching. 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.

Enroll Now for Summer and Fall Classes at WPCC

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Summer curriculum classes begin on Tuesday, May 23 and Fall classes begin Monday, August 14.

Christian 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 Leverage of One Team, resulting in the Spiritual Reproduction among Businessmen. Please join us for lunch at one of our weekly Bible study meetings: Tuesday, 12:00 noon at the Community House, Morganton. Contact: Wayne Giese, 828-413-5819.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County - Cooking Class with Sharon - Tuesday, June 20th., from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., at the Silver Creek Adventist School, 2195 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. 28655. \$10.00 per person, which includes cooking demo and samples! Please contact Cindy at 870-510-8048 or e-mail cj-mercer@tds.net to register or for more information.

Sharon shares a unique presentation that will provide a personal testimony to health and wellness that began while caring for her husband's health challenges, which included diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure and eventually cancer. He now manages his health through diet and exercise without medication!

Aglow International Hickory - Lighthouse Hickory Lighthouse meetings are the second Saturday of each month.

McDowell County

Clinchfield Baptist Church (Marion) - We are accepting resumes for Minister of Music. Current worship style is blended, using both traditional hymns, choral, and contemporary arrangements with soloist and choir. The position is a paid part-time position and involves organizing and leading the church's music ministries both adult and children. Baptist background preferred. Send resumes with references to Clinchfieldbaptistchurch@frontier.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 Belize Medical Mission Trip. 14 are 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 medicines. Contributions are greatly appreciated. Please make your donations to FBC for the Belize Medical Fund. For more info., please contact Scott Hagaman.

Youth Reformation Mission Tour Update By Scott Hagaman, Pastor By the time this newsletter arrives, our youth will be finishing final preparations for their biggest fundraiser for the 2017 mission trip to Europe. The annual auction and BBQ supper is scheduled for Friday, April 21. All funds raised will help make this exciting, special trip possible. June 22-July 4, a group of 36 youth and adults will tour from Berlin, Germany to Switzerland, and to London, England singing praises to God and learning about the Protestant Reformation, which began with Martin Luther 500 years ago. While learning history and seeing the sights of Europe are a big part of this trip, we also plan to minister alongside the contemporary churches of these three countries. Preparations are in progress for active ministry, including singing, in Berlin and Wittenberg, Germany, Zurich and Geneva, Switzerland, and London, England. One of the highlights will be singing as part of the Reformation 500 Festival to be held in the town square of Wittenberg, adjacent to the very church where Luther first nailed his 95 Theses to the doors to begin the renewal of the Gospel.

Historic Marion Tailgate Market is open on Tuesday from 3 to 6 pm and Saturday from 9 am to 12 pm in downtown Marion under the Tailgate Market shelter. Opening day, Tuesday, May 2.

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. 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

Celebrate Recovery - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving help and help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise @ 385-0061
There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families

Calvary Chapel Asheville - Spruce Pine - Calvary Chapel Church in Asheville is sponsoring a home fellowship and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm at 79 Sean Dr. (Estate area—off Brushy Creek Rd). We are studying the Gospel of John currently. Call John Jackson 760-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

Rhododendron Festival—On June 16 and 17, the Town of Bakersville, Gateway to the Roan and Home to the Arts, will host its 71th North Carolina Rhododendron Festival which is among the oldest and most respected festivals in the Southeast. The two-day Festival will feature the Rhododendron Festival Pageant on Friday and Saturday evenings. The Rhododendron Festival Arts and Crafts Fair on both Friday and Saturday will have live music all day, food vendors, featuring local and organic selections and church baked goods; regional arts and crafts people; commercial vendors; inflatables and train rides for the kids; nonprofit exhibits, and the famous Ducky Derby. We will have a classic car show on Saturday as well as a 10K run and street dancing both Friday and Saturday nights. Come to Bakersville! There are vendor spaces still available: Contact Dr. Dan Barron Dr. Dan Barron drdanbarron@gmail.com or 828-284-1914 <http://www.ncrhododendronfestival.org/>.

Support Group For Caregivers Of Those With Memory Loss To 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 & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge, 236 Hospital Dr. in Spruce Pine, from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. High Country Caregiver Foundation welcomes and encourages all caregivers to attend.

Families 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 held on the first Friday of each month will offer refreshments and fellowship. There will be opportunities for caregivers to tell their stories, learn useful tips, trade information, and give and gain support to others in the same situation.

For further information about the group and the meeting please contact Suzanne Russell at (714) 614-5867 or Janet Ouzts at jnutozts@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 eight hours per week consisting of 4.5 hours on Sunday morning, 1.5 hours on Sunday nights, and 2 hours on Wednesday nights plus other hours during special events as needed. The position will require a spirit-filled caring and responsible childcare provider who will focus on providing a safe environment for toddlers. Qualifications include experience in caring for young children, and the physical ability to meet their active needs; 2-3 references; and willingness to submit to a background check. CPR 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.

Applicants should contact First Baptist Church, 125 Tappan Street, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. Phone # 828-765-9411 Ext. 301.

Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge—Annual Golf Tournament May 3, 2017 at the Grassy Creek Golf & Country Club in Spruce Pine, NC for more info call 828-765-7436

Mitchell County 4-H—Summer Fun Program—Mitchell County 4-H is very excited to announce this year's Summer Fun Program! From field trips to food preparation we have something to fit everyone's interest! Be on the lookout for more info that will be sent out in early May. Programs will be provided for ages 5-8, 9-13, and 14-18. Registration for currently enrolled 4-Hers will be held on Thursday June 1 from 8am-6pm. Registration for the general public will be held on Friday June 2nd from 8am-6pm. Spots are limited so please come early!

Mitchell Baptist Association-Spruce Pine - Deacons' Wives Conference Monday, May 8, 2017 Ledger Baptist Church 7:00pm Conference Leader will be Peggy Howell, a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.

Disaster Relief Training -- May 29-30, 2017 Baptist Men's Disaster Relief Training is available to all believers who have a passion to serve others. For more info, online at baptistmission/training/disaster-relief-training.com

Baptist Children's Homes Saturday Workday—Broyhill Home in Clyde—May 13 register at bdhfamily.org/foc

Mitchell County Historical Society—May 15 ...The Rest of the Story- 7pm Spruce Pine Library. David Biddix, and his daughter, Amanda, will share stories about Mitchell County and the surrounding area that you may NOT have heard before. Researching old newspapers, books and journals, they have come up with some very entertaining discoveries!

Red Cross Blood Donation - The American Red Cross serving Mitchell and Yancey County has volunteer positions open as Blood Donor Ambassadors assisting in the areas of Reception and Hospitality at local blood drives in Spruce Pine and Burnsville. With the need for blood donations increased during the holidays, this is a critical role and meaningful way to serve an urgent need through the Red Cross. Drives are held at the First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine and the Higgins Memorial Methodist Church in Burnsville. Volunteers serving in this role help the Red Cross provide a great blood donation experience for donors - helping to save lives. For more information and to apply go to <http://www.redcross.org/volunteer> or contact Kimberly Brewster, Volunteer Services Specialist supporting the Mitchell and Yancey area blood drives at kimberly.brewster@redcross.org or 828-333-9809.

Run for Holland - Don't forget this is May 6, 2017 For more info call 828-385-2341 or email runforholland@gmail.com

Summer 2017 Workshops at Penland - Say hello to Penland's Summer 2017 workshop catalog, now online in full as a 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 bowls or brooches or ...?

All applications received by February 11 will be entered into the early registration lottery. Scholarships are available for all workshops; apply by February 17.

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 fellowshiping, come join us for breakfast at Helen's Restaurant in Bakersville the second Friday of each month at 8:00am. + We will be ending by 10:00am. Open to all-for more information call Barbara Harrell at 828-467-3644 or email at barbarah@brcnews.com.

Yancey County

Calvary Chapel Asheville - Spruce Pine - Calvary Chapel Church in Asheville is sponsoring a home fellowship and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held

on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm at 79 Sean Dr. (Estatoe area—off Brushy Creek Rd). We are studying the Gospel of John currently. Call John Jackson 760-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

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

Partners Aligned Toward Health - Register Now!

The 8th annual Burnsville Fit Families 5K is just around the corner on May 13th, 2017! It's FUN, it's FAMILY-FRIENDLY, and best of all...kids under 18 RUN FOR FREE! There are LOTS of ways to get involved, even if running is not your thing. You can run, walk, push a stroller, cheer from the sidelines, or volunteer to help with the race! Click the link below to get more information about the race, to register, or to volunteer. The Early Bird entry fee ends on April 27th, so get your registration in soon!

Cane River Park Celebration - Come play, eat, and have fun at the Cane River Park Celebration following the BFF 5K! There will be games, sports, fishing, food and more...

Where? At Cane River Park

When? 11am to 5pm, Sat., May 13th

Have fun and explore the improved facilities and wide range of activities that Cane River Park has to offer. Details are available on the Facebook event. Many thanks to the Yancey County Parks & Recreation department and the Yancey County Commissioners for joining us in sponsoring this event!

Parkway Playhouse is looking for ushers for the 2017 season and golfers to take part in our annual Golf Tournament on Saturday April 29th. We are also getting ready for the upcoming Parkway Playhouse Junior performances of Into the Woods Jr.

Shoal Creek Baptist Church- Burnsville, NC - Mother's Day Service May 14th @ 11:00 AM

Celebrate Successes May 28th 11:00 AM worship service, recognition of graduates, achievement of goals, followed by celebration meal, and an old fashioned singspiration.

