

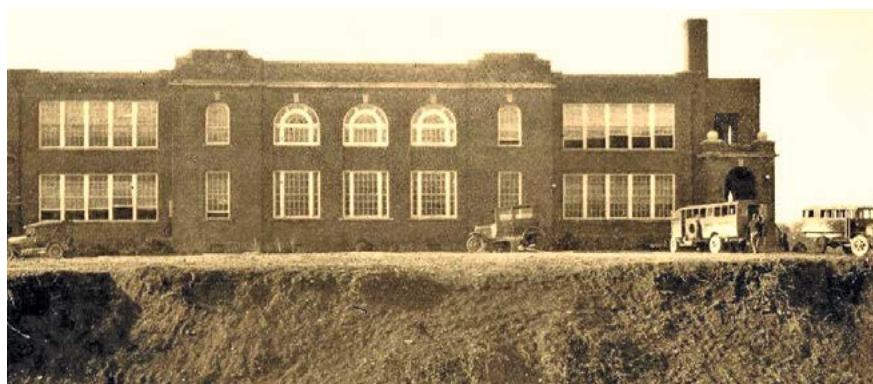
Fairview School (Now Fairview Elementary) Turns 100!

SAVE THE DATE! On April 2, Fairview Elementary, which started as the Fairview School, will celebrate 100 years of service to the community.

There are plenty of folks in our area who attended and fondly remember the original school, at the same location, but newer residents may not know about the first building.

An article in the *Asheville Citizen-Times* in 1990 gave some of the early history. “Fairview School was erected in 1924,” wrote Tula Andonaras. “Small community schools such as Black Knob School on Possum Trot Road and Gap Creek School had served the area until that year when a bond election of \$63,000 was passed to build the first consolidated school.

“By the time the last of the small community schools consolidated into



We’re looking to find out more info about this photo of the Fairview School. What year was it taken? Do you know anything about the buses (on the right)? Tell us what you know!

Fairview in 1939, a log addition housing a lunchroom and two classrooms was added, also a wooden gym and agriculture and home economics.”

In 1990, the original building was

demolished and the current building was opened. The school’s original gym, situated in the parking lot, now serves as the Fairview Community Center.

If you attended the Fairview School or taught there, the school would love to interview you.

Volunteers will be needed but plans are still coming together. Be sure to check out next month’s issue for more info.

Help FES Celebrate This Milestone!

The school is asking the community for mementos, memorabilia, stories and memories.

Loan your physical mementos and memorabilia by bringing them to the school’s front desk during regular school hours or to the public library during their regular hours. They will be on display at one of the two locations, to be decided by the organizers.

For digital copies of physical mementos and memorabilia, and for memories and stories, you can email or text those to the *Crier’s* editor, Clark Aycok, at clark@fairviewtowncrier.com or 828-771-6983. If you email or text, please include any details you know about the submission as well as your contact info. You are welcome to leave a voicemail with your memories—and be sure to leave your contact info for that too. If Clark picks up, let him know and you can call back to leave your message.

A Meow Heard Across the Country



Bootsy (photo courtesy of owners) and the FairviewStrong.org board members and their families.



Over a year after Helene, one Fairview family got a surprise “meow” when Bootsy the cat returned home after being missing since the storm.

The story made its way to CBS’s “60 Minutes,” which aired in November. That’s where something else beautiful happened.

A gentleman from San Antonio saw the broadcast and felt called to help. He wishes to remain anonymous and simply asked to be described as “a man from a far-off land.”

He reached out to the New York station, was transferred to Atlanta, then to Asheville—and from there, the Asheville team tracked down Fairview Business Association contacts Joanne Winkler and Liz Bopp. Joanne, who is also a board member of FairviewStrong.org, had the honor of speaking with him. He’s a veteran, a cat lover, and a man of faith who believes God led him to send support for Bootsy’s veterinary care and for Fairview. He even sent a personalized holiday card and shared the names of his own beloved cats: Jolene, Joshua, Ruth, Frances, Sheila, Mammias, and Old Man.

There is good in the world, and a “man from a far-off land” reminded us of that.

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Important Primary Election Dates

February 6	Voter registration deadline (5 pm)
February 12	In-person early voting begins
February 17	Absentee ballot request deadline (5 pm)
February 28	In-person early voting ends (3 pm)
March 3	Primary Election Day
March 3	Absentee ballot return deadline (7:30 pm)

See pages 16–17 for a full voting guide for the upcoming primary election.

Share the Love: A Night of Community

Root Cause Farm invites you to “Share the Love” on February 13, from 5–8 pm, at Cultivated Cocktails (161 Charlotte Highway, Asheville) for an evening filled with live music, handcrafted spirits and meaningful connection.

The evening will feature live music by Nikki Talley and Jason Sharp, an Asheville-based duo known for their soulful blend of folk, Americana and alternative country.

When you come out to “Share the Love,” you’re doing more than enjoying a great night out. You’re supporting Root Cause Farm’s work to grow community solutions to hunger. Funds raised will help double internship and community education capacity and increase no-cost organic produce production by at least 15% in 2026.

Last year, we distributed over \$200,000 in fresh produce, served 120 families weekly, educated more than 50 children, and engaged more than 80 volunteers. By showing up for Share the Love, you will help ensure this impact continues to grow—and leave knowing you helped grow hope right here in Fairview.

