



YOUR NONPROFIT, COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1997

The Fairview Town Crier

APRIL 2025 VOL. 29, No. 4 | FAIRVIEW, NC | fairviewtowncrier.com



Out and About: A Community Barn for Garren Creek

When the *Crier* was last out on Garren Creek Road in October, Julie Moller had invited us to a Halloween party. It was an attempt to provide some normalcy and fun to a community that was devastated by Hurricane Helene.

"About a week into it, we realized that the recovery was going to be long-term," Moller told us then. "We were giving food, water, cooking hot meals three times a day. We provided people with generators and heat, and Starlink so people could connect with others." That was the beginning of the Garren Creek Foundation.

Moller said she soon realized that another aspect was important to the recovery of Garren Creek. "In the midst of this disaster, there was a need to connect with people," she said. "We were all very sad and heartbroken. Connection was one of the biggest things that we really wanted."

When the *Crier* returned to Garren Creek last month to catch up with Moller, the president of the foundation, and Richard Stevenson, the vice chair, the scars of

the storm are still clear all along the road. But the people there are still connecting, and the foundation is blossoming from a recovery effort into a full-on community support organization.

They will center their efforts at a red barn at 1198 Garren Creek Road that will be cleaned out and refurbished to provide a food pantry and regular dinners; host disaster preparedness classes, community events and youth programs; be a shelter and resource after future storms and for individuals dealing with personal setbacks; and more. Whatever their community needs, they want to provide it.

And why them? Because they live there and know how their neighbors live. And they know that, just as the weather can change—and quite dramatically—around the next curve of the road, the way people live in small pockets of the area can be very different. Life on Johnny Marlowe can be as different from Garren Creek as Garren Creek is from Charlotte Highway.

"There are no limitations to who we are willing to help. People out here live in different ways," said Stevenson. "There are people with various backgrounds, political affiliations, etc., and all that was set aside after the storm. All we wanted to know is if you needed help or if you could help others. And that's how we're going to



Pictured in front of the red barn on Garren Creek Road that will be transformed into a "Community Barn" by the Garren Creek Foundation are (l to r) Richard Stevenson, vice chair of the foundation; his younger daughter Ravi; his other daughter Maris; and Julie Moller, president.

HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR THE BARN RENOVATION

Come to the foundation's fundraiser at Turgua Brewing, at 3131 Cane Creek Rd., on April 12 from 4–6 pm.

continue to operate."

There will be no requirements or check-ins. The bottom line is that they want people in the community to have a place they trust to come to when they need help.

"We have a lot of really big goals. But we

have a vision and a path forward, and we're really excited about it," said Moller.

Follow along with their progress at garrencreek.org and on social media (@garrencreekfoundation)—and keep an eye on that barn!

It's Dry Out There—Be Careful!

We are in the spring wildfire season in North Carolina, and the NC Forest Service is urging residents to be diligent about using best practices and common sense with all outdoor fires, especially yard debris burns. Areas like Fairview, with significant storm debris still on the ground from Hurricane Helene, are especially vulnerable to wildfires. Let's keep our neighbors and first responders safe! For more info, see page 21.



Careless debris burning is the leading cause of wildfires in North Carolina

Check for any **burn bans** or **fire restrictions** in your area. |  Make sure you have a **valid burn permit**. | **Don't be careless. Be ready.**

Watch the weather. **Never burn on dry, windy days.** | Keep your burn pile **small not tall**. It is illegal to burn anything other than natural vegetation. | Trash must be hauled away to a trash or recycling station.

Never use any flammable liquids to speed up debris burning. | Keep available: • Water hose • Bucket • Steel rake • Shovel (Keep a phone nearby.) | **Never leave a fire unattended.** | Call **911** to report a wildfire.

 www.ncforestservice.gov

The North Carolina Forest Service is a division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Steve Traylor Commissioner

New @ fairviewtowncrier.com

Did you know that you can search the contents of *Crier* issues on our website? We've digitized paper issues from 1998 to 2000 (and are adding more every month), and all issues from 2015 on are available. Folks also visit the site to make donations or to review advertising policies and rates.

And now we're adding another feature to our website: *a newsletter that will be emailed to subscribers who sign up for this free service.*

Now, don't panic: We're not replacing the paper with an email edition. No way! Clark and I are an ink-stained duo, proud to be part of a printed paper that has survived and thrived. And we all know that Fairview just wouldn't be the same without the *Crier* arriving in mailboxes each month.

Our goal is to complement the print edition by including things that can't appear on paper—such as videos of Fairview folks and places or events that may have missed our print deadline.

How do you get on our email list? Head to fairviewtowncrier.com and look for the section that reads "Join our e-newsletter to stay updated!" Enter your name and email, and click submit. Next, you'll receive an email from newsletter@fairviewtowncrier.com asking you to confirm your subscription. If you don't receive the email, check your spam folder. It's important that you confirm so that you're added to our distribution list.

We look forward to connecting with you online.

—Ralph Grizzle

The Fairview Town Crier
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Fairview, NC 28730

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COMMUNITY EVENTS & UPDATES

APRIL 1 WNC PROSTATE SUPPORT GROUP

6:30 pm. Speaker: Dr. Dan Brown, Interventional Radiologist. Free via ZOOM and First Baptist Church of Asheville. wncprostate@gmail.com. 828-419-4565.

APRIL 2 FBA MEETING Fairview Business Association

6 pm. Join fellow FBA members as Fro Yo Lab opens for the season. Members get 25% off their cup of yogurt. If you would like to join, feel free to attend. 145 Charlotte Highway.

APRIL 4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MARKET

3–4:30 pm. A free farmer's market-style food distribution by MANNA FoodBank, plus community resource connections at the Fairview Library, 1 Taylor Rd.

APRIL 5 SOFTBALL FUNDRAISER A.C. Reynolds High Athletic Boosters

A fundraiser and celebration of the opening of the softball field's press box and concession stand. There will be a ribbon cutting at 2:30 pm; a home run derby at 3 pm; and then the softball and baseball teams will face off at 5 pm. \$10 entry. Raffle tickets are \$5 each. See page 17 for a photo.

APRIL 8 BOARD MEETING Spring Mountain Community Center

8:30 am. Anyone interested is invited to attend. The board of SMCC would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Valentine Dessert Sale. And they do not want readers to be discouraged because cleanup and repair on the property is ongoing. It will be a long and laborious process.

APRIL 12 CONCEALED CARRY TRAINING Cane Creek Community Center

9 am–5:30 pm. \$110 cash or mobile cash app. Certified NC instructor. Must be 20 years old. Provided will be snacks, coffee, sodas, water and lunch (pizza); ear and eye protection; target; and pistol or revolver for shooting qualification. Register at tinyurl.com/55h683mk. For more info, text "CCCC" to 828-696-6868. 1370 Cane Creek Rd., Fletcher.

EVERY OTHER WEEK POSTPARTUM SUPPORT GROUP

9–10:30 am. Every other Thursday. All moms in their first year postpartum are welcome, and babies are too. Meetings are free but donations of \$20 are suggested. Come for support, education, connection and resources. For more info or to RSVP, email carrieschearcsw@gmail.com. Spring Mountain Community Center, 807 Old Fort Rd., Fairview.

AT WILDERNESS MUSE

April 9 and 23. Cane Creek Farmer's Market. 5–7 pm. Local art, microgreens, mushrooms, flowers, produce, and more.

April 13. Community Art Market. 1–6 pm. This is an art market for all ages and stages of creativity. Some vendor spots remain. Email wildernessmusecreative@gmail.com if you'd like to participate. 1536 Cane Creek Rd. 458-4107.

MAY 5 HARD 2 RECYCLE

Save the date, and bring all of your recyclables to A.C. Reynolds High. Find a list of all items they take at ashevillegreenworks.org/hard2recycle.

MAY 10 OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

A celebration for Buncombe and Madison counties at Brookstone Church in Weaverville. Come hear how gift-filled shoeboxes are blessing children around the world, and how you can be a part of this ministry.

ADVERTISER EVENTS

Second Saturdays—**Rusty Dog Arts & Crafts Show.** See ad below.

April 1—**Opening day.** Sales Farms & Greenhouses. See ad on page 8.

April 17—**Plant-based cooking class.** Fairview Seventh Day Adventist Church. See ad on page 16.

April 19—**Free lab testing and consultation services.** Fairview Seventh Day Adventist Church. See ad on page 12.

April 26—**Appalachia Day.** Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. See ad on facing page.

April 27—**Embodiment: Symbolic Narrative.** Re.Imagine + 310 ART. See ad on page 9.

May 17—**Barn dance.** Project HNG. See ad on page 10.

June to July—**Summer camp registration.**

Gerton Community Center Update

Last month, the Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Community Center held an open house for people to drop by and help themselves to whatever they wanted from a building that will soon be demolished. More than 30 people showed up for the community meeting to brainstorm ideas for what lies ahead.

The board can report on three phases:

1. Responsibly take down the 100-year-old center, which is no longer structurally sound. In its place will be a park with flowers and possibly a pavilion.
 2. Arrange gatherings in various places for the community to come together.
 3. Build a converted or new permanent building. All the while, seek grants and fundraise.
- The board will keep the community updated through Facebook, the Town Crier, and an email list. For questions, send an email to groundedington@gmail.com.

HNG Project. See ad on page 14.

FOOD CONNECTION

Every Tuesday from 3–5 pm in the Food Lion parking lot, the Food Connection van distributes free meals to anyone. The organization rescues surplus chef-prepared food, repacks it into meals (usually chicken, beef or pork) and then redistributes into communities across WNC. Hungry? Come get a meal or two—or take 10 and give some to your neighbors. And they mean anyone—there is no income requirement, no forms to fill out, no explanation required.

FOOD PANTRIES

Food for Fairview
Fairview Community Center,
1357 Charlotte Hwy., Fairview
Mondays: 3–6 pm

Root Cause Farm
26 Joe Jenkins Rd.
Tuesdays: 3–4:30 pm

Trinity of Fairview
646 Concord Rd., Fletcher
Wednesdays: 9 am–12 pm

The Place Fellowship Church

2 Laura Jackson Rd., Fairview
Wednesdays: 4–6 pm

EASTER SERVICES & EVENTS

**APRIL 13
EASTER EGG HUNT AND COOKOUT
Fairview Baptist Church**
At 12:30 pm following morning worship.
32 Church Rd., Fairview.

**APRIL 16
PASSOVER SEDER
Fairview Baptist Church**
At 6:30 pm.

**APRIL 20
SUNRISE SERVICE AND BREAKFAST
Fairview Baptist Church**
6:30 am. Sunrise service at the Cane Creek Cemetery. Breakfast will be served in the Family Life Center at 7:15 am. The Resurrection Celebration will be at 11 am. A nursery will be provided.

**APRIL 20
SUNRISE SERVICE
The PLACE Fellowship Church**
6:45 am at 2 Laura Jackson Rd., Fairview.

IDENTIFICATION STATEMENT The Fairview Town Crier is a 501 (c) (3) company that publishes a monthly community newspaper. Twelve issues per year are delivered free on or about the first of every month to 9,000+ households. Distribution is limited to Fairview, Gerton, and contiguous parts of Reynolds and Fletcher, NC.

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For additional info, please visit fairviewtowncrier.com or see page 31.

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RUSTY DOG



ARTS & CRAFTS SHOW

Second Saturdays
April through November
9am – 3pm

**379 Old Charlotte Hwy
Fairview, NC**
Between Daymoon Coffeebar & Signs for Hope

Poetry, Trees and Plants

Spring is a season of growth: trees bud, poetry flows and communities come together. Like a well-loved library, it's full of renewal and possibility. This month, we're celebrating with programs on poetry, trees, houseplants and more. We hope you will join us this spring for learning, laughter and connection.

FOR EVERYONE

Poetry Celebration (April 24 from 7–9 pm): Come support the Fairview Library and celebrate National Poetry Month with an evening of poetry. Six award-winning NC poets will read from their work: Kathy Ackerman, Cathy Smith-Bowers, Luke Hankins, Keith Flynn, Pat Reviere-Seel and Lee Stockdale. Reception and book signings will follow. Thanks to Friends of Fairview Library for providing refreshments. We will also be celebrating poetry throughout the month in creative ways within the library.

Houseplant Swap Calling all plant lovers! Throughout April, the Fairview Library will host a Houseplant Swap—a great way to share and find new greenery. Bring a pest-free, well-rooted plant cutting to trade or browse for a new plant to take home. Grow your collection, share the love, and let's keep ourselves and our homes thriving one plant at a time.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Baby Gym (Wednesdays at 10:30 am): A fun and active program designed for our youngest patrons to develop motor skills and socialize.