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 828-682-6011.

American Legion Post 122 Would like to invite the Avery, Mitchell and Yancey communities to a Memorial Service honoring the men and women of our communities who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and way of life.

The Memorial Service will be held at 3:00 pm Sunday afternoon, May 28th, at Faith Baptist Church on Highway 197 N Burnsville. For more information or questions, please contact Rev. Harvey Sharpe 828-682-0853 or Les Heavner at 828-675-0290.

Mayland Community College

SMALL BUSINESS CENTER

The Mayland Small Business Center (SBC) 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 free small business seminars, contact Mayland SBC Director Allen Cook at 828.766.1295 or email him at acook@mayland.edu. Check out our May classes:

Your Small Business Taxes 5/2, 5:30-8:30 p.m. -Mayland Campus

NEW! Cash Flow Forecasting 5/4, 5:30-7:00 p.m. -Yancey Campus

Business Plan Presentations and Graduation 5/9, 5:30-7:30 p.m. -Mayland Campus

Lunch and Learn: Tips to Build Tourist Traffic to Your Business (1 Hour) 5/10, 12:00-1:00 p.m. Fee Waived TBD

Business Tips from the "Wildkitty" 5/10, 5:30-7:30 p.m. -TRAC Resource Center Spruce Pine

How to Find and Retain Customers NEW! 5/11, 10:00-11:30 a.m. - Mayland Campus

-Or How to Find and Retain Customers 5/11, 1:30-3:00 p.m.-Yancey Campus

How to Start a Business 5/11, 1:00-3:00 p.m. -Banner Elk Mayland Satellite Campus

How Changes to Yancey, Mitchell & Avery will Affect Business (3 Hours) NEW!

5/23, 5:30-8:30 p.m. -Yancey Campus

Social Media for the Home/Studio Based Business 5/31, 5:30-7:30 p.m. -TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine

- FREE ONLINE BUSINESS SEMINARS: How to register for a Free Online Seminar: Go to www.ncsbc.net/events.aspxCreating a Loan Package (2.5 Hours)

- Finding Money to Start a Business (2.5 Hours)

- Finding & Attracting an Investor (2.5 Hours)

- Creating Financial Projections (3 Hours)

- Accounting 101: The Basics of Bookkeeping (3 Hours)

- Creating Buzz: Marketing on a Small Budget (3 Hours)

- Pricing Strategy and Tactics (4 Hours)

- Market Insight: Conducting Market Research (3 Hours)

- Understanding Advertising and Promotions (2.5 Hours)

- Marketing 101: The Fundamentals (3 Hours)

- How to Write a Business Plan (2.5 Hours)

- How to Start a Business (3 Hours)

- Choosing a Legal Structure for a Business (2 Hours)

- Buying a Business (3.5 Hours)

Allen's Offerings

How Great Thou Art

By Allen Buchanan
Mitchell County



I suppose the desire to go to the top of the world is instilled in each of us from birth. To accomplish this we look around us, close to home, to find the one place that is higher than them all.

When thinking of tall buildings, the One World Trade Center and Empire State Building in NY City or the Sears Tower in Chicago come to mind. You may have visited these or one of the 31 others that Google suggests. I have never visited any of them.

In calling Bakersville, NC home one of the best things about living here is the Blue Ridge Mountains. Living in these mountains offers awesome possibilities. On Friday, April 14th, I sat next to the bridge of Grandfather Mountain and admired all of God's handiwork as far as my eyes could see. There on the top of the world I could see what felt like forever. While taking in all the beauty and majesty, I was listening to Newsong sing "How Great Thou Art". Some who passed by smiled in agreement as others looked as though they didn't have a clue.

That Friday just happened to be Good Friday, the start of Easter weekend. There on a mountain top I was worshipping the King of the universe who died on an old rugged cross to save me and you from our sins. I have never been able to understand why anyone that sees all that God has created cannot see Him for who He is. Whether at ground level or the top of the world, God is there.

*O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.*

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

*When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur
And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.*

*And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing:
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.*

*When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,
And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"*

The lyrics to How Great Thou Art were written by Carl Boberg

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

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Berry Chapel Baptist Church

The Day My Mother Forgot: In Memory Of Carolyn Williams My Mother

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County



There is nothing like a Godly Mother. They are always there for you and they never seem to forget the things you like. My mom was a Godly lady, she kept the family in line and in church all the time, because she loved God so much. Each night she would read me Bible Stories and pray for me at bed time. She taught Sunday School for over 40 years, and I have many years of her notes that she used to teach Sunday School. I am so thankful that my mom was always faithful to God and God's House. Through her faithfulness, she showed me how important it is to place your Faith and Trust in God, in all things that happen in life, whether they are big or small.

Then about eight years ago on an Easter Sunday, we were having a cookout that evening at my parents' house. My mom loved to eat steaks cooked on the grill. So, I had fired up the grill getting ready for the cookout and went into the house to get the steaks. I stopped by Mom's chair and asked her how she would like her steak cooked. She looked at me and she said, "you tell Steve I want mine cooked medium." I thought she was just joking when she said, "tell Steve to cook it medium," because I was Steve. I said, Mom I am Steve, and she said, no you are not, and I said, "yes mom I am." At that time, my eyes were opened and I saw something was happening to my dear mom. I'll never forget the confusion and hurt I felt the day my mom forgot me. I know it was not her fault, but it is a disease that was starting to take control of her body called Alzheimer's. From then on, we started seeing mom go down. She would have her good days and she would remember who I was, and some days she would have bad days and forget who I was.

It hurt me to see this happening to her because she was the person I could talk to and ask her to pray for me, and she would. I remember talking to her about going to Fruitland Bible Institute when God called me to preach. She Prayed. There were times I could not find things in the Bible that I was looking for; I could call her and she would help me find them. When I was confused about church matters she would pray about them, and for God to give me knowledge on what I needed to do. She was a great inspiration to me and I believe my greatest prayer warrior. Then eight years ago as I have already mentioned, Alzheimer's hit my mom. But the most amazing thing I found out during my mom's Alzheimer's was, she never forgot how to pray. She may have forgotten me from time to time and even other people and things, but she never forgot her Lord and how to pray to Him. The reason I say this is I found myself many times just needing to talk to her about things after she developed this awful disease. I would kneel by her chair at the Brian Center and share with her my heart and how I was struggling and how I needed her to pray for me. I don't know how much she understood about what I was telling her, but I do know when I placed my head in her lap, hurting, she would place those sweet hands on my head and pray to God for me. She may have not prayed for the things I asked her to, but she Prayed very clearly and directly to the God she knew and had lived for almost all of her life. It was great to know even though my mom may have forgotten who her son was, she never forgot her Lord.



PS. My Mom prayed for me to have a Godly Wife and I Do. Her Name Is Beverly Williams and now she is my greatest prayer warrior. THANKS MOM FOR ALL YOUR PRAYERS
Quotes On Godly Mothers From Godly Men.

- Only God Himself fully appreciates the influence of a Christian mother in the molding of character in her children. Billy Graham
- I don't believe there are devils enough in hell to pull a boy or girl out of the arms of a godly mother. Billy Sunday
- To be a mother is by no means second class. Men may have the authority in the home, but the women have the influence. The mother, more than the father, is the one who molds and shapes those little lives from day to day. John MacArthur
- The impression that a praying mother leaves upon her children is life-long. Perhaps when you are dead and gone your prayers will be answered. D. L. Moody

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

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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47

This is a busy season here at the NC General Assembly. Members of both the House and Senate work to get their bills heard in committees and voted on for passage in their respective chambers so as to meet the crossover deadline of April 27. Each bill must be passed in the Senate and the House to become law. A bill originating in the Senate must cross to the House where it works its way through the committee process before being voted on during a House session. Likewise, a House bill crosses over to the Senate to be heard in the committee(s) to which it is assigned, before being voted on in a Senate session. Some bills are not subject to the crossover deadline. These include redistricting bills for House, Senate, Congress, or local entities; ratification of amendments to the U.S. Constitution; bills introduced on the report of the House Committees on Appropriations, Finance, or Rules, for example, the bill which sets our state budget; bills providing for action on gubernatorial nominations or appointments; and adjournment resolutions of both chambers.

After the crossover deadline, bills that are eligible continue to be heard in both chambers, while work on the budget bill becomes the primary focus. Although the process is lengthier, passing the budget bill follows the process of any other bill. The House and Senate alternate, from one biennium to the next, which chamber drafts and passes the budget for consideration by the other chamber. For this biennium, the Senate will be presenting its proposed budget first. After the Senate finishes its version of the budget it is voted on by the full Senate and, when passed to the House, the same process begins again. Differences between the Senate and House budget bills are resolved in conference committees. Once these differences are resolved, each chamber again votes on the budget bill. After the bill is passed by both chambers it is submitted to the governor for signing. If he chooses not to sign the budget, he can veto it or let it become law without his signature.

Budget work is underway here in Raleigh, and will continue through at least July 1. I look forward to a final budget which funds our core priorities of education, infrastructure, and public safety. Deciding how the state spends the dollars of hard-working taxpayers is a serious undertaking and responsibility.

As always, please share your thoughts with me on this or other issues related to state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.