Preschool Story Time (Thursdays at 10:30 am): Join us for themed story times filled with engaging tales, songs and activities for preschool-aged children.

Toddler Story Time (Fridays at 10:30 am): Join us for themed story times filled with engaging tales and songs for toddlers.

After School Art Experience (the second and fourth Friday of every month from 3:30–4:30 pm): We will explore the lives and works of influential artists and experiment with fun and interesting art techniques. Participants can create and take home their projects. All materials will be provided. Ages 6–12.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Fiber Arts Club (April 9 at 6:30 pm—"after hours"): A monthly gathering of those who enjoy knitting, crocheting or other fiber crafts, and hanging out with new friends. This is not an instructional group, but beginners are welcome.

Book Club (online on April 11 at 7 pm—OR—in-person at the library on April 15 at 7 pm): This month's selection is *Lessons*

in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus. Copies are available at the front desk. Email jen.waite@buncombecounty.org to receive the link for the online session.

Successful Houseplants (April 15 at 10:30 am): Master Gardeners will share tricks and experience with choosing plants, finding the proper indoor environment, watering and fertilizing, and dealing with insects.

Paper Play: Leaf Prints for Arbor Day (April 25 at 1 pm): Celebrate your favorite trees by making leaf prints on paper. In this introduction to nature printing, our leaves will become the inspiration and the vehicle for this surprisingly simple art process. Materials will be provided. Class size is limited, and registration is required. No experience is necessary.

BearWise (May 1 at 11 am): A bear biologist with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission will teach us about black bear behavior, how to prevent conflicts, and what to do if you encounter a bear. Perfect for families, hikers and anyone curious about these incredible animals.

The Deep End of Hope in the Wake of Hurricane Helene with Emma Churchman (May 1 at 6:30 pm): Author Emma Churchman will be signing and discussing her book. Part survival story, part love letter to human resilience, this unforgettable memoir shows us what's possible when crisis strips away our differences and reveals our shared humanity.



Friends of Fairview Library purchased a new puzzle table for the library. Stop by anytime to add a few pieces to our ongoing community jigsaw puzzle or check out one of our circulating puzzles to take home.

Special Thanks

Our team would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to FEMA and Tetra Tech for their time at the library helping so many of our neighbors recover from Helene. And we would like to thank our library community for your patience with the increased traffic that you have experienced in our parking lot as our library has served as a Disaster Recovery Center.

We also extend our gratitude to the Friends of the Library and everyone who supported our spring grab bag book sale.

Jen Waite is the branch manager of the Fairview Public Library. Contact her at Jen.Waite@buncombecounty.org or call 250-6496.



Appalachia Day

at Hickory Nut Gap Farm

Saturday, April 26

A FULL day event in 3 parts:

Morning guided hike to Blue Ridge Pastures
8:30 am | Please register in advance for hike; space is limited.

FREE family-friendly festival & local market
12:00 to 6:00 pm | Music, food, farm activities, raffle, more!

Evening concert with Darren Nicholson Band
6:30 to 9:30 pm | \$ 20 in advance, \$25 at the Barn
Benefiting Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

Thank you sponsors:



Info & Tix at Appalachian.org/AppalachiaDay



Jenny Brunet



Karen Cernak



Emily Dalton



Omar Fakhuri



Andy Gilbert



Allen Helmick



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Justin Schmidt



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ARDEN 1306 Double Knob Drive .77 acre lot. Great residential lot **\$65,000**

BURNSVILLE 1099 Silas Branch Road 194 acres. Extraordinary acreage **\$1,250,000**

ASHEVILLE Off Charlotte Highway 10 acres. 3 miles to I-40. **\$950,000**

MARS HILL 19 Trillium Lane Rare, easy to build on lot, 1.3 acres. **\$20,000**



REALTOR of the MONTH
Susan Lytle

Susan has lived in Buncombe County for 33 years and now resides in Fairview. She has four children and five grandchildren and is married to Herman Lytle, a Fairview native.

Susan's goal is to help people not just buy or sell a home but to give that personal touch for first-time buyers, help families downsize or expand, or match the perfect seller with the perfect buyer.

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Thankful for Community Support in Hard Times

The past six months have been a roller coaster of emotions for our department. We have suffered unimaginable loss and seen epic destruction. But each day brings renewed hope that tomorrow will be a little better.

We have said goodbye to two of our Battalion Chiefs, Tony Garrison and Steve Lytle. Both were with the department for 20 years. Each was a strong leader in our community and their home community. Words can never be put to paper to describe what they meant to us and their friends and family. We miss them now and forever. It's like a slab of the foundation has been removed, and we have a huge hole to fill.



Amazing Grace



Battalion Chief Tony Garrison



Battalion Chief Steve Lytle

Gratitude

We are grateful to those who have put their arms around this department and the families of these two amazing men—literally and figuratively. We have definitely felt your compassion and your love.

We are grateful to our neighboring departments that stepped in for days to cover shifts for our staff as they grieved. Thank you to those who fed our department and the departments that covered for us. Sometimes love is shown

through food or just stopping by to say hello. This community, near and far, truly stepped up to show their compassion, and we are thankful.

Adding to Our Pack

Right after we lost Tony Garrison, Chief Scott Jones received a call from K9 Responder Foundation, an organization in Charlotte that trains therapy dogs. They wanted to work on getting us one of their dogs. When we lost Steve Lytle, the need became urgent. The organization

immediately found the perfect little lady. Her name is Grace, and she is a blue tick hound. This is so fitting, as both Tony and Steve loved to hunt. With the help of many generous donors, and especially \$5,000 from the Garrison family, Grace will be coming to Fairview very soon. We can't wait for everyone to meet her.

May Fundraiser

As we roll into spring and summer, we would like to invite you to come support our department once again at our annual spring fundraiser. It will be held on Saturday, May 10 from 9 am to 2 pm at the Fairview Community Center (1357 Charlotte Highway, beside Fairview Elementary). We will have plants and flowers from First Step Farm, as well as a bake sale and cake walks. We will raffle "The Ultimate Mother's Day Gift Basket" as well as other baskets and hold a 50/50 raffle. We will have hot dogs with chips for purchase as well.

Thank you to Fairview and beyond for all of your love and support over the past six month. We appreciate you more than we can ever say.

Robin Ramsey is the President of the Support Unit Group of the Fairview Volunteer Fire Department.

BETTER MOVEMENT FOR BETTER LIFE

- Physical Therapy
- Return to Sport
- Hand Therapy
- Pain Management
- Pre & Post-Op Rehab
- Balance Training
- Musculoskeletal Injuries
- Worker's Comp

Fairview

1356 Charlotte Hwy, Fairview, NC 28730
Located across from Fairview Elementary
Phone: 828-537-8256

Arden Phone: (828) 203-2603	Biltmore Phone: (828) 412-5330	Black Mountain Phone: (828) 357-9050
Canton Phone: (828) 492-1480	Enka-Candler Phone: (828) 633-6287	Leicester Phone: (828) 412-5120
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Fairview

67/69 Flat Top Mountain Road

Discover a rare opportunity with this dual-home property on Flat Top Mountain! Built in 2023, both homes come fully furnished. The main home is a beautifully crafted log cabin featuring an open floor plan and modern finishes. The second home offers 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, perfect for guests, rental income, or multi-generational living. Peaceful surroundings and ample outdoor space. Seeking a full-time residence,



vacation getaway, or investment property? Don't miss this rare chance! Shared well. Additional lot included.

EXCLUSIVE LISTING Sunday Grant
\$945,000 | MLS ID 4218897

ACTIVE LISTINGS

Asheville



3 BR | 2 BA | 1,098 SF

43 Vermont Court (Unit C10),
\$384,900 | MLS 4227600

Black Mountain



3 BR | 2.5 BA | 1,404 SF

215 David Ridge Road
\$499,000 | MLS 4225943

Asheville



3 BR | 2 BA | 1,657 SF

34 Onteora Oaks Drive
\$519,000 | MLS 4226997

FAIRVIEW REAL ESTATE SALES FEBRUARY 2025

LISTING PRICE	NUMBER SOLD	AVERAGE SALE PRICE	AVERAGE DAYS ON MKT	AVERAGE % LIST-SALE PRICE
UNDER \$300K	1	\$275K	20	73
\$300K-599K	2	\$387K	29.5	95
\$2M+	1	\$2.2M	203	97

Data is sourced from Canopy MLS and compiled by Greybeard Realty Broker
Sara McGee

Agent Spotlight SCOTT McDOWELL



“

My experience with Scott was exceptional. He took us around and showed us houses, yes, but he also made it personal. He took the time to know both of our needs and wants. We ended up with a beautiful home that exceeded our list!

— Theresa J.

”

CONTACT SCOTT TODAY!

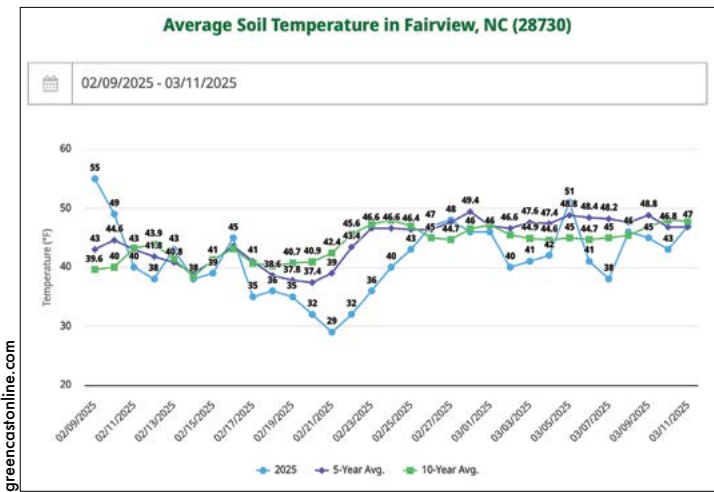
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Spring's Transition Brings Blustery Weather

This year, March brought sharp breezes and frequent chills, especially in the first part of the month. March tends to be blustery because it is a period of transition. The sun is higher in the sky and the earth warms up in places, creating pockets of relatively hot air. But this temperature change is not widespread, causing pressure differences between warm and cold areas. These pressure differences give rise to winds as air moves from high pressure to low.

The increased amount of warm air has a further effect. It rises, causing atmospheric mixing and bringing winds from higher levels down to ground level. The wind is always stronger at altitude, so this type of mixing invariably means stronger winds below. This is why we have many high-wind watches and warnings across parts of WNC during this time.

Now, with daylight saving time in place, we are enjoying later sunsets, and spring-time temperatures are starting to rise due to the increase of solar radiation. The return of spring can vary depending on what you're looking at. The daffodils were in full bloom in most places by mid-March. Following closely behind were the Bradford pears, some cherries, and plums. The actual beginning of spring to me is the day when new plant growth rises and migrating birds return. For others, spring begins when they



can plant early lettuce or perhaps the first mowing of the yard. For most of us, that time is at hand. April's average highs start to take off, going from an average high temperature of 64 at the beginning of the month to 71 by month's end, with the lows moving from 39 to 47. Plants and trees usually wake up during this period as well, and local farmers' markets typically have early-season produce. Some years we can get an April snowstorm, but they are quite rare.

Since April can be a month of extremes, one needs to keep an eye out for late-season frosts that can harm tender vegetation,

especially if trees and plants "greened" up earlier than usual. I usually breathe a sigh of relief when mid-May arrives, because then we are out of danger.

Another thing to watch for is hail. Increasing surface temperatures and cool air aloft can lead to a process that creates a large vertical temperature gradient from the surface to 40,000 feet. Because of this gradient, which is most prevalent in April, we stand a greater risk of hail here in WNC.

Another tip: I usually follow the "old timers" saying to not plant your tomatoes outside until Mother's Day. They really don't grow that much until the soil temperatures warm up close to 60 degrees, which doesn't happen until May.

A great resource to check the progress of the warming of soil temperatures can be found at products.climate.ncsu.edu/map. Go to the link that will show the air

temperature, then go to the menu bar on the left to change the parameter to soil temperature. Another link is greencastonline.com/tools/soil-temperature. Change the location to Fairview to get an updated reading (see image for example).

February's Trivia Question
What is the background and origin of "Spring Fever?" In the 8th century, people used to get sick with scurvy, which resulted from the lack of fresh fruits or vegetables all winter. People would end up deficient in vitamin C, which made their gums bleed, their joints ache, and they generally just felt unambitious. This seasonal illness was dubbed "spring disease" or "spring fever," and somehow the name stuck.

Now, people use "spring fever" to describe the distraction, restlessness and excitement that we feel at the start of spring.

This Month's Question
How are lightning and thunder related?