Sen. Ralph Hise
Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net
919-733-3460



Marion's 11th Annual Liver Mush Festival

Saturday, June 3rd 2017
5:00PM-9:00PM
Main Street,
Downtown Marion
828-652-2215

*Celebrating Liver Mush
and the Liver Mush
Heritage of Marion and
McDowell County!*

Back again this year - Pig Calling Contest. Get your best pig call ready! \$50, a trophy and a Festival t-shirt for the best pig caller!

And the Liver Mush Eating Contest!!! The Contest is open to adults 18 years & up. A \$50 cash prize, a trophy and a Liver Mush Festival T-shirt to the winner.

Inflatables and other activities for the kids!! Visit with the vendors and sponsors. There is fun for everyone!

For the motorcycles enthusiast, plans are underway for a Hog on Hog poker run and motorcycle display. More details to come!

Free Liver Mush sandwiches from Hunter's Liver Mush, the event sponsor.

For more information call **828-652-2215** or check out **Liver Mush Festival** on Facebook.

Sponsors - City of Marion, Hunter's Liver Mush, Goforth Pest Control, US Cellular, Aaron's Rental, McDowell Chamber of Commerce, Phillips Financial.

In case of rain, the concert will be at the Historic Marion Tailgate Market Cover, 67 West Henderson Street.



And what would a Liver Mush Festival be without the sounds of great country music and rock classics by: **Roadrunnerz**



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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

US House of Representatives NC District 11



Congressman
Mark Meadows
202-225-6401
www.meadows.house.gov

Every year as we celebrate Memorial Day, I am thankful for the time as our Country collectively reflects and remembers all of the brave men and women who fought and died while defending the freedoms that we cherish. On May 29th, we will be celebrating the lives of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our nation. These men and women fought for the United States, but also for the friends and the family that they left behind. It says in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Outside my office door here in Washington, DC I have the photos of the men from our district that have given that ultimate sacrifice in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn. They went into conflict knowing the potential cost, and sacrificed all for us in North Carolina, and for our great Country. While we remember their deaths, we also celebrate that such people lived. Every day as I walk into my office, I am reminded of their lives and the lasting impact that they have made on Western North Carolina. We take time this month to remember them, and to honor the families that carry on their memory.

PFC Joey D. Whitener, Nebo, NC
SGT William S. Kinzer, Jr., Hendersonville, NC
CW3 Mitchell K. Carver, Jr., Leicester, NC
SGT Kevin D. Atkins, Burnsville, NC
SSG Joseph R. Ray, Asheville, NC
CPL Kenneth D. Hess, Asheville, NC
SSG Jason C. Ramseyer, Lenoir, NC
SGT Larry R. Bowman, Lenoir, NC
SSG Charlie L. Bagwell, Lake Toxaway, NC
SGT Thomas C. Ray II, Weaverville, NC
LCPL Jessie A. Cassada, Hendersonville, NC
SGT Jason R. Parsons, Lenoir, NC
SGT Donald T. Edgerton, Murphy, NC
PFC Christian Warriner, Mills River, NC
W02 Terry L. Varnadore II, Arden, NC
SPC Patrick L. Lay II, Bradenton, NC
CPL Michael J. Dutcher, Asheville, NC
SSG Brandon G. Eggleston, Candler, NC
SGT William D. Brown III, Franklin, NC

NC House District 118



Rep. Michele D. Presnell
Michele.Presnell@ncleg.net
919-733-5732

House considers hunting with dogs bill

My office and I have received hundreds of calls and emails from people who are opposed to House Bill 648 – Responsible Deer Hunting.

I intend to vote no on the bill if given the opportunity. The bill would give too much authority to the state Wildlife Resources Commission, which would be given rule-making authority over some aspects of hunting with dogs in our state.

House Bill 648 had been scheduled for a hearing in the House Wildlife Resources Committee on Wednesday, but the meeting was canceled. Another meeting of the committee has been called for April 24, but the agenda for the meeting had not been announced as of this writing.

People I have spoken to about the issue are concerned the bill would be a step toward ending hunting with dogs in North Carolina. I tend to agree with them. Given I support hunting with dogs and the freedom generally to hunt in our state, I cannot support House Bill 648.

A particularly interesting take on the bill came from one of my constituents in Yancey County. He noted that during the time preceding the founding of the United States, people moved to the new world in part because of the tyrannical restrictions placed on hunting in Europe.

In England, he said, only royalty and wealthy landowners could hunt. I will vote no on any bill that may move our state toward a heavily commercialized approach to hunting, which, in the long run, would lead to exclusion of those who aren't wealthy enough to afford commercial hunts.

As Ted Nugent once said: "Take your kid hunting and you won't have to hunt for your kids." Hunting feeds families and keeps them close.

French Broad EMC spreads internet

French Broad Electric has been working diligently – road by road – to spread internet service through Madison County.

They use power lines that are already in place to provide internet connectivity to people in more isolated parts of the county.

While Yancey County is already covered by internet, people in more isolated parts of Haywood County could benefit from internet connectivity as well. Perhaps the Haywood County EMC could take a look at the approach being taken by French Broad Electric.

NC House District 85



Representative
Josh Dobson
Josh.Dobson@ncleg.net
919-733-5862

The long session of the North Carolina General Assembly is the busiest time of the two-year cycle for the legislature. It is not widely known that you only have a small window in the two year cycle to get bills passed both chambers and signed by the governor. This is that time. Part of the fast pace of legislation is due to something called "crossover".

April 27 is the Crossover Deadline, the date by which most bills have to pass either the House or the Senate to stay alive for the remainder of the session.

Over the next week, legislative committees will be hearing numerous bills, and both chambers—House and Senate—will be holding long sessions to vote on the bills coming out of these committees. Many of the bills are noncontroversial and will pass quickly. However, in the rush to make crossover, my experience has been that some bills will receive favorable votes without full vetting. Since all bills have to pass both chambers, making crossover is just the next step in the legislative sausage-making business.

My hope and my goal is that by the time "crossover" has concluded I will have passed 8 bills out of the House Chamber. So far I have been fortunate to pass 6 bills out of the House. Three in particular are listed below.

HB 299 addresses the state health plan. It gives more autonomy to the State Treasurers office to plan for our long term obligations as a state. Our state employees and retirees are crucial to the success of our state. HB 299 will help assure that our state health plan is sustainable for the long term.

HB 353 is one of my few non health care related bills that I was fortunate to pass out of the house with almost unanimous support. HB 353 is an act to add three areas of our state to the state park system. One of which is in my district. (Bob's Pocket in McDowell County) I believe we do need to preserve what we can in a common sense way for future generations.

HB 248 is a bill to form a study committee to exam how best for North Carolina to address the aging population. North Carolina currently ranks ninth in the nation for the size of the age 60 and older population and tenth in the nation for the age 85 and older population. From 2015 to 2035, the age 65 and older population is projected to increase sixty-seven percent (67%) and the age 85 and older population is projected to increase one hundred two percent (102%). By 2019, North Carolina will have more people that are 60 years of age and older than 21 children age 0-17. It is recommended that the Subcommittee examine the range of programs and services for older adults throughout the continuum of care. The Subcommittee is encouraged to seek input from a variety of stakeholders and interest groups including: The Division of Aging and Adult Services and the Division of Social Services, Department of Health and Human Services; the North Carolina Coalition on Aging; the North Carolina Senior Tarheel Legislature, and the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. The needs of our seniors are vital to the long term success of our state. I look forward to hopefully getting this bill to the Governor's desk soon.

As always, I am thankful for the opportunity to serve Western North Carolina. Please don't hesitate to call my office anytime I can be of assistance.

Equality and Justice

Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.
McDowell County



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

This month open your Bible to Matthew 7:12 and follow along as we continue with the study of "The Sermon on the Mount."

From our March article, we were blessed with an understanding of ask, seek and knock. Jesus revealed to all of us how we should approach God and be persistent with our prayers and petitions. Our approach must be tempered though. That is where we find ourselves with this article. Notice the first word in Chapter 7 verse 12, "Therefore." It refers to something previously stated. With this thought we understand this article gives deeper clarification to the previous passage while opening a fresh perspective to every born-again believer. With your Bibles open to Matthew Chapter 7 verse 12 we read: *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."*

This verse clearly has a theme of equity and justice, a theme which will regulate our relationships, with God and one another. The golden rule is encompassing both economies, the O.T. and N.T.: we see the O.T. law being applied through N.T. gospel. The connection between these two, then, shows that in the practice of the golden rule Christians are to consider not only how they would be dealt with by men, but by God Himself. This elevates the understanding high above the ethics of the world. I speak to Christians because that is who the Lord spoke to as He delivered the sermon on the mount. It still applies to the body of Christ because we are His elect! We have a testimony of being born-again into a new life that is eternal and abundant. We are to follow the standard set within God's word as conviction leads us --not obligation.

Christian, how does God's word reveal His handling of His children? Would the word merciful provide the answer? The golden rule then tells you and I to treat others the way God treats us. Remember the word "therefore"--the golden rule is there for understanding what has previously been given. The lost cannot do this, they are not indwelt with the Holy Spirit. God doesn't leave you and I alone to struggle with molding our lives into this order. He provides us with a comforter. The Holy Spirit will move us according to God's word to be the people God has saved us to be. Therefore, we are expected to submit to obedience and humble ourselves to the work of the comforter. How can we expect God to be merciful with us if we are eaten up with selfishness? Let's not forget the need others have of us is the same need we have of God.