Meteorologist Tom Ross managed the Climate Database Modernization Program at the National Climatic Data Center.

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SMALL GROUP TRAINING

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APRIL SPECIALS

FREE FOUNDATIONS OF LIFTING Date TBD

FREE GYM TUTORIAL Fridays, 1 pm

FOLLOW US for updates!

19 KRISTIE SCOTT LANE, FAIRVIEW behind KD's gas and Trout Lily

A Study in Soft Chaos: Trying Watercolor for the First Time

I've spent my life avoiding watercolors. It wasn't intentional at first. In grade school, I loved acrylic. In high school, I wrote and journaled for hours every day. In college, I studied operatic performance and played the piano. As an adult, I got into beadwork and made it my living. Watercolor seemed like the opposite of everything I love about making art. It's unpredictable, unruly and uncontrollable. So, when I set out to try something new each month for this column, I knew that watercolor had to be first. If I had avoided it for this long, it must have something to teach me. Of course, it didn't hurt that my friends over at The Common Pine in Old Fort had the cutest travel watercolor kit and paper to purchase in their shop. When I was a child, I was so confident. I didn't hesitate to dunk my brush into the brightest red paint and smear it across the page. I didn't worry if the colors clashed or were a chaotic soup of shapes and drips. When did I lose that sense of recklessness and stop playing? Somewhere along the way, we tighten up. We start craving precision, or even perfection. We fear mistakes. We edit our creativity before it even has a chance to develop. I stared at the untouched watercolor pans, full of curious dread. I misted the palette with water, watching the dry cakes



soften. Then, following advice from a YouTube tutorial, I brushed clear water onto my page. It felt like I was doing absolutely nothing. I tapped in some blue pigment, and it spread in unpredictable waves. When I'm beadweaving, I have control over where each glass bead sits. Watercolor, however, moves on its own. Colors bleed together. Sometimes it's beautiful and sometimes it's a mess. When I tried to force the paint to do what I wanted, it pushed back. It felt like trying to speak a language I've never heard before. Something kept me curious. When I added more water and let the pigment do what it wanted, it started to dance instead of fight. At first, my inner critic had plenty to say: This looks terrible. You have no idea what you're doing. What's the point of this

whole thing, anyway? But then, I softened and let go. The mess wasn't a failure; it was the process. The hues settled. I added another layer. Let that dry. And another. It started to come together over time. Before I got to that first stroke, I almost didn't start at all. I stared at the blank page, completely stuck on what to paint. I debated for an impossible amount of time, scrolling through photos of my family and dogs. I finally looked up and saw my Thai Constellation monstera plant staring back at me. I guess I could paint that? Once I started, the anxiety of choosing disappeared. I learned a few things. First, I desperately need to study the color wheel. Some colors mix well and others turn into what looks like muddy swamp water. I want to make more informed choices. I learned that more water meant lighter, delicate shades, and less water left behind bold pigments. Patience is everything, and you can't rush. The paper has to dry before you add more paint. Those awkward in-between stages, where everything looks like a blob, are just as important as the final details. I also learned that paper matters. The texture in quality watercolor paper makes the process really fun.

Watercolor reminded me how uncomfortable it can be to be a complete beginner and how satisfying it is to push through that discomfort and discover the unexpected. We all deserve to take a shot at something new. We deserve to invest in our experiences, as simple or silly as they may seem. We deserve to sit down, set up our space and give ourselves permission to play without judgment. The creative process in painting, business and life isn't meant to be rushed. It needs time to settle, dry and be revisited. I think we forget that every piece of art goes through the "ugly" phase. Those early layers aren't failures; they're foundation. So if you've been avoiding something, even watercolor, try it. Set up a little space. Mist the palette. Make something without needing for it to be good. Even a travel watercolor pen and a tiny pan of colors on a rainy Monday afternoon can open a door for you that you didn't know you needed to walk through.



Leigh Shultis loves the unpredictable magic of the creative process. She is the owner of Wilderness Muse, 536 Cane Creek Road. 458-4107.

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Almost Time to Get Busy

I'm often asked, "How are your girls?" I call them my girls because female bees make up 80% or more of the colony and do all of the hard work of the hive. From housekeeping, building (or drawing-out) the wax comb for individual cells inside the hive, nursing the young, caring for the queen and foraging for supplies. It's all done by the females. The males, or "drones," basically have one job: to mate with a queen from another colony.

My girls appear to be doing well. I was lucky in that all five of my colonies survived Helene and the winter. Unfortunately, Walker lost almost all his bees to the storm. I believe much of my success is due to the location where my bees are kept, as my apiary sits next to our garden. It's southwest facing and is bordered by a high fence on two sides. This allows the hives to be warmed by the sun and protected from wind. In addition, they are at an elevation where flooding creeks won't wash them away. Sadly, Walker will need to start over completely this spring.

It's common for beekeepers to lose colonies in the winter. But colonies that survive have a tremendous advantage in the spring. The queen will ramp up laying eggs as soon as pollen and nectar become available, and by April the colony numbers will be swelling.

We'll make frequent hive inspections in the spring, about every five days. If the beekeeper needs new bees, he or she can buy a "nuc" (nucleus), which consists of five frames of bees, with the natural queen mother, along with resources such as pollen, nectar and honey. All that for about \$200. The cells of the nuc frames will already have been drawn-out by the bees. As an alternative, a package of bees with a caged queen can be purchased for about \$150. While more expensive, a nuc is generally a much better option. Since a package of bees has no frames or resources, the girls may have to first draw-out the wax comb and gather resources before the queen can start laying. It sometimes happens with a package that the colony will reject the queen once she starts laying, and they'll use her first eggs to create a new queen. This colony will take much more time to get established.

Neither a nuc or a box of bees will be available from retail suppliers until April. The best option is to have a friend with hives that made it through winter. This is our plan. By May, my colonies will need to be split to avoid swarming, and I'll gladly help Walker reestablish his apiary. We hope to start splitting for him in April. Walker has also received generous offers from beekeepers outside the county. With his talents at beekeeping, he'll soon be back on his feet.

Drawn comb is precious to the beekeeper because it takes an enormous effort from the bees to make it. The process begins with bees first making honey from plant nectar, which is stored inside their body. From there, enzymes in the bee's digestive system break down the nectar into simple sugars, which is then regurgitated and passed to other bees that absorb the water content, regurgitate it again and pass it along again until it reaches the necessary hydration level and becomes honey. Female worker bees have eight pairs of wax glands that produce wax from the honey they consume. They excrete tiny flakes of this wax from pores on their abdomen. They then chew the wax until it gets soft and pliable and can be molded into a hexagonal shape. They layer it to the necessary depth, which is commonly known as a "drawn-out" honeycomb. It takes thousands of bees to get the job done.

The queen can live from two to five years and can lay up to 1,500 eggs each day. Experienced beekeepers will catch a new queen and mark her with a colored dot that corresponds to the year she is hatched, which makes it much easier to find the queen during hive inspections.

The queen will have a unique pheromone that is recognized by her colony. As she ages, her pheromone and egg output diminishes. Worker bees recognize when

it's time to replace the queen and use a fertilized egg to create a new one. To increase the chance of success, they may initially set out to make several queens. The queen larvae will be fed royal jelly throughout its development. This diet will cause her ovaries to enlarge.

The first virgin queen to hatch will seek out any other rivals and attempt to kill them. Her stinger has no barbs, so she will not die after stinging. She will then fly several miles to mate with up to 16 drones, collecting sufficient sperm and storing it in her spermatheca for her lifetime. If she doesn't collect enough, she will go out for a second mating flight.

If on her mating flight she is killed by a bird or a dragonfly, the hive will be in trouble. But if the beekeeper reacts in a timely manner, a purchased queen cell can be introduced to give the colony a second chance. We have also had success reviving a dying colony by inserting frames with newly laid eggs sourced from another hive. The worker bees will use these eggs for a second attempt to create a new queen. For these reasons, it's important to keep a close watch on how the hive is progressing in the spring to ensure a successful year.

Mike Spivey is a retired tax consultant living in Fairview who now keeps bees for enjoyment. Walker Overstreet runs Fairview's Little Jaybird Farm with his wife and three children.





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Reply vs. Reply All

Using email to communicate with a group of people means you should think through the difference between Reply and Reply All, along with using the Bcc (blind carbon copy) address field. Most people know about putting additional addresses in the “To” field so that replies can come back to all. The key for this to work is that you, the recipient, have to click on reply all, not just reply, or your reply only goes to the sender. Suddenly, the rest of the group is missing out on your wisdom. I always click reply all and then review the addresses if there are more than one. It’s a new habit so that I don’t drop others out of a conversation.

If you are frustrated by Adobe’s rental pricing for Photoshop, try GIMP (gimp.org) and check out their tutorials at gimp.org/tutorials. If you have a Buncombe County library card, there are older GIMP tutorials through LinkedIn Learning (and if you don’t, you are missing out on a great resource.)

By the time you read this, Amazon will be sent recordings of all commands spoke to Alexa through Echo speakers and other smart devices. Simple commands used to be handled locally on the device. This change is part of Amazon’s push into AI. They are claiming that the data will be protected by encryption when sent to their

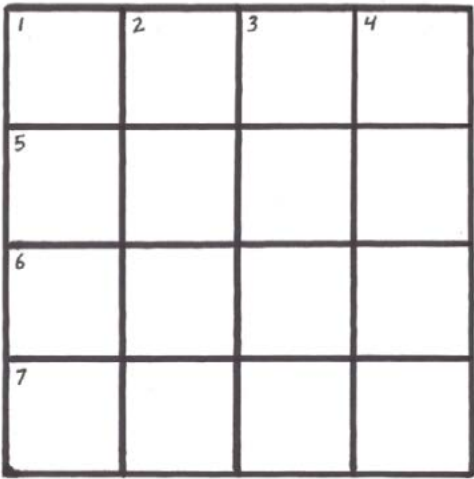
cloud and that recordings will be deleted as soon as they are processed. Still, be careful what you say around your Alexa.

If you still use Skype, be aware that it is going away this May. Microsoft is replacing it with Teams. You can still use your existing Skype login with Teams, which will bring over your existing contacts and chats. If you have credit with Skype, you will be able to use it, but not renew it.

Removing your personal info from Google searches is possible with their “Results about you” tool. Once you put in some basic personal information—name, address, phone, email, etc. —Google will check their searches and let you know what they find. Once they find some search results with your information, use the triple dot by each entry to find out more about what you can do. They can’t actually take the information off the linked sites, but they can break those searches for your personal information. For more info, go to myactivity.google.com/results-about-you.



Bill Scobie fixes computers and networks for small businesses and home. Contact him at 628-2354 or bill@scobie.net.



- Across**

 - 1. You can post twenty of these at a time on Instagram, these days
 - 5. 43,560 square feet
 - 6. Bezos and Buffett
 - 7. _____ A Sketch
- Down**

 - 1. Gait
 - 2. Stage name for Tracy Morrow
 - 3. Perforated clog
 - 4. Short session?

The Itsy Bitsy Crossword is a puzzle designed to tickle the mind. If you can’t solve it on your own, ask a friend for help. If together you can’t quite finish it, ask a stranger, or, as a last resort, ask the internet! Sometimes the clues are wickedly difficult, and other times delightfully easy. Luke Wander grew up reading the Town Crier and it will always be his hometown paper. These days, he is a teacher living in Colorado, with his wife and editor, HH, and cat, Esme.

Answers at the bottom of page 31.

Swing into Spring!



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Find Ways to Create Good Behavior Changes

Most people fail to achieve their goals. Typically, this is due to unrealistic expectations that were set to begin with—and a lack of consistency. Now that the pressure from the new year is off, let's create sustainable habits to help you jump start your health and fitness journey.

The first step in creating a new habit is to think about your current habits, good and bad. Then write down the new habit you wish to create and make a way to track your progress. For example, your goal is to exercise 30 minutes twice per week, and you need to have a specific way to color or mark your calendar once the task is complete. This adds a visual cue to the habit, which will make it obvious if you haven't completed the task.

Make a new habit "attractive" by rewarding yourself afterward. For instance, instead of bingeing an entire TV season, make yourself complete a workout before you watch an episode.

The easier you make a habit, the more likely you will be consistent in creating it. Friction stops you from completing tasks. Find ways that decrease barriers for you in order to create healthy lifestyle changes. Pack your gym clothes the night before you go to the gym so they are ready before leaving the house. Or choose a workout environment that is convenient

(i.e., on the way to/from your home). We live in a world of instant gratification. However, you didn't end up where you are right now overnight, and achieving new goals won't happen overnight either. Creating a reward system will create positive reinforcement as you're making it through your workouts. The more you incorporate fitness into your life, the more comfortable it will feel.