This brings us to a very necessary question; how am I to determine what is good for my neighbors? Look at our verse: *"all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."* Our answer can be summarized as: Whatever you consider best for yourself were you in their place, that is what you must do for others. The understanding of verse 12 is found in these three things. (1) We must do to our neighbor what we ourselves acknowledge to be fit and reasonable, considering the discovery and understanding of the circumstances. (2)



We must consider other people on the same level with ourselves, and understand we are as responsible to them as they are to us. Being saved does not make us better than anyone. We are all sinners, some are saved sinners and others are unsaved sinners. We all have come short of the glory of God. (3) We can very easily find ourselves in equal or worse condition than we find others in. All of us live under a sovereign God, yet it is His children who are called to be salt and light. The golden rule is a guideline for meeting that expectation.

So, does this mean we can expect to be treated by others the way we treat others? The verse doesn't say that, unfortunately many of us have read into it that very result. The lost, the immature, the selfish, the self-righteous and many others will never be able to return the grace of God until they experience or have renewed the grace of God. But, isn't that the reason our Lord has given us this directive. We can be God's grace extended to those who do not seek it, cannot ask for it and will not search it out. For this very reason, the golden rule is the physical expression of the great commission. Christian, lets reevaluate our understanding of the golden rule and seek Gods glory through it in our lives. Until next time may God keep you firmly in His grip!

Terry Cheek is Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marion.



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Friendships

By Timothy Eller
McDowell County

When I began to look for a subject for this month's article I chose the subject of Biblical friendships. I often struggle to know or understand what God thinks about friendships. I do know that the Bible says if a man desires to have friends that he must prove himself friendly (Prov. 18:24). Often we fail to see the greatest example of friends in the Bible, Jonathon and David. Jonathon and David were friends and the Bible even talks about the bond between them being stronger than a man and a woman (2 Samuel 1:26). There was nothing impure in its meaning. It was stated to prove the fidelity and trust between two very close friends. Jonathon cared more about his friend being exalted and promoted than he did his right to the throne of his father. Jesus said no greater love does a man have than to lay down his life for his friend (John 15:13). He even put his life in jeopardy to save David. Friends can never show a more loving gesture than to do good for a friend despite what it might cost them to be willing to put their friend first. Be a Biblical friend to somebody today, help someone who is not able to help themselves, regardless of what they can do for you in return. David had nothing to lose and Jonathon had everything to lose, yet he fought and stuck up for his friend. Be a true friend to somebody today. True friends never look at the bottom line of what am I going to get out of this relationship. Friendship often is a give and take where two people are willing to give of themselves out of care and concern for the common good will of mankind.

Tim Eller 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.



Achievement Night

By Jane McDaniel
McDowell County

On Tuesday March 28th North Carolina Cooperative Extension McDowell Center hosted the annual Extension Recognition and Achievement Night at First Baptist Church in Marion. Volunteers from 4-H, Extension and Community Association, McDowell Cattleman's Association, McDowell Youth Foundation, Keep McDowell Beautiful, Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, Local Foods Advisory Council, McDowell Honeybee Club, and the Extension Advisory Council were recognized. 4-Her's were honored for their accomplishments in 2016. NC Cooperative Extension would like to thank Farm Bureau – McDowell for sponsoring the evening.



Farm Bureau – McDowell Board Members posing with donation to McDowell 4-H with McDowell 4-Hers.



North Carolina Cooperative Extension McDowell Center Staff with McDowell County Commissioners 1st row: Chad Ray, Adam Lawing, Cathy Hohenstein, Juliet Eirikis, Molly Sandfoss, Jane Dale, and Matt Burneisen 2nd row: Commissioner Tony Brown, Commissioner Barry McPeters, Commissioner David Walker, and Commissioner Lynn Greene.

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Golfers' Raffle

Accentuate the Positive

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County

FHS student scores prefect on ACT

When Freedom High School junior Jack Swanson received an email in his inbox from ACT informing him that his test score was ready to view, he was understandably anxious.

The test gauges college readiness, and colleges and universities use students' scores in the admissions process, so Jack knew a lot was riding on the results.

Thinking back to test day, Jack recalls feeling "overly-prepared," and since he had not taken any formal prep classes or read any official books related to acing the test, he was relying on his school experience and his AP and humanities classes at Freedom to perform well.

And perform well he did. Jack scored a perfect 36 on the ACT.

It was actually during school," Jack said, remembering where he was when he learned of his score. "I felt as if a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. A lot of emphasis is placed on standardized testing today, so getting this out of the way was a great relief for me."

Jack immediately texted two people: his mom and his friend and mentor Ben Succop, who scored a perfect 36 on the ACT while at Freedom in 2014. "I owe much of what I have accomplished to these two specifically," Jack said of his mom and Ben. He gave credit to his teachers, too.

"Going into the test room, I felt overly-prepared and was confident that I could perform well," Jack said. "After finishing, I couldn't think of a section I may have performed poorly on, but never anticipated a perfect score. All of the preparation I needed to perform well on the ACT came from the wonderful teachers at Freedom. I did not use a prep book or other outside sources; the academic rigor of the courses at Freedom was more than enough to prepare me for the ACT."

He added, "I've taken many AP/Pre-AP courses in my time at Freedom, but the most influential of those would have to be AP Calculus/Stats with Mr. (Brent) and Mrs. (Kelly) Baker, and Mr. (Tim) Fossett's Pre-AP/AP English courses. AP and Pre-AP courses allow for a more in-depth approach to traditional curricula, allowing for a greater understanding and grasp of learning in general. Without having taken these classes, I could not have performed near as well as I did on the ACT."

When he is not in class, Jack is busy with Quiz Bowl, Math Team, Key Club, National Honors Society, Ping Pong Club, Marching Band and Wind Ensemble (he plays the trombone) and Young Democrats.

He said, "I am particularly involved in the Young Democrats Club, where I serve as president and recently won election to the State Executive Board."

It is his interest in politics that may drive Jack's future.

He said, "Quite a bit has changed in the last few weeks, and I feel more confident on a career path than ever before. Over the past year, I've become heavily involved in politics on the state and local level, and had the wonderful opportunity to attend a state convention last weekend. Meeting with wonderful and inspiring speakers from around the country made me realize what it is I love doing. With that being said, I am now strongly considering a career in government and international affairs, with a possible extension into the legal field."

With a perfect score on his ACT, he won't have any trouble getting into a school of his choice. He said, "I'm looking to apply to an array of colleges, and am particularly interested in Chapel Hill, Duke, Harvard, Yale and Georgetown."

Freedom Principal Mike Swan said, "It has been a pleasure to be involved with Jack's education during his last three years at Freedom. I am very proud of Jack's dedication, both in the classroom and with his many activities within the community. He continues to push himself and takes on multiple roles at Freedom to help mentor other students. It will be an honor to watch Jack walk the stage in 2018 as he receives his well-deserved diploma. During my career at Freedom, I have had the pleasure to not only watch Jack score a perfect 36 on the ACT, I have also had the opportunity to be part of Benjamin Succop's successful academic career. Having two students score a perfect 36 on the ACT not only shows the dedication on behalf of the young men mentioned, but also the solid foundation they have received from the Burke County School System and the hard work and dedication from the faculty and staff."

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "I am very proud of Jack and this awesome accomplishment. This puts him in rare company as only .1 percent of students who take the ACT achieve a perfect score. Jack has a bright future ahead of him, and I can't wait to see the great things he is going to do out in the world."



Freedom High School junior Jack Swanson is pictured here with Freedom Principal Mike Swan and Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam.



Freedom's JROTC team advances in academic competition

Freedom High School's JROTC Academic Team has earned a trip to Washington D.C. to compete in the 2017 U.S. Army JROTC Academic Bowl Championship. The team is one of only 24 Army JROTC Academic Bowl teams in the nation to advance to the National Academic Bowl competition, which includes an all-expense paid trip to the championship event at the Catholic University of

America in June.

Team members are Cadet 1st Lt. Carrie Clark, Cadet Cpl. Logan Teaster, Cadet Pvt. 1st Class Camille Ridge, Cadet 2nd Lt. Mathew Powell, Cadet Capt. Joshua Hiatt and Cadet Pvt. Brendan Hurley; 1st Sgt. Trina Hines is their coach.

The JROTC Academic Team advanced through two phases of online competitions before making it to the face-to-face round set for June. Freedom's team earned top scores out of the 1,498 Army JROTC teams that competed from around the world. During the two, fast-paced preliminary rounds, students were tested on their knowledge of JROTC curriculum, English, math and science. One of the main goals of the JROTC Academic Bowl is to prepare students for state exit/graduation exams as well as college entrance exams, such as the SAT and ACT. This event is sponsored by the U.S. Army Cadet Command, JROTC Headquarters and is conducted by College Options Foundation. The winner of the U.S. Army JROTC Academic Championship will compete against the winners of the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy JROTC Academic Bowls in the JROTC Joint Service Academic Bowl Championship.

The JROTC Leadership & Academic Bowl (JLAB) is a nationally recognized academic competition created exclusively for JROTC students. By participating, cadets learn the values of citizenship, academic competition, and college opportunity. The competition creates tremendous opportunities for JROTC cadets by allowing them to demonstrate leadership and academic abilities. College Options Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the academic development of high school students and assisting them with their preparation for higher education. Using academic competitions, college exam study guides, college admissions tutorials and personalized counseling, College Options Foundation has assisted the nation's JROTC cadets worldwide for over a decade.

Burke County Public Schools and the Burke County Board of Education recognized the students and their leaders, Col. Terry Connelly and 1st Sgt. Trina Hines at the Monday, April 10 board meeting.

Middle school students go head-to-head in robotics competition

Students from Burke County Public Schools five middle schools were challenged to program robots to run autonomously as well as respond to a joystick and perform specific tasks. The schools formed robotics teams last fall with the goal to converge on East Burke Middle School on April 6 to compete against one another in the second annual BCPS Middle School Robotics Competition. The teams received points for their VEX robots' actions, which they had to perform under time constraints.

Liberty Middle School won the competition with Walter Johnson and Heritage tying for second place. The competition also included the teams forming alliances. Walter Johnson and Table Rock middle schools joined forces to win the alliance competition.

Liberty robotics teacher Clay Nelson said, "The purpose of the robotics clubs and competitions with VEX is to get students excited and build on excitement about automation and prepare these same students for industries that are moving in that direction if they haven't fully automated by this point."



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



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Mitchell County 4-H

Junior Robotics

By Kimberly Slotnick

Six Mitchell County 4-H Junior Robotics teams were able to compete at the FIRST Jr FLL Expo held at UNCA on Sat, 3/18. Jr. First Lego League helps introduce youth, ages 6-10, to science, technology, engineering, and math concepts by exploring real-life scientific problems. Each year the kids are challenged to investigate a new topic that they will research and develop into a working model using Legos and a "Show Me" poster telling about their team and the journey they had working together on the real-world topic. This year the topic was called "Creature Craze". The participants had to identify an animal that shares a habitat with the honey bee. Each team learned about bees and why they are important and how they cohabitate with other animals.

This year, all three 4-H robotics competition teams from Gouge Elementary School's after-school program competed, the team from Bakersville's 4-H program, and two teams from the Spruce Pine program. All the teams did an excellent job of choosing a



creative animal, building motorized models to display the shared habitat of the bee and the animal they chose, and presenting their projects to judges at the FIRST Expo.

The participating teams from Gouge are the Thunder Bees, Creature Creators, and Fast and Furious, coached by Renee Johnson, Tamara Lujan, and Joe Lujan. The Bakersville team is the Mean Green LEGO Machines, coached by Misti Silver and Ellen Gouge. The Spruce Pine teams are the Engineering Elephants and the Slithering Smarties, coached by Holly McClure and Amy Masterman.

Each team was awarded a unique award that emphasized the workmanship that they put into their project. Thunder Bees received the Amazing Movement Award. Creature Creators received the Inquiring Minds Award. Fast & Furious received the Outstanding Teamwork. Mean Green LEGO Machines received Innovative Construction. The Engineering Elephants received the Solid-As-A-Rock Model Design Award and the Slithering Smarties received the Explosive Ideas Award.

A huge THANK YOU to our hard-working volunteers. These programs would not exist without them.

Kim Slotnick is 4-H Program Assistant for the NC Cooperative Extension-Mitchell County Center, you may contact her at kim_slotnick@ncsu.edu.



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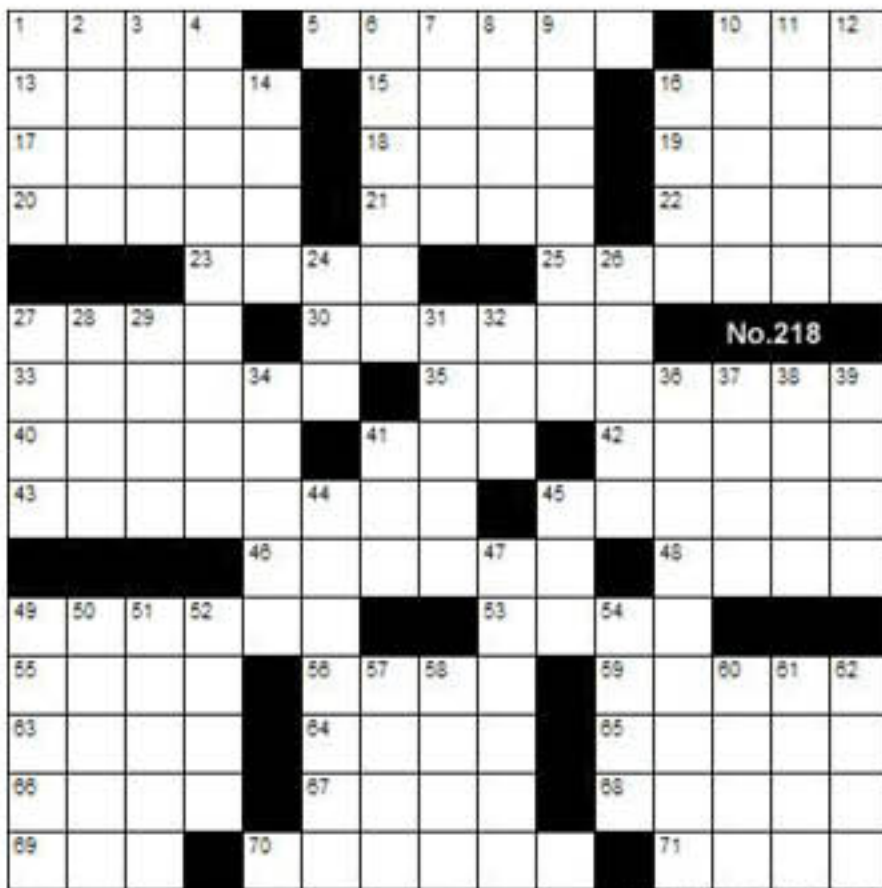
ACROSS

1 David played one of these musical instruments (1 Sam 16:23)
 5 At the blast of the trumpet he ____ 'Aha!' (Job 39:25)
 10 in the month ____, which is the eighth month (1 Kings 6:38)
 13 make yourself ____ of cypress wood (2,3) (Gen 6:14)
 15 Take an ____ of manna and keep it for the generations to come (Ex 16:32)
 16 The armies of heaven ____ following him, riding on white horses (Rev 19:14)
 17 But he had no ____ with her until she gave birth (Matt 1:25)
 18 the inscription that was written: MENE, ____, TEKEL, PARSIN (Dan 5:25)
 19 we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of ____ (Acts 27:2)
 20 along with the flashing spear and ____ (Job 39:23)
 21 Picnic pests (Prov 30:25)
 22 The robbers beat the man and left him half ____ (Luke 10:30)
 23 took unto them certain ____ fellows of (Acts 17:5) KJV
 25 ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and ____ (2 Kings 24:14) KJV
 27 Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of ____ (Est 1:2)
 30 the desert owl, the ____, the cormorant (Deut 14:17)
 33 With ____ like that of chariots (1,5) (Joel 2:5)
 35 You will be a ____ wanderer on the earth (Gen 4:12)
 40 Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the ____ (Dan 4:23)
 41 receive him not into your house, neither ____ him God speed (2 John 10) KJV
 42 One of the minor prophets
 43 the Egyptians and their chariots and ____ (Ex 14:26)
 45 This is what the LORD, the God of ____ says (2 Sam 12:7)
 46 Smite the ____ of the door, that the posts may shake (Amos 9:1) KJV
 48 Chief or clan leader (Gen 36:15) KJV
 49 ____, I will create new heavens and a new earth (Isa 65:17)
 53 raised up Jesus, whom ye ____ and hanged on a tree (Acts 5:30) KJV
 55 for he commandeth ____ the winds and water (Luke 8:25) KJV
 56 after three years I ____ up to Jerusalem to see Peter (Gal 1:18)
 59 Paul stayed for a year and ____, teaching them (1,4) (Acts 18:11)
 63 that anointing is ____, not counterfeit (1 John 2:27)

64 The man who was healed had no ____ who it was (John 5:13)
 65 descended to the top of Mount ____ and called Moses (Exod 19:20)
 66 Do not ____ a violent man or choose any of his ways (Prov 3:31)
 67 shake the dust off your ____ when you leave (Matt 10:14)
 68 apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's ____ (Titus 1:1)
 69 Our forefathers ____ the manna in the desert (John 6:31)
 70 Thou shalt not let thy cattle ____ with a diverse kind (Lev 19:19) KJV
 71 female sheep (Gen 32:14)

DOWN

1 unable to ____ the net in because of the large number of fish (John 21:6)
 2 a prophetess, ____, the daughter of Phamuel (Luke 2:36)
 3 And the ____ was upon the earth forty days and forty nights (Gen 7:12)
 4 the feet of one who brings good news, who ____ peace (Nah 1:15)
 6 you will live a long time in the land where you are ____ (Jer 35:7)
 7 to seek an ____ : He will cast lots with arrows (Ezek 21:21)
 8 Joshua ____ his clothes, and fell to the earth (Joshua 7:6)
 9 like royal tapestry, the king is held captive by its ____ (Song 7:5)
 10 Fear and trembling have ____ me; horror has overwhelmed me (Ps 55:5)
 11 first husband of Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:3)
 12 seems right to a man, but in the end it ____ to death (Prov 16:25)
 14 at the name of Jesus every ____ should bow (Phil 2:10)
 16 from the ____ of Egypt to the Euphrates River (2 Kings 24:7)
 24 ____ to them! They have taken the way of Cain (Jude 11)
 26 to devote themselves to ____ and endless genealogies (1 Tim 1:4)
 27 down to his feet and with a golden ____ around his chest (Rev 1:13)
 28 He came ____ his own, and his own received him not (John 1:11)
 29 The fathers eat ____ grapes, and the children's teeth are set on (Ezek 18:2)
 31 Except I shall see in his hands the ____ of the nails (John 20:25) (KJV)
 32 wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the ____ sea (Acts 7:36)
 34 By your magic ____ all the nations were led astray (Rev 18:23)
 36 Seek the ____ he may be found (4,5) (Isa 55:6)
 37 son of Isaac and brother of Jacob (Gen 25:26)