You don't have to belong to a gym to start adding movement to your days. Here are easy things you can start doing today:

- Use half of your lunch break for a walk.
- Set a timer every hour to get up and walk around your house or office.
- Take the stairs at work or park farther away.
- Walk to your mailbox instead of driving.
- Every time you pass your dining table, add some squats to your routine. Choose a hard-surface chair and sit and stand up without using your hands. If this is too hard, start with just two repetitions and add one or two repetitions each week.

Consistency is the key to creating any new behavior. Find ways to create good behavior changes that are sustainable and consistent. You have the power to choose which habits stick. Start by creating a list of new behaviors you wish to implement and a list of behaviors you'd like to eliminate. Create friction for the habits

you want eliminate and plan for those you wish to add to your routine. After a couple of weeks, the new behaviors will be easier and the old ones will fade away.

Chip away at your goals one day or week at a time. Create short-term, attainable goals. And be sure to celebrate your successes along the way while also acknowledging that your health and fitness journey is not a linear process. You will have days you don't feel like showing up, but those are the days that showing up is the most important thing you can do.

Regardless of how or where you choose to add exercise to your routine, having a

great support system will help keep you accountable but will also make the journey more fun. People love community, so find one—whether that is walking with your neighbors, meeting up with friends at a park or joining a local gym.



Crystal White is the owner of Specialized Fitness, which offers a variety of personal, community and online training classes with a trained nutritional coach. specializedfitnessnutrition.com. 767-2632. 19 Kristie Scott Lane, Fairview.

AN AT-HOME WORKOUT

Complete four rounds of each of the following exercises.

- **10 lunges, each leg**—Use a chair or bench for support as needed.
- **5 sit-ups**—Use a kitchen counter to make it easier.
- **10 alternating knee to elbow touches**—This works standing or sitting.
- **5 jumping jacks**—If jumping is too hard, step out with each leg instead.

Note: These exercises are examples of what you can do. There are ways to safely modify each one. If you have any mobility or joint issues, please stop by a local gym or physical therapy office to find out about a safe range of motion for you.

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Longtime Fairview Dentist Retires

By Robert Busey, DDS. As I celebrate my 43rd year of practicing dentistry in Fairview, I want to thank all of you who have given me the privilege of being your dentist. Your trust and confidence in me and my staff in providing oral health care has been both professionally rewarding and personally humbling. The relationships that I have had with so many of you has been a gift, and I will be forever grateful to consider you all friends.

I have decided it is time to retire and transition to the next chapter in my life. When I opened my practice in 1982, Highway 74 was two lanes and Jan and I had one infant daughter. Fairview and our family have grown! We now have four adult children and four grandchildren. I look forward to spending more time with them.

I am comforted to know that the practice is thriving with Dr. Michael Martinsen and Dr. Sophia Larsen continuing the tradition of excellent care.

Thank you again for making my years of practicing dentistry so special and memorable. *“Retire from work, but not from life.” —M.K. Soni*

A Tribute to Dr. Busey

Over the years, we, as Dr. Busey’s staff, have had the deep privilege of working for him. He is a man of great integrity, character and humility.

Not only did he build a family dental practice, providing exceptional care to his patients, but he also gave back immensely to the community. He spent years volunteering at ABCCM, assisting those in need with their dental care. He also served on the Dental Bus, helping community members who lacked access to dental services. Additionally, he dedicated his time to Loving Family Resources, a food bank supporting the terminally ill.

Dr. Busey has served on the Buncombe County Dental Society Board and has taken part in numerous mission trips to Guatemala, Haiti and Cuba. Beyond his professional and charitable work, he is a pilot and an avid skydiver with approximately 2,500 jumps. He continues to use his skills to fly rescue dogs to their forever homes. Over the years, he has been deeply involved in his church—teaching, singing in the choir, serving as a deacon and fulfilling many other responsibilities.

He is a doting husband, father and grandfather. As his staff, we were fortunate to be taken under his wing, treated as part of his extended family, and always cared for. In return, we remained loyal and hardworking, always striving to do our best for him and our patients. We will miss working with him, but we wish nothing but the best in this next chapter of his life.

“BobbyTim,” thanks for the great memories!

—Karen (32 years), Judy (28 years), Amy (26 years), Lisa (22 years) and Marie (21 years)



ACRHS Grad Promoted to Major

Captain Lindsey Morgan Brown was promoted on February 28, 2025, to Major in the US Army’s Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps at Joint Base Lewis McChord in Washington state. Lindsey grew up in Fairview, where she attended Cane Creek Middle and A.C. Reynolds High. She was active at Reynolds and was a four-year member of the cheerleading team who was selected as captain her senior year. She graduated with Honors in 2009.

Lindsey attended UNC–Chapel Hill for her undergraduate studies, where she graduated with Distinction in 2013. She attended UNC for law school, graduating with High Honors in 2016. After passing the bar exam, she applied for a direct commission in the US Army’s and Air Forces’ JAG Corps. She received her acceptances to both services on the same day in early 2017.


Lindsey ultimately chose the Army for her service and was assigned to Fort Benning, GA, for her pre-commissioning training.

She has served in the JAG Corps around the world, in places such as Charlottesville, VA; Fort Wainwright, AK; Baghdad; the Republic of Korea; and Joint Base Lewis McChord near Tacoma, WA. Her duty positions include trial counsel with the 1st Brigade Stryker Combat Team, 25 Infantry Division in Alaska and deployment with the same to serve as legal counsel to the Fires Cell, Operation Inherent Resolve Combined Task Force in Baghdad. In Korea, Lindsey served as an attorney for the Trial Defense Service and continued in



that role when she was reassigned to Joint Base Lewis McChord. Upon completing her service as a defense attorney, she was selected as the Brigade Judge Advocate for the 62nd Medical Brigade, I Corps at Joint Base Lewis McChord. She is currently serving as an Administrative Law Attorney for the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, I Corps.

Lindsey’s awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and Korea Defense Service Medal.

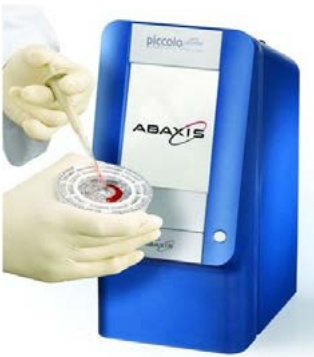


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Winter Reflections and Dahlia Decisions

As the gentle breeze of the Atlantic Ocean is quietly rustling the palm fronds outside, I find myself in a peculiar position for your faithful Semi-Serious Gardener columnist. Far from Fairview's on-again-off-again winter chill, I'm contemplating the beginning of spring from afar, particularly our beloved dahlias, which are weathering this season in a wholly different manner than years past.

I am not sure if I prefer being thousands of miles away from my garden in the depths of winter or right in the thick of it. What I do know is that this winter in Fairview has been a fickle one. Warm days followed by cold snaps, spring teases punctuated by winter's brief returns. A dusting of snow might come and then vanish with the next sunshine. It's the kind of winter that keeps gardeners guessing, and dahlias—well—that's what I've been thinking about.

For the first time since we started growing dahlias eight years ago, my grandmother, mother and I didn't dig up our tubers this fall. It wasn't by choice or careful planning, but necessity. You all know how Helene left a mess that demanded attention far more pressing than flower beds. Between clearing fallen trees, helping neighbors, and working with my students to get back into the business of school, digging up dahlias simply fell

to the bottom of our list. Nature forced us into an unplanned garden trial.

It's funny how life works that way sometimes. Through our years of long-form learning, we have worked hard, across three generations, to master the rituals of dahlia preservation. Every autumn, we'd gather with garden forks, labels and storage crates, carefully excavating each clump of tubers and preparing them for winter in my grandmother's basement.

I've come to love these days of hard work, but this year they weren't possible. We did manage to mound the dahlia beds with a thick layer of pine needles before a deep freeze—a hasty protection rather than our usual care, but hopefully enough to see them through.

I'm writing this from the Florida Keys, my childhood home before moving to Asheville more than 25 years ago. The irony isn't lost on me—coming from south Florida where dahlias couldn't grow to Fairview where we've become students of their care, and now back in Florida reflecting on how hurricanes have shaped both landscapes. In the Keys, plants don't concern themselves with dormancy periods, winter protection or hurricanes. There's a resilience in this approach that feels oddly relevant to our situation back home.

As I walk the beaches, I've been

thinking about what makes gardening so rewarding. It's not just the blooms, though heaven knows I love cutting a fresh bouquet of dahlias. It's the way gardening connects us to the rhythms of the world around us, to each other, and to unexpected lessons.

What will spring continue to reveal when I return? Perhaps nothing—maybe empty spaces where blooms once stood. Perhaps a few survivors, teaching us which varieties possess greater hardiness than anticipated. Or perhaps, if fortune smiles, a full resurrection of our dahlia display, having safely weathered winter's temperamental moods. Last year, a friend whom I had gifted dahlias to reported that his plants bloomed a full month before mine flowered because they had overwintered in the ground.

This uncertainty itself feels valuable in a gardening practice that can sometimes become too prescribed. Gardening, after all, is both science and art, tradition and experimentation. Sometimes the most interesting lessons come when we're forced to try something new.

If you are carrying out your own dahlia experiment, I have questions. Which varieties have shown unexpected resilience? Have you noticed microclimates in your yard where tender plants survive when they shouldn't? What protection methods

have you tried when life got in the way of the "proper" approach?

When I return, checking on the dahlia beds will be among my first priorities. I'll run my hands through the protective pine needles, searching for signs of life below. And whatever the outcome, it will add to the long-form learning that we have been working to accumulate.

In the meantime, while winter appears to close out its back-and-forth dance across our mountain town, I encourage you to embrace the unexpected in your own garden. What conventional wisdom might be worth challenging, intentionally or by necessity? What can your particular plot of earth teach you if you observe it closely enough?

From my temporary tropical vantage point, where the concept of winter exists only in memory, I'm reminded that all garden wisdom is local, seasonal and ever-evolving. The semi-serious gardener knows that learning comes not just from success, but from rolling with the punches that weather, life, and sometimes hurricanes throw our way.



Nate Barton is an artist who teaches art. He lives with his wife and two sons in Fairview, where he maintains a flower garden with his mom and grandmother, who are also his neighbors. You can find him on Instagram (@etannotrab).

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Appalachia Day—A Celebration of All Things Appalachian

On April 26 the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC) will host Appalachia Day: A Celebration of All Things Appalachian at Hickory Nut Gap Farm. Rescheduled from the event planned last October, this special full-day celebration will include live music, local artisans and vendors, and farm fun for the whole family.

“This event hits particularly close to home for me, as we look to support our local businesses and celebrate all the things we love about the mountains where we live,” said SAHC Membership Director and Fairview resident Cheryl Fowler. “We’ve all been through a lot in the past six months, so we’re excited to get outdoors, spend time together and help our community continue to recover. Appalachia Day offers a great way to soak in the culture, natural beauty and community spirit of the Appalachian Mountains while actively supporting conservation efforts crucial to preserving this treasured region for generations to come. Hosted at Hickory Nut Gap Farm, Appalachia Day showcases SAHC’s work in a practical way—being surrounded by SAHC-conserved land.”

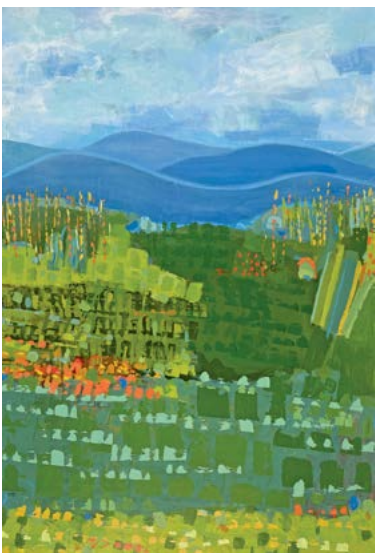
In 2008, SAHC closed on the first of a series of conservation easements permanently protecting agricultural land and surrounding forests at Hickory Nut Gap. SAHC worked with descendants of

James and Elizabeth McClure to preserve farm and forest land, in partnership with many dedicated conservationists, generous supporters and grant funders. In total, SAHC has protected a network of about 1,500 acres of conserved land surrounding Hickory Nut Gap and Fairview.

The Appalachia Day event includes a morning hike, a free daytime festival/market and an evening benefit concert.

The early morning hike on the Strawberry Gap Trail (created in partnership with Conserving Carolina) will let folks experience the beauty of SAHC-conserved land. Advance registration is required for the guided group hike, and space is limited.