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cob (Gen 25:26)
 38 Ask, and it shall be given you; ____, and ye shall find (Matt 7:7)
 39 sold your people for a pittance, gaining nothing from their ____ (Ps 44:12)
 41 youngest son of Jacob (nickname) (Gen 35:18)
 44 A woman skilled in aiding the delivery of babies (Gen 38:28)
 45 I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ____ for several days (Dan 8:27)
 47 an ____ nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official (Acts 28:7)
 49 the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to ____ (Acts 17:10)
 50 there is one ____ to the righteous, and to the wicked (Eccles 9:2)
 51 your tithes, and ____ offerings of your hand (Deut 12:6)

52 We have here ____ five loaves of bread and two fish (Matt 14:17)
 54 will live in safety and be at ____, without fear of harm (Prov 1:33)
 57 garden of God (Ezek 28:13)
 58 The LORD will fight for you; you ____ only to be still (Ex 14:14)
 60 until that day when I drink it ____ in the kingdom of God (Mark 14:25)
 61 unto the rings of the ephod with a ____ of blue (Ex 28:28) KJV
 62 discord, jealousy, ____ of rage, selfish ambition (Gal 5:20)

Solution on page 14



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What's a Mom Worth?

By Rick and Cindy Mercer
Burke County

Abraham Lincoln once said, "No man is poor who has a godly mother." I think you would agree with that statement...especially if you have been the recipient of a godly mom.

There have been many mothers in the history of this world who have impacted their sons in a tremendous way. Abraham Lincoln was one of those. It is because of the many prayers of a mom that a son or daughter has been brought to the cross. We have numerous stories in the Bible of women who are great examples for all the mothers today who want to be what God wants them to be.

But, what about her worth? Is there truly any way to measure that? How can one determine the depths of her love and her gentle care? What about her touch that heals the wounds on the spirit or the heart? No scale or ruler or number can calculate. The love that she shares from day to day deserves much honor and respect. There is no way to measure a mother's worth. The intensity of her love is both precious and rare. The bond she has with her children from birth. There is no equal of her indefinite worth anywhere. (Excerpt from "The Measure of a Mother's Worth"-Arthur Janner)

There have been many analysts that have made futile attempts at actually putting a price tag on what a mother is worth. I have seen various figures ranging from \$70,000 to \$150,000 per year! When we think of our own moms...I wouldn't even attempt to put a value because the numbers would be infinitely adding up!

A question was once asked. "What makes a Christian mother distinctive from other mothers? Answer: salt. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth" (Luke 5:13) A Christian mother isn't necessarily better than other mothers; but rather she has special seasoning due to the presence of the Holy Spirit. The believing mother has a wealth of resources available to train, discipline, and love her children in the grace of God.

Consider the following qualities of a godly mother:

1. Possesses a keen sense of discernment (Proverbs 15:14)
2. Persists in prayer at all times (Luke 18:1)
3. Demonstrates unconditional love (1 John 4:18)
4. Cultivates a joyful environment (Psalm 16:11)
5. Exhibits steadfastness in the Word of God (Psalm 111:10)
6. Forgives the offenses of others willingly (John 20:23)
7. Embraces a spirit of contentment (1 Timothy 6:6)
8. Trust in God (Psalm 9:10)
9. Keeps the faith (Proverbs 28:20)
10. Brings order to chaos (Proverbs 31:27)
11. Holds to what is right (Matthew 13:43)
12. Willing to release her children to God (Romans 5:5)

As we look at this list, we know there is no such thing as a perfect mother, but the Christian mother continues to be perfected by the grace of God. She is invaluable to the kingdom of Christ due to her influence on the next generation. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, every godly mother can be valuable and of great worth to her children and children's children. Now that's worth a lot!

Rick Mercer is the pastor of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church at 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton. They can be reached at 870-820-3549 or cjmercer@tds.net. Check out www.morgantonsda.org. Their passion is to share the love of Jesus with all who will listen.



Relay Of The Blue Ridge News

Publications Volunteer

By Don Ford
Mitchell County

Relay of the Blue Ridge would like to encourage anyone who would like to form a team to do so to help fund research and find a cure for cancer. You can find many fundraising ideas and register your team on the following website: <https://secure.acsevents.org/> Please note these very important

upcoming dates. The Survivor Brunch will be held at Spruce Pine Volunteer Fire Department on Saturday, May 6th at 10:00 AM and the Annual Relay Event at Mitchell High School on Friday, May 19th at 6:00 PM. In addition, luminaries are available and can be purchased locally to honor those fighting cancer, or in memory of those who were victims of cancer. You may do so by contacting Ms. Jackie Thomas at (828) 688-2256 or Mr. Russell Saxon at (828)765-9265. For any additional information, you may call the American Cancer Society at (800) 227-2345.

RELAY OF THE BLUE RIDGE SPOTLIGHT - SURVIVOR'S BRUNCH AND MAIN EVENT

Have you ever wondered how the Relay for Life fundraising dollars are used or what happens at a RFL event? Hopefully, this will answer those questions and more!

Relay for Life is the signature fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. Events are held to help reduce the burden of cancer in our communities. Over 1.5 million people are expected to be newly diagnosed with cancer this year. Here are a few ways that your contributions are being utilized. In 2015, \$150 million was used for cancer research grants. Over 361,000 nights of free lodging were provided at American Cancer Society Hope Lodge facilities. In addition, 316,000 rides to and from treatment were provided. Locally, more than \$35,000 was raised in 2016 to help fight all types of cancer and ease the pain and suffering of this disease.

What is Relay for Life? It is a team fundraising event where team members honor cancer victims, survivors and caregivers. This briefly describes what to expect at an RFL event: (1) Welcoming Ceremony, (2) Survivor Lap - involves people affected by cancer who walk a designated track, (3) Caregiver Lap - recognizes those who provide support to loved ones during treatment. Both survivors and caregivers are cheered and supported by their attendance, (4) Teams then walk the track to begin the celebration, (5) When not walking, participants visit other team sites, participate in activities, enjoy games and entertainment, (6) Since darkness is symbolic of the fear that cancer patients may experience, luminaries are lit after sunset to remember those we have lost, to celebrate cancer survivors, and show that anyone who is affected by cancer is not alone, and (7) Closing ceremonies wrap up the event as we are reminded to participate in RFL until cancer is no more!

Relay of the Blue Ridge would like to invite everyone from Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties to the following special events. The Survivors' Brunch will be held on Saturday, May 6th at 10 AM at the Spruce Pine Fire Department and Ms. Anne Castro will be the guest speaker. The main RFL event is at Mitchell High School in Ledger, NC on Friday evening, May 19th beginning at 6 PM. For more information, please contact Russell Saxon 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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Pause...and Consider

Butterflies And Faith

By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County



The butterflies fluttered their wings alighting on one bloom after another...sometimes pausing to take in nectar. And, even in the seeming stillness, their wings swayed a bit.

These flying jewels are something to behold, a welcome addition to any garden...color and charming allure come together to produce living artistry.

But there is one place that butterflies are not welcome. In my stomach!

I'm sure I'm not alone. Each of us has experienced that fluttering sensation that would almost cause us to back out of speaking or singing in public; teaching a class; starting a new job or going to a new school. That nervous fluttering isn't winsome at all.

But often butterflies come along for the ride when undertaking new adventures. You see, often our next steps seem to require a great deal of faith. But, Jesus has told us that if we have faith the size of a mustard seed, we can move mountains.

Then in Matthew 13: 31-32, NKJV, Jesus elaborates on the kingdom of heaven being like a mustard seed that a man planted in his field, "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

It is important then to remember that when God opens an opportunity for us that is bigger than we are (or our abilities or circumstances seem to allow) it isn't such great faith that is needed.--- Just mustard seed size will do. It is who we place our faith in that matters. If our faith is in Almighty God and we believe he is leading us, then the outcome is in his hands.

Often the next requirement is steps we're willing to take...even if butterflies accompany the journey.

When I was first testing my wings with singing, butterflies seemed to be having a party in my stomach. I wondered how I would be able to sing at all. Then someone said that once I opened my mouth and started singing, I would let the butterflies out!

Recently on the radio I heard Dr. Tony Evans say, "Your faith is validated by the steps you take not the butterflies you feel."

In other words, stepping out in faith to sing with God as the object of my worship and purpose released the butterflies, allowing me to sing his praises. But, first I had to open my mouth. Selah

*The steep, rocky hike caused us to pause for a breath –
Only to become breathless.*

*The glowing flower was captivating.
The alighting of twin butterflies amazing.*

*A gracious gift.
Out of breath? Pause. Wait. Be doubly blessed.*

*"The Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you."
Isaiah 30: 18a*



Ken and Jan 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.



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Spruce Pine Main Street

New Happenings

By Libby Phillips
Mitchell County

Hello and Happy Spring!

Below are a list of upcoming events and happenings with Spruce Pine Main Street.



- **Summer Concert Series-** In addition to the summer concert series, we have partnered with Parkway Playhouse to add a children's musical in June. This year's performance will include a special performance of A Year with Frog and Toad followed by hands on activities for the kids led by Penland School of Craft. Each child in attendance will receive a free book as well! Thanks to the generous donations of several merchants in town, we have purchased a sound system and equipment which we plan to add outdoor movies to our list of activities. We have received several donations this year for the summer concert series but are still looking for a couple more to round out the season. If you would like to host a concert, please email me so I can add you to the promotional materials. No amount is too small to make a difference. Many thanks to Tree House Mountain Realty, Tri-County Oil and People's Furniture for your support of this year's events! We would also like to thank an anonymous donor for sponsoring the purchase of the new sound system and a late donation last year by Tokyo which helped us add additional events to this year's calendar.
- **Fire on the Mountain-** April 29th is right around the corner. We are looking forward to another great festival this year and have added additional events for all to enjoy. Please be reminded that Locust Street will be closed on the day of the event. Please do not park along Crystal, Link or Topaz as vendors and emergency vehicles will be utilizing those avenues for transit. Parking will be available in both public lots and we will have a shuttle that will pick up at First Baptist church with spillover parking at Pinebridge. Merchants are encouraged to ask employees to park in these designated lots and leave on street parking available for handicap and out of town festival attendees. If you are offering special discounts, sales or meals on festival day, please let me know asap so we can offer this information at the SPMS booth and remember, to keep the sidewalks clear for pedestrian and handicap traffic day of the event.
- **BBQ Festival-** The annual BBQ festival will be held on July 14th and 15th at Riverside Park. The Rotary Club has made every effort to accommodate local wishes and has made several changes to the event this year. Pricing for the event is \$5 per person and \$20 per family and will have local musicians, food and craft vendors. There will not be a championship this year. I will send additional information as we get closer to the event. Please encourage folks to attend this event. The money raised from this festival goes directly back into our community and helps many. I have added a line for sidewalk sale that weekend. If you want to participate in this, let me know.
- **Downtown Beautification-** On behalf of SPMS, I would like to thank everyone in our town who have made significant upgrades and improvements to their businesses. From awnings, to signs, new paint, new facades, and flowers- the town looks great and the improvements are so appreciated! The Design & Beautification committee held their spring cleanup last weekend and have continued to work on clearing the banks heading into downtown/Locust Street. Flower pots are planted and the parking lot above Mitchell News Journal will receive a face lift in the coming weeks- (thanks in part to a generous downtown merchant contribution). The committee has other improvement plans scheduled for the summer months. If you want to help out or lend a hand, please stop by my office.
- **Downtown Investment-** Taking pride in our hometown pays off and people notice. Did you know- SPMS has received 2 nationally recognized awards in downtown economic development in the past 2 years? That's impressive folks! I can't tell you how many times over the past year on my state travels, that other

- communities come up to me and brag about the wonderful things happening in Spruce Pine! Yes, we have things to work on, like all towns, but we really do have a beautiful little town and treasure right under our noses. Over \$520,000 in private improvements in the past year in downtown alone! Many thanks to these businesses for downtown improvement projects completed in the past fiscal year; Burleson's Plumbing, Young, Miller & Gillespie, Southern Lights, Canipe's, Vesper Lodge, Spruced Boutique, The Crystal Building, Eben Concepts, Cross Street Building, McCall's, Pizza Shop and Dry County Brewing, Tokyo, Southwest Trading, Lakeview Garden Center and Mercantile and the Home Shed. On top of that, 5 buildings sold in the past few months- yes, FIVE! Yippee! (If you have made interior or exterior improvements to your building this past year and are not listed- let me know so we can brag on you!!!)
- **New Stores-** Have you introduced yourselves to our newest merchants and businesses? These folks have recently opened or are planning to open in the coming months. Please take a moment to stop by and welcome them to downtown as I am sure they would love to meet you; Spruce Boutique, Tangled Salon, The Home Shed, Joe Bomar Attorney, Blue Ridge Resource Conservation and Development Council, Southern Lights, Uptown Funk Christmas Store, Heart and Snake Biscuits and coming soon- Poppy's Wildcraft, The Thrift Store, and Appalachian Pets & Supplies
 - **For Lease-** Do you have space for lease? I have people looking for multiple offices (together) in downtown. If I haven't talked to you already and you have space, call me.
 - **On Street Parking-** Thank you all for being cognizant of the public parking areas designated for employees and merchants. I see the lots fill up every morning and several businesses have sent notes thanking you for doing so. Please continue to utilize these spaces going forward so we will have accessibility for our patrons, elderly and handicap.
 - **Issues-** Do you have a problem, question, or suggestion? Please remember that our door is always open and we encourage all to come by and discuss topics you may have with us. Any topic, no matter how small will always be addressed with our board of directors and the town (when applicable) in hopes of finding a solution. My office hours are Monday -Friday 8-5 and our board of directors meet the first Thursday of each month at 8:00 at DT's. All are encouraged to attend or get involved.
 - **Forward Me On.....** If you know someone who doesn't receive our emails, please forward on and ask them to contact SPMS so we can add them to the list!
 - **Help us promote your business-** If your business has rack cards, business cards, or menus please bring me some and I will happily add to the visitor center- no charge!

Libby Phillips is Executive Director of Spruce Pine Main Street.





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Avery County Schools

Spring and Forward

By David Burleson
Avery County



By looking at the calendar, spring is officially here but we have had some days that make us wonder. We all know that late March and early April can bring some snow and bad weather to Avery County. This year's winter was kind to us as we missed only eight school days. Because of the extended time that was added to the school day, the Avery County Board of Education, during its March 21 meeting, voted to move the last day of the school year for students to Friday, June 2 if no more days are missed for inclement weather. Spring Break and Easter Vacation will be from Friday, April 14 through Friday, April 21. This is the first time in many years that the Avery County Schools have had a full Spring Break.

Our calendar committee has worked very hard to develop the school calendar for 2017-2018. The recommended calendar has been presented to the board of education for a first reading. The proposed calendar is very similar to this year's calendar. If the calendar law does not change and the proposed calendar is approved, students will head back to school on August 21, and the scheduled last day for students is June 6. Our plan for next year is to continue to add the additional twenty minutes to the school day as we have done for the last two years, starting with the very first day. Doing this allows us to not only bank some time for snow days but it will also allow us to finish our first semester before Christmas at the high school. Based on this year's weather we feel like, along with our calendar committee, that finishing first semester before Christmas is advantageous not only to our students, but to our entire community.

Even though we are not finished with this school year yet, we are already planning our summer programs. Our goal is to provide our students who need a little extra help and support, the opportunity to get that during the summer months through summer school. Our plan is that summer school for kindergarten through fifth grade will begin on Monday, June 12 and will run until Thursday, June 29. Summer school for middle and high school will also begin on Monday, June 12 but the ending date has not been determined. Again, this year, the Read to Achieve legislation requires additional support for students in third grade who are not proficient in reading. Students who fail to meet this requirement will have the opportunity to attend summer school. We will provide bus transportation, breakfast, and lunch for all our students who attend summer school. We will have an excellent staff in place, and based on our last three years of summer school it has been a very rewarding experience for our students. Our goal is for this to be supportive and helpful, not punitive in any way. We stand ready to answer any questions you might have about summer school.

Not only are we planning for summer school, but have also geared up for next school year by registering our eighth graders and high school students for the courses they will take next year. This is a very important time for our students and their parents as they consider the courses they need to take next year to prepare them for their future. Our high school and middle school staffs have worked very hard to prepare registration materials and meet with students and parents about their scheduling needs. If any parent has a question about registration or high school courses, he or she should feel free to contact a counselor or principal.

We are also grateful to the High Country Council of Governments, Mayland Community College, their staffs, and the staff of our school system for working together to provide a program for our eighth graders to discuss different career opportunities and the courses students need to select while in high school to prepare them for those jobs and careers. I am especially appreciative of the work Mrs. Kim Davis and Mark Parlier have done in coordinating the program along with our high school and middle school counselors and administrators. Our goal is to make this process even better year after year so our students are provided the best information possible, and parents are also given the information they need to work with their students and encourage them to take the courses that are most beneficial for them. Our hope is that our students' experiences, especially in the high school courses they take, are preparing them for their life's career. We have a very strong academic program along with a career and technical education program that provides the foundation for each of our children's future. We would encourage parents to be intricately involved with their child's education in the Avery County Schools.

We have lots going on this spring, and we certainly appreciate the support of everyone in Avery County as we work to meet the needs of each of our children that we serve. Thank you for making Avery County such a special and wonderful place for all of us. We wish for you and your family a very Happy Easter!

David Burleson is Superintendent of the Avery County Schools

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Part 7: Planning

By Nancy Yantchook
Mitchell County



Families can cope with disasters by preparing ahead and working together as a team. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but they cannot reach everyone right away. We have already listed what you can do to be prepared as far as your water supply, your food supply, and items and materials that you should have available in your disaster kit. Your disaster kit should be in one place and easily accessible to use in your home or to take elsewhere. There are a few other things you should think about and do before a disaster strikes.