The free, family-friendly festival at Hickory Nut Gap Farm will run from 12 to 6 pm and feature live music, local artisans and craft vendors, food trucks, farm activities and pony rides (\$10 for pony rides benefits Project HNG). The Hickory



Nut Gap Farm Store will be open for purchases, too. Enjoy plenty of live music throughout the day by the Root Diggers, the Old Charlotte Highwaymen (featuring John Templeton) and Dan Shearin (of River Whyless). Kimberley Turner-Hall will be on hand to offer a Spring Bird’s Nest Basket weaving opportunity for children and adults. Sponsors Wicked Weed Brewing and Highland Brewing Company will provide cold brews, and

proceeds from these beer sales during the daytime festivities will support SAHC, as will a raffle held during the event. Artist Moni Hill will donate a painting to be raffled off to support conservation, and tickets for it can be purchased online now or at the event. “I am inspired by the natural world,” Hill said. “I believe that colors can transform spaces and lives. I love long hikes, big trees, little warblers, native wildflowers and authentic, wild people.”

Interested in Regenerative Agriculture? During Appalachia Day, you can learn how an ecological health index (EHI) is

performed on a pasture at Hickory Nut Gap Farm. The demonstration will include species ID, scoring the pasture’s overall health and discussing the merit of these judgements when it comes to grazing practices. Data from an EHI is used in the Ecological Outcome Verification monitoring process. This annual farm monitoring offers a holistic and intensive look into the health of a farm across its entire acreage.

The evening concert with the Darren Nicholson Band will start at 6:30 pm at the Big Barn at Hickory Nut Gap Farm; this is a ticketed event to benefit SAHC. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the Barn (\$10 for kids 8–16, age 7 and under are free).

“Appalachia Day is just a great community event, and we hope to see some of you there,” said Fowler. “We’re deeply grateful to our partners and event sponsors Hickory Nut Gap Farm, Explore Asheville, Wicked Weed Brewing, Highland Brewing Company, Equinox Environmental, Altura Architects, B Local Asheville + WN, and Kee Mapping & Surveying.”

Full details and links for concert and raffle ticket purchases and hike registration can be found at Appalachian.org/Appalachia-day.

Angela Shepherd is Communications Director at the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. Visit Appalachian.org.



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All About Mushrooms

All mushrooms are low in fat and calories, and packed with the goodness of B vitamins, selenium, copper, potassium, phosphorus, polyphenols, carotenoids and polysaccharides. We’re dealing with a superfood.

We’re accustomed to seeing white button mushrooms, pre-packaged and wrapped in plastic. Mushrooms need air circulating around them. A suffocated mushroom is a slimy mushroom. When you buy your mushrooms, ask for a small paper bag. Place the mushrooms in the bag, then place the bag in the refrigerator, on a shelf, near the top. If you can, buy loose mushrooms. They’re typically fresher, with a better texture and flavor.

White button mushroom, a type of cremini, are the most widely available, commercially grown mushroom. The brown button mushrooms offer the most flavor and a denser flesh. You’ve likely seen these brown cremini mushrooms labeled as “baby bellas.” This is just marketing. Look for other varieties of “exotic” mushrooms as well. Oyster, porcini, chanterelles, shiitakes, portabellas. When commercially grown, these mushrooms are no longer wild, but according to the marketing department, they are “exotic.”

Why not skip the marketing and check the farmer’s market? Commercial growers

cultivate fewer than a dozen varieties of mushrooms, but in the wild world you’ll find about 300 different varieties. The flavors, textures and colors seem endless. Please do bear in mind that mushroom foraging takes training and experience. The right mushroom could be dinner. The wrong mushroom could be your last meal.

If the membrane below the cap is intact, a quick rinse is fine. If the cap is open, I wipe the mushrooms with a damp towel. A fresh mushroom is as much as 90% water, by weight, so not much water can be absorbed. As mushrooms love water, over time, that mushroom will absorb water like a sponge. You don’t want waterlogged mushrooms. Never leave them to soak!

Now that I’ve hyped all the goodness of mushrooms, I offer you this side dish. It’s perfect with roasted meat or a roasted chicken. This dish has converted more than a few mushroom haters. One of them gave it a new name, which I decided to keep.



James Burgess wishes for a larger kitchen. You can reach him at ohnonatinmykitchen@gmail.com.

Muchrooms (serves 6 to 8)

- 1 pound whole mushrooms, cleaned, trimmed, sliced into ¼ inch slices
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- ¼ cup shallot, chopped

Salt

- 1 clove garlic, peeled and pounded once with the side of a knife
- 2 low-sodium beef bouillon cubes
- ½ cup hot water
- Splash of brandy to deglaze (optional)
- 2 tbs all-purpose flour
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Ground white pepper to taste
- ½ cup soft white bread crumbs (remove crust from bread before grinding)
- ½ cup, or more, freshly grated Romano cheese



Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter the bottom and sides of a 1 ½ qt casserole dish. Dissolve bouillon cubes in ½ cup of hot water. Heat 2 tbs butter in a sauté pan until the foam subsides, then add half of the mushrooms, the shallots, and a generous pinch of salt. Sauté until lightly browned, taking care to not burn the butter. Transfer to a plate. Repeat with the remaining mushrooms, the garlic clove and salt.

When the second batch is lightly browned, deglaze the pan with sherry, white wine or Cognac. (Add Cognac off heat, then return pan to the burner.) Cook, stirring, until added liquid reduces to a glaze. Discard the garlic clove and transfer to a warm plate.

Return the skillet to heat and add the remaining 4 tbs of butter. When the foam subsides, add the flour, stirring for two minutes over moderate heat, taking care to not burn the butter. Remove the pan from heat and add the beef broth, then the heavy cream. Stir well and return to heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and allow sauce to simmer for one minute. Add white pepper to taste.

Blend the bread crumbs and grated cheese. Place the mushroom mixture into the buttered casserole dish and top with the warm sauce. Sprinkle the mixture of crumbs and cheese over the top of the casserole, then bake at 350 degrees for ½ an hour, or until the dish is bubbly and the top is well browned.

Cool 15 minutes before serving. Brown, about 45 minutes. Remove from oven, cool for 15 minutes, then serve and enjoy.

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How Hurricane Helene Changed Our Yards—and What to Do Next



by Ashley Haywood

Fairview is still wearing the scars of Hurricane Helene. If you step outside, you see them—bare soil where the land slid off the slope or tree roots once held the earth firm; new pockets of standing water that never used to be there; and bright patches of sun that had been dense shade. Some yards look like a completely different landscape than they did six months ago.

And if you're feeling a little lost in all these changes, you're not alone.

I've been living this firsthand. When the

storm hit, five massive oaks—each over 75 years old—came crashing down across my driveway, missing my house by inches. Not so lucky was one of our vehicles, crushed by the tag team of trees. Clearing the debris has been a months-long process, and now that most is sawn, split, stacked and burned, I've been staring at a yard that feels unfamiliar—more exposed, more open and in need of a new plan.

Like many of you, I lost shade, gained sun and found myself with new drainage issues. But instead of trying to force my yard back to what it was, I'm working with what nature

gave me. I've used some of the downed wood to create a log garden—a simple way to build habitat for fungi, insects and small critters. I've also started shaping a two-stage rain garden to catch runoff from the driveway, turning what could have been a muddy mess into a thriving native plant oasis.

The storm changed my yard. But instead of fighting it, I'm reimagining it.


WNC's landscape is built to withstand a lot. Our deep-rooted mountain flora has been evolving through storms, floods and fire for thousands of years. And while our modern landscaping choices—like

sprawling lawns, exotic ornamentals and quick-fix mulch—don't always hold up to nature's temper, native plants do.

Right now, many yards need stability—something to hold the soil together before more of it washes downhill. Others need better drainage to keep water from pooling up. And plenty of people simply need to rethink what to plant in spots that used to be shady but are now in full sun.

The Rain Garden Solution

If you've noticed new low spots in your yard where water lingers long after a good




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New Press Box and Concession Stand Completed for ACRHS Softball Field



Above, members of the A.C. Reynolds Athletic Booster Club stand in front of the new press box and concession stand. The completion of this project was made possible by sponsors, community support and the tireless work of the booster club.

The following people and companies purchased an 8 x 8 donor brick to sponsor the project: Grant Ridge Contracting, T.P. Howard's Plumbing, ABC Supply, Jackson Electrical Contractors, Adams Products, Red Wolf Contracting, PBI, T&K Utilities, SEBRG LLC, Chris Banks, D.H. Griffin, ISM, Goforth Builders, White and Williams, Demolition and Asbestos Removal Inc., LFS Partners, Mark Wall, Shady Grove Landscaping, and Capstone.

rain, it's not just an eyesore—it's an opportunity. Instead of fighting the water, you can work with it by creating a rain garden.

A rain garden is a strategically planted area designed to absorb and filter stormwater. Think of it as nature's sponge—soaking up excess water, reducing runoff and recharging groundwater. The key is to use deep-rooted native plants that love wet feet and can tolerate periods of dryness, such as buttonbush, elderberry shrubs, swamp milkweed, blue flag iris and cardinal flower. Don't forget to include grasses that have roots that go down multiple feet into the ground, such as Switchgrass and Broomsedge, to help fill in the space.

In my yard, the driveway runoff created a perfect (if unexpected) spot for a two-stage rain garden—one basin to catch the heavy flow, and another to slow and absorb the excess. By spring, I'll be putting native plants in the ground to help me manage water and creating habitat for pollinators and birds.

From Shade to Sun

Losing a big shade tree changes more than just the look of your yard. It completely shifts what can grow there. If you've suddenly got a sunny patch where shade plants used to thrive, resist the urge to run to the big-box store for something ornamental to replace those hostas. Instead, let's think about what naturally thrives in sunny meadows here in the mountains.

Some fantastic sun-loving native plants to consider include:

- Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)—tough, beautiful and a magnet for pollinators.
- Beebalm (*Monarda fistulosa*)—a native wildflower that attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.
- Blazing star (*Liatris spicata*)—a gorgeous spike of purple flowers that's drought-resistant once established.

These plants don't need constant watering, pesticides or fertilizers to thrive. They were made for this place.

Restoring More than Just Land

The storm took a lot from us: familiar shade, reliable trees and the old shape of our gardens. It's okay to miss what was. But it's also a chance to create something even better.

Native plants aren't just good for the land; they're good for us. They bring back birds, butterflies and fireflies. They turn battered spaces into thriving habitats. And they remind us that change, while hard, can also be beautiful, if we give the land what it needs (including time).

If you're looking out at your yard, wondering where to start, think small. Plant something native. Give the land a chance to heal, and watch how quickly it bounces back.

Ashley Haywood is a native garden designer at Wild Ash Consulting. ashley@wildashconsulting.com.



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Cane Creek Middle Band’s Trip to Carnegie Hall

In my sophomore year at Old Dominion University, an opportunity to perform in the play “Fiddler on the Roof” became available. I hoped to be in the chorus. So, I showed up to audition. All around the Cavalier Dinner Theater, people were lined up. The young men and women in line had envelopes with their resumes and headshots. I was wearing a t-shirt and jeans.

The music director dispatched each auditioner in a matter of seconds. He was looking to learn the vocal range each singer possessed. After my one-minute audition, I was sent to read from the script. I was thanked and went home. The next day I had a phone call. Would I come back? Sure!

I met with the theater manager, who handed me a contract to be in the play. Not only that—I was to have a leading role as Motel the tailor. The contract was for eight weeks; six performances a week, with the possibility of extending an additional four to six weeks. Yes, I signed. I will never forget that moment. But it was nothing compared to opening night. We had a full house and the play went well. At curtain call, I was the first soloist to take a bow. I looked up to see the audience rise up from their seats and applaud. Holy cow! A standing ovation—for me. What an ego trip that was.

Why am I sharing this story? Easy. On March 10, the Cane Creek Middle School



(CCMS) band performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City. I get shivers down my spine when I think of our kids, from our community, performing on that famous stage. To stand on the stage at this world-renowned theater would be enough for any lifetime. And then these boys and girls got a cherry on top of the sundae when they all went to see the play “Wicked.”

You may be wondering, “How did the school afford such an extravagant trip?” You may also be wondering how the band was able to prepare for and rehearse for the trip after losing a month of preparation to the storm. The answer to both starts with an energy powerhouse, band director Adam Stewart. As you may recall, last year he was honored as the best of the best as a

middle school band director. Getting the kids ready took many hours away from the regular school schedule. No one would have blamed Mr. Stewart if he had simply canceled. But he knows his families and musicians. Under his leadership, these musicians gave hours of effort above and beyond the normal responsibilities of middle schoolers.