- Be aware of what type of disasters would occur in your community and request information on how to prepare for each type.
 - Learn what your community's warning signals are, what they sound like, and what you should do when you hear them. The warnings may be by radio, short-wave radio, TV, or by word of mouth.
 - Learn what your workplace disaster plans are and how to follow them.
 - Learn what your children's school or daycare plans are and discuss them with your children.
 - Meet with your neighbors and discuss what you all should do in the event of a disaster. This means working together.
 - Think about your elderly or disabled neighbors or relatives and how you could help them.
 - Plan what you will do to care for your pets and animals if a disaster occurs.
 - Set up a disaster plan with your family and discuss what each of you would do if a disaster occurred and you were not altogether.
 - Post emergency telephone numbers near your phones in the home.
 - Teach your children how to call 911 or local medical services for help.
 - Pick two places to meet in the event of an emergency.
 1. Right outside your home, in case of a fire for example.
 2. Outside of your neighborhood in case you cannot return home. Know the address and phone number.
 - Ask an out of the state friend to be a "family contact". After an emergency, it is frequently easier to call long distance. Everyone should know the phone number.
 - Also, it is best to not tie up the telephone lines any more than necessary because emergency personnel need to use the phones.
 - Make sure you have adequate insurance coverage for your home and belongings.
 - Be sure you have your important papers in a waterproof, portable metal container.
 1. Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds.
 2. Passports, social security cards, Medicare cards, immunization records.
 3. Bank account numbers.
 4. Credit card account numbers and companies.
 5. Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers.
 6. Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)
 - It would also be a good idea to have copies of these records in your car with a small disaster kit. You could be caught in a flash flood or snowstorm.
 - In your home:
 1. Conduct a hazard hunt.
 2. Know how to operate an A-B-C type fire extinguisher.
 3. Know how to evacuate your home quickly and efficiently.
 4. Show each member of the family how to turn off water, gas, and electricity at the main switches and when they should do it. Don't forget special wrenches may be necessary and should be nearby valve or switches.
 5. Install and maintain smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
 6. Determine which rooms are the safest in the event of an earthquake or tornado.
 7. Check your home for damaged utilities, such as leaking gas. Use flashlight, not matches or electrical switches if you suspect dangers.
 8. Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline, or other flammable liquids immediately.
 9. Stay away from downed power lines.
 - Be dressed warmly with protective clothing and sturdy shoes at all times.
 - Lock your home if you must leave.
 - Be aware of where the shelters are and have the travel routes memorized.
- Have a map available in the event that some routes are impassable or dangerous.
- Be sure to keep your car gasoline tanks full at all times. It may be difficult to get gas.
 - It would also be a good idea to have some cash on hand at home, as credit cards and checks may not be accepted during an emergency.
 - ABOVE ALL, REMAIN CALM AND PATIENT AND PUT YOUR DISASTER PLANS INTO ACTION. IF NECESSARY GIVE FIRST AID AND GET HELP FOR INJURED PERSONS.

Paul and Nancy Yantchook 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.

Saving Babies

By Doug Sudduth
Mitchell County



If you build it, they will come. Members of the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine on Thursday, March 30, were presented a slideshow by Spruce Pine First Baptist Church members Robin Buchanan, Robert Stroup and James Byrd, who is also a Rotarian, about their recent mission trip to Johannesburg, South Africa.

Buchanan, Stroup, Byrd and Diane Pritchard spent two weeks in South Africa helping build Hope Village, which helps meet needs of abandoned, abused and orphaned children in South Africa by providing a stable, Christian environment. Hope Village is a refurbished house on 62 acres that is an ancillary facility for toddlers associated with the Door of Hope, a stainless steel "baby bin" that allows



Pictured are Rotary President Alex Glover with Rotarian James Byrd, Robin Buchanan, and Robert Stroup

mothers to leave unwanted babies in the care of the Berea Baptist Church in central Johannesburg. An alarm sounds to notify caregivers when a baby is placed in the bin. Berea Baptist Church pastor Cheryl Allen started "Door of Hope" in 1999 after a high number of newborn babies were being abandoned – between 40-50 babies

per month at that time. More than 1,500 children have been placed through the Door of Hope, including two while the group was on the mission trip, Stroupe said. "Many of the children are the sons or daughters of prostitutes," Stroupe said. "Many more are single mothers who just can't care for the child for some reason or another."

Buchanan said an average of three babies are abandoned per day in the Johannesburg metro area, which has a population of 12 million people and of the 18.5 million children in South Africa, approximately 5.2 million are orphans. "Abandonment is increasing and the number of adoptions decreasing because of changes in the adoption laws," she said. The first baby adopted through Door of Hope, Georgina, is now a freshman at East Carolina University, Stroupe said.

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

Sudoku

	4			3		7		
	9	7					8	
8			5	9			2	
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	7			1	9			5
	5					9	7	
		6		7			4	

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Engage and Pursue!

By Pastor Kurt Bomar
 Avery County



Have you ever prayed something like this, "Lord, I don't know what you want me to do with my life but, I am willing? Just show me what it is and I'll do it. Open the door and I'll walk through it?"

I have. And I think it's a wonderful prayer. But there can be a problem with it.... Complacency.

There is a tendency after uttering that prayer to sit back in our rocking chair and just wait. I can remember self-righteously thinking, "I don't have to do anything now, I'll just wait until I see this wide-open door in front of me with a flashing neon sign saying, 'this is your destiny, enter with confidence'."

While that can happen, I don't think that's the way God normally works. I think after we say that prayer, a better approach we can take was modeled by one of my heroes, Jonathan, son of Saul.

1 Sam. 14:8 Jonathan said, "Come on, then; we will cross over toward them and let them see us. 9 If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them. 10 But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the LORD has given them into our hands."

What was he saying? "Lord, I'm available, if you want me to fight, I'll fight. If you don't that's ok too. Just give me a sign." That much is very similar to prayers you and I have prayed but note the difference: Where did they position themselves to hear from God?

11 So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. "Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in."

Notice they exposed themselves. They weren't in the caves waiting on God, they were standing on the edge of a cliff in full view of the Philistines. I guess you could say they were pushing God—not to force Him for the answer they wanted. But, they wanted an answer, and they placed themselves in a position to storm through the door in the event He opened it.

There is no telling how many opportunities we have missed, exciting adventures we never experienced, or lives we failed to invest in because we were in our caves waiting for God to open a door. A door we can't even see from the cave. We need to be like a runner in his starting blocks ready to bolt through the door at the first glimpse of light as it cracks open.

What does that look like practically? It means we need to be willing to take a chance. We don't often know if an opportunity is God sent, or just coincidental. We need to expose ourselves and stand on the edge. Do something, give the door a push if necessary. In short, be brave and courageous and take a chance. What's

the worst that could happen? We might be taken advantage of or made to look like a fool. Is that really so bad? I think, even then; our Father is proud of us for our motivation. But look at the potential reward. As Jonathan routed a stubborn enemy and inspired his country, we could be just action away from a life changing moment. A moment that could change our destiny or the destiny of others.

The Lord has promised to close doors no man can open and to open doors no man can shut (Rev. 3:7), but you can't see the door from inside the cave. Get out there and engage and pursue. Be like Jonathan!

Selah (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.



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Kenya

By Rev. George Patton, Jr.
Burke County and the World

It was not just your typical street service in Kenya. We were in one of the most remote areas of the country, along Lake Victoria. We had traveled for several hours just to get into this location from our base in Homa Bay. They had told us that they had spoken with the city officials about us using the market place for our crusade. The city said that this would be fine. Our crusades always seem to bring God's blessing on a city. When we arrived to review the site, many people had already started gathering. They had come from all over the area in their Sunday finest. They had come because they had heard the word that an American Evangelist would be coming to the area. Posters had been placed in many shops, alongside of buildings and on trees lining the city. There was an excitement among the people. Special singers had been contacted to join us for this mighty move of God. We did not stay long, just long enough to get an idea of where we were going to be. Our host took the team and I back to a little house where they had refreshments waiting for us. It seemed as if this was the talk of the area. Men of God have come to bless us with the Word of God, was the talk on every lip. It was as if some great movie star or something was coming with all the fuss they were making. Much care had been taken by each one. We had given 500 US dollars towards this event. The people themselves had raised over 1000 US dollars themselves. This is a great sum of money considering the average income is less than one hundred dollars per month per family. The way they raised the money was that some people brought eggs, some a goat, others a chicken and the people pooled it all together to sell it in the market place. All of the money was used to publicize the event, rent sound systems, generators, transportation for everyone involved to and from the event, security and all that goes into a crusade. Finally, the day was upon us. It was day one of the crusade. People were lined everywhere to listen to God's message. I preached on Lazarus and the rich man out of Luke 16:19-31. I told them how the rich man did not go to hell because of his riches, but because he had not trusted in Jesus. I told them how Lazarus had trusted in Jesus and how the angels came and carried him to heaven at the time of his death. As I began to share the plan of salvation with them, you could see the Spirit of God come upon the entire place. No one moved. It was as if a hush fell over the whole place. I did not hear the busyness of the market. I did not hear any



traffic. I did not even hear a bird sing. It was as if God had brought all creation to a standstill as I told them how God did not want them to die in their sins. I shared with them how Jesus Christ had made a way for them to get into heaven by taking the sins of the world upon Himself and how, if they would simply put their trust in Jesus Christ, He would save them as well. I asked them, "How many of you want to put your trust in Jesus Christ today and have your sins forgiven?" It was that day that 14 people were gloriously delivered into heaven by the Spirit of God. And that was just the first day. That week the Lord brought over 50 precious souls to Himself. God really used this team and all the efforts they had put in for His glory. God is doing great things around the world. He is just looking for a few people willing to go with His message. People who are willing to go to a people not their own. Will you be one of them that will say Lord here am I, send me?

George Patton is an evangelist/missionary to the world from Grace Baptist Church in Morganton.



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