The financial burden was amazingly hard and also easy to resolve at the same time. After Helene, lives, jobs, income opportunities and discretionary spending all came screeching to a halt. How would anyone, even Mr. Stewart, be able to beg, borrow and wrest financial support for such a trip from an exhausted community. Apart from traditional fundraising, how could

the thousands of dollars be found? I don’t know if you believe in miracles, but what happened next sure felt like one. Schools and church groups and generous families dug deep and found the resources, making it possible for every child and their chaperone(s) to finance this trip. Yes, thousands of dollars were raised from locals and folks from other counties and communities.

Last night, Mr. Stewart’s once-in-a-lifetime dream came to fruition. He and his students performed on one of the most prestigious stages in the world. Mr. Stewart and this CCMS community really defined the Cane Creek Way: the way of dogged determination, coupled with hope. At CCMS and its greater community, we walk forward together, arms locked to support our kids and the programs that enrich and ennoble our goal-driven purposes.

Mr. Stewart is extraordinary. He was able to marshal resources, work with the music community and—above all—teach music to a whole lot of young people whose lives will be forever touched with an event they will carry with them forever. He knew how important this trip could be. And I know what that feels like. As Motel the tailor sang, “God gave us manna in the wilderness. That was a miracle.”

Norm Bossert is the Assistant Principal of Cane Creek Middle School.

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FES DAD’S CLUB
Meet the Dads: Tony Wavering



Tony Wavering grew up in rural Macon, MO, before heading to study finance and accounting at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School. He lived in NYC for eight years, where he met his wife Jillian. Their son Paul is in kindergarten at Fairview Elementary, and 2-year-old Graham will soon follow.

Tony is the founder of PromoHunt, a software company that develops specialized tools for businesses in the branded merchandise industry. In his downtime, he enjoys the thrill of mountain biking, the freedom of piloting airplanes, and exploring new destinations through travel with family.

“I’m looking forward to becoming more involved with the Fairview Elementary community and getting to know the other families,” says Wavering. “It’s exciting to be part of my son’s educational journey and to support the school that’s nurturing his growth.”

• **APRIL 23 Daybreak with Dad**

All FES Dads or adult role models are invited. Spend some quality time with your kid while eating breakfast and discussing a character-building topic. Dads will have the opportunity to walk their child to class, and, if interested, read a book to their child’s classroom.

• **MAY 9 Daddy–Daughter Dance & Mommy–Son Dance**

At the Fairview Elementary School gym. Mark your calendars!

• **JUNE 7 Bus Wash**

Bring your buckets, brushes, sponges, etc. All FES dads and kids are welcome to join in giving back to our amazing bus drivers as we clean their buses for the end of the year.

The club is always looking for dads or male role models. For more info, email fesdadsclub@gmail.com, follow the club on Facebook (@fesdadsclub) or call/text 631-741-9606.

PARENTING POINTS TO PONDER
THE COMPARISON TRAP

“Can you believe they are so different even though they came from the same womb?” We laughed about this fact regarding our children recently with other parents. Later, I started reflecting on my own growing-up years and how, as a twin, some of the subtle comparisons at home, school and church stuck with me, even into adulthood. It’s true that we all use the power of perception through our life experiences to define ourselves. By being intentional, we can help our children embrace their differences with confidence—without the weight of comparison. Here are some practical ways to shift your mindset and foster a healthier dynamic for everyone involved.

- Awareness is the first step in breaking the habit. Acknowledge any tendencies you have to compare your children, whether it’s about behavior, achievements or personality.
- Celebrate their individual strengths: Each child is unique, with their own talents, struggles and pace of growth. Help them find individual interests to develop.
- Remember the power of perception. When we realize that perception involves thinking, feeling and deciding, we can pause to decide the value of our words. Describe what you see, what you like or don’t like, without referencing another.
- Avoid labels: Statements like “She’s my



easy one” or “He’s my wild child” can reinforce unhelpful narratives when you’re talking about your kids in other settings. Even positive labels such as “the smart one” or “the athletic one” can create unintended competition or resentment.

- Foster mutual respect. Teach your kids to appreciate each other’s differences. Siblings don’t have to be alike to love and support one another.

By shifting your focus from comparison to appreciation, you create an environment for the long term, where each child feels valued for who they are and not how they measure up to their sibling.

Christi Hurd is a retired BCS teacher who is now a Family Coach. She helps parents as well as individuals embrace uncertainty with courage, self-discovery and practical solutions. To learn more, go to hurdhuddleparentsupport.com.

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A Taste of the Working World

I've written before about Asheville Christian Academy's Winterim, in which the school gives us a week before spring break to go on trips, take classes, visit colleges or participate in internships. I've gone to Spain and Greece, but this year I shifted gears and interned with Rosemary C. Scapicchio, a defense attorney in Boston.

It was the most incredible professional experience I've ever had. I gained exposure to the legal profession, and I also gained invaluable insight into the inner-workings of a law firm.

I sat in on two days of evidentiary hearings in court, learning about the procedures that move a case toward trial and gaining incredible insight on the direct and cross-examination processes. I also spent three days in Attorney Scapicchio's office, working with her paralegal, Mrs. Curran, to scan documents and organize files.

I am very rarely overwhelmed, but I was taken aback when I walked into the law office for the first time. Boxes and boxes of files and papers lined the walls in the offices—research, discovery, notes and motions for over 50 cases! I was completely astonished by the quantity of work just three attorneys tackled together, and was wowed by the quality of their labors, reflected in the plaques, awards and titles hung on the walls.

For the first time, it felt like an experience

was beyond me. I thought to myself, "I could never do this much. I could not function in this busy and clustered environment." However, as the week progressed, I learned that there was indeed a system behind all the papers that seemed to engulf the office. Slowly but surely, my type-A personality was put at ease. I started—loosely—relating it to school. Exams equal trials, motions equal research papers; and, likewise, there is extensive studying and preparation that goes into absolutely everything, all with hard deadlines. However, Attorney Scapicchio had more than 45 cases, while I have eight classes. It left me blown away at how she accomplishes all that she does.

One of the most daunting aspects of this entire experience took place outside of the office walls: public transportation. I joined the city workforce crowd, taking the train into the city and walking 25 minutes to the office. In the beginning, it was the most intimidating part of the entire internship. But by the end of the week, I truly enjoyed the routine I had fallen into, walking along the waterfront to and from the office.

This internship provided me with so many new perspectives. I got a taste of the commute of a worker in the city, the slammed schedule of an impressively established attorney, and the workload of a dedicated paralegal.

I also received invaluable insights on the justice system that have challenged me to think through deep ethical, moral and personal beliefs on legal professions and values. I had expected to gain insights on the profession and daily life, but I was not expecting to walk away with so many mind-boggling, thought-provoking perspectives on the defense side and the justice system as a whole.

Furthermore, I am again met with the same question of where I see my future self and how my career fits into that picture. I liked the work I did during my internship, and I think it is incredibly purposeful, impactful and important. However, I clearly see that I would have to have a deep, passionate love for this specific profession if I were to pursue it as a career. Due to the strenuous, long workload and despite my love for investigative work, writing and research, I would have to do a lot of soul searching to see if that is where I would want to go. Could I see myself being a defense attorney? Absolutely. Do I think I would be good at it? Yes. Do I think I would enjoy it? Definitely. Am I willing to allow



Ansley and her siblings in Boston

my career to be the entire center of my life? Is the time sacrifice worth it? I'm not sure.

The experience as a whole was an incredible look into the world of law, and it has given me numerous insights on how to approach and analyze any potential career.

I am so incredibly grateful for Attorney Scapicchio for allowing me to shadow her for a week. I know it was the opportunity of a lifetime, and I will carry the lessons gleaned from this experience with me through all of my professional pursuits.



Ansley Fuchs lives in Fairview with her parents and three siblings and is a junior at Asheville Christian Academy.



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It's Dry Out There—Be Careful when Burning

We are in the spring wildfire season in North Carolina, and the NC Forest Service is urging residents to be diligent about using best practices and common sense with all outdoor fires, especially yard debris burns.

WNC counties dealing with significant storm debris from Hurricane Helene are especially vulnerable to wildfires due to increased fuel loading from downed timber.

“We reduce our wildfire risk by working together,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “When it comes to wildfire response this time of year, the NC Forest Service (NCFS) is at the ready, prepositioning resources as needed. We need you to be prepared and ready for wildfire. Understand that you’re not powerless when it comes to wildfire prevention and risk reduction. Everyone has a role to play, starting with making good decisions and planning ahead if you intend to start a fire.”

Escaped yard debris burns, often due to carelessness, continue to be the leading cause of wildfires across the state, accounting for nearly half of all wildfires in North Carolina. In general, human activity is responsible for 99% of wildfires, and spring weather tends to draw people outdoors to work in their yards, with many choosing to burn as a method to dispose of leaves, limbs and other yard debris.

“Careless behaviors, such as burning

on the wrong day, leaving a fire unattended, [or] not staying with a fire until it is fully extinguished, can result in a fire escaping and becoming a dangerous wildfire that quickly threatens lives and property,” said NC Forest Service Assistant Commissioner and State Forester Greg Hicks. “Your NCFS county ranger is a great resource for recommending best practices and guidance about when, where and how to burn safely outdoors.”

Before starting an outdoor fire, contact your local NCFS county ranger’s office. In Buncombe County, that’s Caleb Garland, in Black Mountain, at 686-5885.

The NCFS also offers the following tips:

- Check local burning laws. Some communities allow burning only during specified hours. Others forbid it entirely.
- Make sure you have a valid permit. You can obtain a burn permit at any NC Forest Service office or authorized permitting agent, or online at ncforestservice.gov/burnpermit.
- Keep an eye on the weather. Don’t burn on dry, windy days.
- Local fire officials can recommend a safe way to burn debris. Don’t pile vegetation on the ground. Instead, place it in a cleared area and contain it in a screened receptacle away from overhead branches and wires.
- Be sure you are fully prepared before burning. To control the fire, you will



Buncombe County crews battled a 15-acre fire in Broad River in February.

need a hose, bucket, steel rake and a shovel for tossing dirt on the fire. Keep a phone nearby, too.

- Never use kerosene, gasoline, diesel fuel or other flammable liquids to speed up debris burning.
- Stay with your fire until it is completely out.

For Campfires and Grills

- Douse burning charcoal briquettes or campfires thoroughly with water.
- Drown all embers, not just the red ones. When soaked, stir the coals and soak them again.

- Make sure everything is wet and that embers are cold to the touch.
- If you do not have water, mix enough dirt or sand with the embers to extinguish the fire, being careful not to bury the fire.
- Never dump hot ashes or coals into a wooded area.

To learn more about fire safety and preventing wildfires and loss of property, go to tinyurl.com/yc29hdpa. For information about creating defensible space and a fire-resistant landscape around your home and property, visit resistwildfirenc.org.

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Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and Your Cat

By now, the news that highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 is growing is not news. It's also not news that this highly virulent virus has been found in waterfowl in Buncombe County. What may be news is that when a group of veterinarians was checked for antibodies to this virus, several tested positive but had no known exposure to infected animals. We know of at least one human death from this virus as of the time of writing. We know that this is a virus that humans, cows, birds, cats and other mammals can all catch, and we know influenza viruses can mutate to become easier to spread among different species. This is a virus that we should all know a little more about.

The current H5N1 outbreak in the US was found in cattle in March 2024 and has since been found in cows in almost 1,000 herds in 17 states. But this virus has been identified in birds since 2021. This virus most likely mutated from a lower pathogenic strain of influenza that was circulating in wild bird populations. Influenza mutates with frequency, and we have seen prior outbreaks of other highly pathogenic influenza that can be shared between animals and people—H1N1 in 2009, otherwise known as Swine Flu, being a prime example.

Clinical signs in birds may be minimal,

and the first time anyone realizes a bird has H5N1 is when the bird is dead. However, some birds do show clinical signs, including discoloration (blue or red) and swelling in and around the head and legs, bruising, blood-tinged nose and mouth discharge, greenish diarrhea, and neurological signs (twisting of the neck, backward arching head, weak legs, drooping wings, and trouble walking or flying).

Cows show different signs, and the vast majority of cows recover with supportive care. Dairy cows seem to be at higher risk of infection than beef cattle. Clinical signs we see in dairy cows include poor appetite, decreased milk production, and thick, discolored milk.

Cats are particularly susceptible to severe disease and death from avian flu. The early signs in cats will be vague and include signs such as poor appetite, lethargy and fevers. As the illness progresses, cats will start to show neurological signs such as being uncoordinated, tremors, seizures and blindness. They can also become very depressed, have difficulty breathing, start to sneeze or cough, and have ocular and nasal discharge.

If you think one of your cats may have influenza, call your vet right away. While transmission between pet animals and humans has not been well documented, you should consider limiting contact with



your sick cat, especially if you or a family member is immunocompromised. When you take your cat to the vet, please call from the car so the staff can bring you in when they are ready.

Fortunately, there are some practical, common sense measures you can take to help decrease the chances that you and your cat are exposed to avian flu.

- Don't eat or feed your pets raw meat or eggs, even if it is a commercially made pet food.

- Don't drink or feed your pets unpasteurized dairy products.
 - Keep your cats inside and away from the wild bird population and your backyard chickens.
 - If you have a backyard bird flock, call your vet to discuss ways to keep them safe and what to look for if they get infected.
 - Limit your and your cat's exposure to dairy cows and dairy barns.
 - If you work with high-risk animals, wear protective gear and limit your cat's exposure to your clothes that you wore to limit possible transfer.
 - Don't touch dead or dying high-risk animals; instead, call in a professional if needed.
 - Wash your hands after coming into contact with high-risk animals.
- These days, false information is almost easier to find than good information, so please make sure you are getting your information from a reputable source. To make the search a little easier, avma.org and vet.cornell.edu are good places to start to learn more about avian flu and our pets.

Margaret Moncure is a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Cedar Ridge Animal Hospital. 184 Charlotte Highway. 527-2430.

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MEET A MEMBER

Dana Gamble *Magic Rocket Vintage*



My husband and I were looking for a change of pace. We both were born and raised in Brooklyn, NY. We lived there for the first 25 years of our lives then made the move right across the Hudson to Jersey City, where we lived for eight years.

Our nervous systems were ready for a calmer, more nature-focused area to live in. So during the pandemic, we had the realization that if you want to do something, you need to do it while you can. So we planned a road trip to visit a few places. Asheville was our first stop, and we loved it, so we decided to stop there again on our way back and look at it through the eyes of seeing ourselves living there—and it was decided. It took us over a year or so but we found our home in Fairview, and we honestly cannot picture living anywhere else. We feel so blessed and grateful to be welcomed into such a loving community.

While living in the NYC area, I had bartended and served for over a decade before deciding to pursue my art full time.

In Fairview, I was pursuing my art as a career, doing markets and online sales. I started to bring a small rack of some clothing to my markets and noticed they were at least half of my sales. That collection grew into two racks and odd little trinkets and antiques. Then one day, I was getting my hair done with Michelle at Rocket Beauty, and I learned they were leaving the space. My brain immediately said, “You should rent it.” But I was afraid so I didn’t say anything. When I talked with my husband, he immediately said, “Ask them how much the rent is!” And the rest is history.

We welcome the Crier’s readers to shop our curated items of clothing, vintage finds and local art pieces and products. And if you’re saving your money, you can support us by leaving a Google review, mention us to your friends, or share on social media.

As an artist, I had my items/art in a few places around Asheville and found it very difficult to turn a profit when a business charges both a monthly rent and a commission for every item sold. So I wanted to offer a space to local artists and makers that was rent-free. We only take a small commission if an item sells. We also host markets periodically, and during October we hosted a free pumpkin painting event. We want to make it an annual tradition.

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Carefully Consider Social Security Decisions

Your Social Security benefits can be an important part of your retirement income—but when should you start collecting them? It's a big decision, so you'll want to consider your options carefully.

Essentially, you'll need to decide whether you're going to take your benefits as early as possible—age 62—or if you should wait until your "full retirement age" or even longer. If you begin accepting benefits at 62, they'll be about 30% lower than if you waited until your full retirement age, which is 67 if you were born in 1960 or later. And if you wait until 70, your benefits will be about 24% higher than at your full retirement age.

- In deciding when to claim benefits, you'll want to weigh these factors:
- **Income needs**—If you need the money to help meet your daily cost of living, then you may not feel you have much of a choice about when to take Social Security. However, if you have sufficient income from other sources, such as your 401(k) or other retirement accounts, you may be able to delay taking benefits until they're much larger.
 - **Employment**—If you're still working and you haven't reached your full retirement age yet, it might be a good

- idea to wait before claiming Social Security because your benefits will be reduced by \$1 for every \$2 earned above \$23,400. In the year in which you reach your full retirement age, your benefits will be reduced by \$1 for every \$3 earned above \$62,160. (But once you reach your full retirement age, Social Security will adjust your payments to credit you for the months during which your benefits were lowered because of your income.)
- **Life expectancy**—None of us can say for certain how long we'll live — but you may have some hints. For example, if you have a family history of longevity, and you're in good health, you might decide it makes sense to delay taking Social Security until your full retirement age, or even later, as you could potentially have more years of receiving larger checks.
 - **Spouse**—If you're married, decisions about when to claim benefits could affect you or your spouse. The spouse with lower Social Security payments may be eligible to receive spousal benefits, which, when combined with their own benefits, can reach up to 50% of the higher-benefit spouse's payment at their full retirement age. To qualify, the lower-benefit spouse's benefit at their full retirement age must

be less than half of the other spouse's full-retirement-age benefit. But if the lower-benefit spouse claims their benefits before their full retirement age, their own retirement benefit and the spousal benefit will be reduced. Also, the lower-benefit spouse reaches their maximum benefit amount at their full retirement age—they won't receive additional benefits even if they or the higher-benefit spouse delays taking benefits past their respective full retirement ages.

One other point to keep in mind: If the higher-benefit spouse claims early, the survivor benefit to the other spouse is reduced, but if the higher-benefit spouse delays their benefit beyond their full retirement age, the survivor benefit is increased.

By making the appropriate choices, you can help maximize your Social Security benefits—and possibly enjoy a more comfortable retirement.



This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor, Stephen Herbert. Contact 628-1546 or stephen.herbert@edwardjones.com.

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Start of the Long Session and the State of our State

Spring is just beginning to come to our mountains, and I'm hopeful that the change in season will come with a rapid improvement in our effort to heal from the devastation of Helene. By the time you read this, it will have been six months since the storm altered our landscape and community. I continue to be impressed by the way that our incredible neighbors came together immediately following the storm and the resilience that we have shown since.

The long session in Raleigh kicked off at the end of January, and it's been busy. My work has focused almost entirely on the bipartisan effort to bring relief to WNC. It's taken a lot longer than I would like, but as of mid-March we are very close to final passage of a bill that will direct \$500 million to our part of the state to help solve some of our most pressing needs. The bill that the House passed on February 25 included \$100 million to help rebuild private roads and bridges, \$140 million to start rebuilding homes, \$75 million to help restore damaged farmland, \$75 million to reimburse farmers for crop losses, and additional dollars for fire departments, volunteer organizations, debris removal and rental assistance. Just before passage, other members of the Buncombe delegation

and I were able to add in \$15 million for small business grants, as well as a program to forgive previously approved loans for local governments.

The Senate removed a number of these provisions and didn't send the bill back to the House for a vote until March 11. The House did not agree with all of the Senate changes, and so the bill will now go to a Conference Committee that I am hoping will have a final version of the bill ready for a vote before you read this. I am confident that Governor Stein will sign it as quickly as he possibly can. [Editor's Note: The bill was passed by the General Assembly on March 19 and signed by Governor Stein on the same day.]

While this bill is a positive first step, it won't be enough. And though we continue to push for more federal funding, the political leaders in Washington, in my opinion, don't seem to be making disaster relief a priority at the moment. We're going to have to do more in the NC General Assembly, and I have been given assurances from the majority party that they are committed to keep working on more funding for WNC. In the meantime, our governor and his team have been focused on ensuring that everything possible is being done to speed up the recovery. They just need funding, and

that is our job in the state legislature.

On another note, Governor Stein came to the legislature last month to deliver his State of the State address to a joint session of the General Assembly. I think he gave a solid speech focused on the issues that impact the lives of North Carolinians every day and on mostly bipartisan solutions. He started by praising all the work that those of us in WNC have done and urged quick passage of the \$500 million relief bill. He also called for the legislature to increase pay for our law enforcement officers, to make our teachers the highest paid in the southeast, to pass a \$4 billion bond to repair school buildings, and to create opportunities for people to succeed through lower housing costs and more apprenticeship programs.

While bills on a lot of other issues are flying around down in Raleigh, I am spending my time focused on ensuring WNC returns better than ever. I am worried that a scarcity mindset is setting in at the state level due to the fact that our revenue forecast for the next few years is pretty dire. It's my opinion that this is driven primarily by the fact that we have scheduled tax rate decreases for corporations and some for individuals in the coming years. While I am a strong

believer in efficient government, I think it would be prudent to pause some of these tax rate decreases so that we can fully fund the relief efforts while continuing to ensure that the other important functions of government continue.

I am pleased that we have common sense leadership here in North Carolina and look forward to moving our state forward. I had a friend tell me the other day that "all you can do is the next right thing," and that is what I am focused on. I couldn't be prouder to serve a community that is willing to work together despite partisan differences and ready to fight for our friends and neighbors when that is required.

I'm sure there are other needs in the community, as well, and I encourage you all to reach out to me if there are things that we need to pay attention to or if you are having difficulty connecting with government entities that should be doing more to help.



Rep. Eric Ager, District 115 North Carolina House of Representatives. Contact him at eric.ager@ncleg.gov or 450-4463.



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A Huge “Thank You” Is in Order

By Julie Nelms

Every now and then, I meet someone who stands out in a crowd and yet can seemingly go unnoticed. They are the kind of person who will step up and do whatever needs to be done and do it with excellence. They do not draw attention to themselves. In fact, they might even prefer to avoid the spotlight. Yet their faithfulness and their accomplishments need to be celebrated, for without them, we would not be where we are today.

I have recently had the privilege of getting to know a person of this caliber. She was born and raised in our Cane Creek community and to my knowledge has not lived anywhere else. She is fun, loving, kind, generous and hardworking. She appreciates the past and what others have sacrificed and worked so tirelessly to create in our community, and has been willing to step up and do her part. She is a beloved daughter, sister, wife and mother. Family is high on her priority list.

Whether it is her immediate family, her extended family, her church family, her home-schooling family or her larger Cane Creek community family, she can be found serving in some capacity and giving her all.

For the past five years, this special lady has been serving on the board of our Cane Creek Community Center (CCCC). During this season, she has served as both the treasurer and the point of contact for the use of the center. Through her leadership, attention to detail and her desire to continue the value of making our community a better place to live, she has worked behind the scenes to add her personal touch. Some of her accomplishments include:

- Digitizing our pen and paper record keeping system
- Creating the CCCC website, giving the community a digital hub and contact point.
- Creating the CCCC Facebook page.
- Establishing the email account for CCCC.
- Organizing the general upkeep and improvements of the center, including repainting the kitchen area and installing new window treatments.
- Processing every rental request, payment and calendar event.
- Keeping the cleaning supply closet stocked and making sure the facility is clean and ready for the next renter

- (often cleaning it herself when renters failed to do it).
- Doing whatever is needed with a servant's heart.

As you can see, we have been tremendously blessed to have this person serving on our board of directors with her knowledge, skills and wisdom. She has been such a vital part of keeping the center open and accessible. So on behalf of the board of directors and our Cane Creek Community family, we want to thank Nichole Young for her years of service and dedication to our community. You are a treasure, and we are extremely grateful for all you have done! May God continue to bless you in all your endeavors.

Julie Nelms is a board member at Cane Creek Community Center.



Nichole Young

On the Road



Phyllis and Jim Humble, who live off Merrill's Cove Road, sent us a photo from their trip to Japan last month.

Jim ran the Tokyo marathon, and then he and Phyllis visited Kyoto, Nara (where this photo was taken at Tōdai-ji) and Hakone.

Jim has now run six of the world's major marathons: New York City, Chicago, Boston, Berlin, London and now Tokyo. Congrats, Jim! And thanks (arigato!) for sharing your trip with our readers.

Send your travel photos to ralph@fairviewtowncrier.com or (text) 828-771-6983.

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Dopeler effect (n) : The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

*

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*

I'm getting stronger with age. I can now lift \$100 worth of groceries with one hand.

*

I asked my date to meet me at the gym. She never showed up. That's when I knew we weren't going to work out.

*

Just burnt my Hawaiian pizza. Guess I should have put it on aloha temperature.

*

Where do surfers learn to surf?
At boarding school.

*

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then quit. No use being a damn fool about it." —W.C. Fields



Blaine Greenfield hosts BLAINESWORLD, a webcast, and he also publishes a blog with the same name. You can reach him at bginbc@aol.com.

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A Love Letter to the Humble Spud

A favorite “not so wild edible” of mine is the potato, which, like all our common food staples, originated in the wild and was first domesticated by humans over 10,000 years ago in Chile and the Andean highlands of Peru. The original wild ancestor has narrow, snaky tubers and is bitter, foul-tasting and considered poisonous and inedible. But that humble ancestral spud and its closely related kin are responsible for the evolution of over 5,000 varieties worldwide, with over 3,000 varieties in the Andes.

At a restaurant recently, I had one of my favorite dishes: a side of amazingly crispy delicious pommes frites covered in truffle oil, rosemary, sea salt and herbs. Pommes frites is the French version of our beloved French fries, and when they are freshly made, they are outstanding.

At home, I boiled young red, purple and gold baby potatoes, tossed them in tons of fresh garlic, parsley, salt and pepper and loved every bite of these delicious spuds. Next, I'll slowly roast tri-color potatoes and sweet potatoes, tossing them in olive oil, salt, rosemary, thyme and garlic and serve them with roast chicken. Potatoes are a staple in my diet, and my beloved spouse would have eaten them for breakfast lunch and dinner seven days a week if allowed.

Potatoes are one of our essential food

crops. Over the years, I've grown over 20 varieties of potatoes on our mountain farm, as they are so easy to cultivate and thrive in our rich, organic garden beds. I would cut the seed potatoes in early spring and push them into the soil lightly, and then cover them with straw to keep out weeds. At harvest time, I could reach my hands into the straw and pluck new potatoes that were nearly clean. After the new potato season had passed, I would dig up the bed and harvest bushels of wonderful potatoes to put in the root cellar for months to come. In later years, I began experimenting with planting them in growing bags and half barrels. They did well, and I could just flip the containers upside down and harvest all the riches easily.

Potatoes have a rich and fascinating history. The English word “potato” comes from the Spanish word “patata.” The name “spud” originated in the 15th century from



the word “spudde,” which was a short, stout knife or dagger (likely perfect for peeling potatoes). Potatoes are used around the world and have been called earth apples, ground apples and earth nuts. Potatoes

are members of the solanaceae or nightshade family, which includes tomatoes, peppers and egg-plants. The vegetative leaves of potatoes are toxic and contain poisonous glycosides. If stored potatoes are exposed to light, they will eventually turn green, and these parts are poisonous to humans and other animals.

Potatoes should not be eaten raw as they are hard to digest, and we should only eat the tubers.

Potatoes are the fourth most cultivated vegetable in the world and are highly nutritious. They are primarily water and carbohydrate in their composition, but they contain high amounts of vitamin C and potassium—more than bananas, in fact. They are fat- and cholesterol-free; contain iron and essential B vitamins; provide fiber, especially in the skins; are easy to grow; store safely for long periods of time; and—let's face it—are delicious!

Ancient varieties of “heirloom potatoes” are being re-introduced, like the deep-blue, purple and yellow fleshed varieties, and

these have far more complex nutritional value than regular, white potatoes.

As a way to avoid fast-food indulgences when driving, my spouse would order one of Wendy's perfectly done baked potatoes with sour cream, chives and butter. It was a quick, nutritious, inexpensive and delicious meal on the road. Many of our health-conscious friends, myself included, have adapted this simple trick.

Potatoes were considered sacred in many southern hemisphere cultures. The Incas had a goddess named Axomamma, who ruled over the afterlife and was essentially the goddess of the potato. Potatoes were so important in their culture that, upon death, people were often buried with a potato in their tomb for good fortune in the next part of their journey.

I hope you all enjoy this once-wild edible that originated in our own southern hemisphere's wild jungles. May you all enjoy the beauties of springtime and this season of renewal, rebirth and regeneration.



Contact Roger at rogerklinger@charter.net.

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The Life of Soil: How Death Creates More Life

A lot of people look up to the heavens for hope. Lately, I have been looking under my feet—in the tendrils of chickweed climbing up telephone poles, in the bloodroot crawling through the floodplains, and in the trepidatious trout lily blooming under the shade of the dogwood tree. With the riverbeds still filled with rusty cars, trails in the forest crowded with fallen trees, and our town still unrecognizable, it is easy to feel stuck in a place of grief. They say grief is love with nowhere to go. This spring, I am taking my piles of grief and transforming it into something that will grow.

A Roman philosopher (and the late '90s band Semisonic) said that new beginnings come from some other beginning's end. Nowhere is this cycle more evident than in the soil beneath our feet, where decay gives rise to renewal. In the garden and the forest, death is not an end but a transformation—a vital process that fuels new beginnings. The rich, living world of soil teaches us that life and death are not opposing forces but essential partners in creation. Through decomposition, organic matter is broken down, nutrients are released and new growth is made possible. In this way, soil serves as a profound reminder that death is not destruction but a necessary step in the continuous cycle of life.

Soil is actually teeming with life. A single handful of healthy soil contains billions of microorganisms—bacteria, fungi, protozoa and other tiny creatures—all working together to break down organic matter and transform it into nutrients that plants can use. These microorganisms, along with insects and earthworms, decompose fallen leaves, dead plants and animal remains, turning them into the building blocks of future life through essential nutrients. Without this process of death and decay, life as we know it would not be possible.

One of the most intentional ways to physically harness this process of renewal is through hügelkultur, which is a centuries-old gardening method that transforms fallen trees and organic matter into rich, self-sustaining garden beds. Hügelkultur, from German, translates to “hill culture” and refers to the practice of building raised garden mounds using decomposing wood, branches, leaves and soil. This technique mirrors the natural process of a forest, where fallen logs slowly break down and nourish new plant life.

Hügelkultur beds begin with a base of rotting wood, which is then layered with compostable materials and topped with soil. Over time, the wood decomposes, acting as a sponge that retains moisture, improves soil structure and releases

nutrients slowly. This process creates a long-lasting, fertile environment where vegetables, fruits and flowers can thrive. Beds are often huge mounds in the shape of a long triangle, but they can take any shape or even be created by digging holes in the ground and filling them with wood, grass clippings and compost.

By utilizing hügelkultur, we can directly participate in the cycle of life and death, repurposing fallen trees and decaying plant matter into something that sustains new growth, in the ground and inside ourselves. What was once waste and loss can become an opportunity and a resource that can nourish the next generation of life. Ready for renewal, I hauled all the fallen branches into a pile in my soon-to-be garden. I imagined the food and medicine this unassuming garden would grow, all the ways it would nourish our bellies and fill our hearts. I watched a goldfinch in the trees above, blazing from bud to branch, slowly



Root Cause Farm volunteers helped with spring clean up last month.

crafting a nest. When everything feels out of control, there is always this: the soil, the trees, the goldfinch building her nest, the wild verdant grasses growing in the muddy mess where the river receded, the fallen trees bearing life to new swaths of soil and plant life. All of it a constant reminder that life is a continuous, regenerative process. Every time the wind shifts, a seed is blown and something new takes root.

Amy Miller is a friend of Root Cause Farm.
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rootcausefarm.org.

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Professional organic skincare lines combine ancient botanical wisdom with modern scientific research. The result? Products that work in harmony with your skin’s natural processes, not against them. From antioxidant-rich serums to gentle cleansers infused with essential oils, these formulations nourish at the cellular level.

What separates professional organic products from supermarket alternatives is their potency and purity. Higher concentrations of active ingredients mean visible results without the harsh side effects common to chemical-laden products. Your skin absorbs up to 60% of what you apply—choosing organic means choosing wellness inside and out.

Beyond personal benefits, embracing organic skincare supports sustainable farming practices and reduced environmental impact. Many professional brands also maintain cruelty-free standards and eco-friendly packaging.

With 47 years as an esthetician and the founder of the first day spa in Texas, Brea Gratia excels in acne and aging skin exper-

tise, offering sought-after solutions. She is the owner of Gratia Botanica, 4 Olde Eastwood Village Blvd., Asheville. 333-5345.

Vacant Home Insurance

Vacant home insurance is a specialized policy designed to protect properties that are unoccupied for an extended period (typically 30 days or more). Standard homeowner’s insurance often excludes coverage for risks such as vandalism, theft or water damage when a home is vacant, as unoccupied properties are more susceptible to such issues.

This type of insurance is ideal for homeowners in transition. Coverage can include protection against fire, weather damage, liability risks and even break-ins.

It’s important to inform your agent if your home will be vacant, as failing to disclose this could void your existing policy. Premiums for vacant home insurance may be higher due to the increased risks, but the peace of mind it offers is invaluable.

Joanne Winkler is the owner of ESCO Insurance Agency and lives in Fairview. 231-6577 or esco1960.com.

Fuel Your Body Right

Follow these key principles to support energy, strength, and long-term health.

Prioritize animal proteins. High-quality protein is essential for muscle function,

metabolism, and overall vitality. Choose nutrient-dense options like grass-fed beef, pasture-raised poultry, and wild-caught fish. **Choose the right fats.** Not all fats are created equal. Focus on healthier sources like tallow, avocado oil and first cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil. **Hydrate with purpose.** Adding a pinch of sea salt or an electrolyte supplement helps the body absorb and retain fluids more effectively. This supports energy levels, prevents dehydration, and enhances overall performance. **Eliminate processed foods.** Refined grains, added sugars, and artificial preservatives don’t just lack nutrients—they disrupt the body’s natural balance. These foods can spike blood sugar, increase inflammation, and lead to energy crashes. Prioritizing whole, unprocessed foods is one of the most effective ways to support long-term health. **Nourish for the long run.** Good nutrition is not about following fads but about making sustainable choices that fuel your body properly.

Fletcher resident Ashley Lucas has a Ph.D. in nutrition and is a Registered Dietitian. myphdweightloss.com

7 Reasons to Buy a Home

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in Q4 2000 to \$417,700 in Q4 2023. That’s greater than 6% appreciation per year on average. **Equity.** Money paid for rent is money that you’ll never see again, but paying your mortgage lets you build equity ownership interest in your home. **Tax benefit.** If you itemize deductions on your federal tax return, the US Tax Code lets you deduct the interest you pay on your mortgage, your property taxes (up to \$10,000) and some of the costs involved in buying a home. Talk to your accountant. **Savings.** Building equity in your home is a ready-made savings plan. And when you sell, you can generally exclude up to \$250,000 (\$500,000 for a married couple) of gain without owing any federal income tax. **Predictability.** Unlike rent, your fixed-rate mortgage payments don’t rise from year to year. So, as a percentage of your income, your housing costs may actually decline over time. However, keep in mind that property taxes and insurance costs may increase. **Freedom.** The home is yours. You can decorate any way you want and choose the types of upgrades and new amenities that appeal to your lifestyle. **Stability.** Remaining in one neighborhood for several years allows you and your family time to build long-lasting relationships within the community.

Jenny Brunet is the Broker-in-Charge at Cool Mountain Realty & Construction. 628-3088, coolmountainrealty.com.

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Patrick Nichols, Fairview's Profile in Courage

By John Ager

Imagine you're a young man who has suffered a motorcycle accident and faces a lifetime in a wheelchair. How would you respond? Patrick Nichols is that man, and his mother Susan wants you to hear about his remarkable answer to that question.

Susan and Nick Nichols are well-known in Fairview, living on their farm on Garren Creek Road. They were regulars at the Black Mountain Saturday market, selling their lamb for the most part. But it is their son Patrick that fills them with pride.

"This journey started 20 years ago when he had a motorcycle accident that left him a paraplegic," Susan said. "He went to a rehab center, where he learned to care for himself, including how to get in a car. But Patrick wanted to drive a truck! They wouldn't pay for hand controls so he ordered them and paid for them, and he was on his way.

"As I remember that time, I can hear Patrick tell his doctors that he would overcome this disability, and that he would walk again. But they shook their heads, telling him that it was not in his future, barring some medical breakthrough. But maybe there was another path to overcoming."

Patrick moved on from truck driving to another passion: forestry. He immediately went back to Haywood Community College and received his forestry degree. And then he worked at both the NC Forest Service and the US Forest Service.

And while at the Forest Service, Patrick learned how to skydive. An article appeared



in the *Citizen-Times* and *USA Today*, which highlighted Patrick doing what very few other paraplegics could do. What a story! But after a few broken bones, skydiving became off limits.

But the sky had him hooked, so he started flying lessons. He had to teach the instructors so that he could do it with hand controls. He received his private pilot license and then, last year, his commercial license. Currently, he owns two planes—one he rents, and the other is being rebuilt.

Patrick holds down a factory job to pay his own way. He is currently working at a factory in Tennessee but still lives in Fairview in his own home. Every day at 6 am he drives 1½ hours to work.

"We have always been amazed at what Patrick has accomplished and his interests," said Susan.

I think we all should be amazed. We talk a lot about resilience after Helene, but Patrick Nichols has taken that concept to a whole new level. If you see him getting gas or grocery shopping, give him a thumbs up. He deserves it.

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