—Nicole Coston, Executive Director of Root Cause Farm



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COMMUNITY EVENTS & UPDATES

ONGOING

PARENTS HELPING PARENTS Grace2Grow Family Coaching

8 pm, Tuesdays. Weekly support group for parents of tweens and teens. "Adolescence isn't terminal... it just feels like it!" Quick tip and group problem-solving each week. \$10/session. You can get more info at christi@grace2growfamilycoaching.com.

ONGOING

ASHEVILLE-BUNCOMBE COUNTY SENIOR GAMES

The Senior Games celebrate active and creative aging for adults over 50, featuring athletic events such as pickleball, swimming and track & field, as well as Silver Arts including dance, poetry, pottery and sculpture. Register through March 31; events start on April 11. To register or get more info, email Colt Miller at cmiller@ashevillenc.gov or call 707-2376.

FEBRUARY 3

WNC PROSTATE SUPPORT GROUP

Speaker: Dr. Carl Klutke with Mission Urology & Boston Scientific. Free via ZOOM and First Baptist Church of Asheville. wncprostate@gmail.com or 419-4565.

FEBRUARY 8

"A THING CALLED LOVE"

Re.Imagine Gallery & Studios

12-4 pm. A reception for this new showcase explores love in all forms—romantic, familial, communal—through painting, sculpture, photography, and mixed media. For more info, go to reimaginefairview.com. 15 Spivey Lake Dr., Fairview.

FEBRUARY 9

AMATEUR RADIO LICENSING CLASSES

Mountain West Firearms

6:30-8:30 pm. Entry-level technician classes will be held every Monday and Wednesday through February 25. \$50 deposit to register: \$25 for a coursebook and, upon completion, a \$25 gift card is awarded. No registration deposit required for remedial attendees.

A separate, general class licensing course will meet once a week on Sunday evenings, 5:30-8:30 pm, beginning February 8 through March 15.

Register at ticketleap.events/events/mtnwestclass or save the transaction fee and sign up at 1484 Charlotte Hwy.

GARREN CREEK FOUNDATION

Tuesdays, Free food and supply pantry, 4:30-6:30 pm. **Sundays**, GCF and Myco Rhizing will host a weekly Sunday (except the last Sunday) Growers and Makers Market, from 1-4 pm. If you want to vend or get more info, email info@garren-creek.org or text 828-989-2556. **Third Thursdays**, Community dinner and barn jam, 6-9 pm. February 7 from 11 am-1 pm, **Free GMRS radio class** with Justin Hamel. Sign up at tinyurl.com/mry3ppry. All events are at 1198 Garren Creek Rd. and are free. Donations always accepted. garrencreek.org.

WILDERNESS MUSE

February 6, 12-6 pm: Last day of retail shopping at Cane Creek Station. **February 13**, Galentine's Day & Gift Registry Release Party. Be the first to see the new Wilderness Muse Creative Marketplace at 1185 Charlotte Highway. 1536 Cane Creek Rd. **February 14**, Wilderness Muse Creative Marketplace officially opens at 1185 Charlotte Highway. **February 20**, 6-8 pm: Beginner Beadweaving with Leigh Shultis, at the Cane Creek Station location. For updated class schedule, pricing and to register, go to wildernessmuse.com.

ADVERTISER EVENTS

February 19, **Plant-based cooking class**. Fairview Seventh Day Adventist Church. See ad on page 15.

February 28, **Chili cook-off and silent auction**. The PLACE Fellowship Church. See ad on page 11.

FOOD PANTRIES

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

Root Cause Farm 26 Joe Jenkins Rd., Fairview. 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



Spring Mountain Community Center Updates

FROM THE BOARD OF SMCC: Our **monthly board meeting** is February 10 at 6:30 pm. The meeting is open to anyone. We will serve up **Valentine's Day desserts** on February 14 from 4:30-6 pm. Pickup will be downstairs. Reservations suggested, as we will not have a large number of extra items. Additional items may be available when you call. Desserts will include: red velvet cake, cheesecake, pecan pie, pineapple upside down cake, chocolate cherry cake, French silk pie, peppermint bark and chocolate fudge. Please call Susan at 231-7526 through February 9. After that date, call Shirley at 777-4047. Price will be \$6 each. We accept cash or check. All proceeds will go to the general fund and/or playground.

Free Community Classes at Catalyst Fiber Workshop Craft Gathering

February 18 from 1-4 pm

These free Sunday afternoon craft gatherings are designed to bring people together to build relationships and inspire others. Bring a current work in progress, grab a friend, and join to spin, stitch or mend together. Registration required at catalystfiberworkshop.com.

Experimental Basket Club

February 21 from 6-8pm

These free basket focused gatherings are designed for folks with prior basketry knowledge to come together to share skills, build relationships and inspire one another. Bring a current work in progress or some materials, grab a friend and join to coil, twine and weave together.

Registration required at catalystfiberworkshop.com. 1695 Charlotte Highway.

Community Forest Gains Protection

If you read our story last month about the new trails coming to the Fairview Community Forest, you already know there's a lot to look forward to in the woods. Now, there's more good news: the WORX Project campus at the center of the forest has been officially protected, adding to the growing network of conserved land that will be open to everyone.

Conserving Carolina recently purchased an extra 27.5 acres—nicknamed the "donut hole"—to ensure the WORX Project can continue its hands-on educational programs without worry. This land will be placed under a permanent conservation easement and eventually transferred to Camp Grier, which runs the WORX Project. The surrounding forest will still be managed by Conserving Carolina, with trails and public access overseen by Camp Grier.

This means local students have even more room to explore, learn, and try out career-focused programs—everything from environmental stewardship to woodworking and sustainable agriculture—while the community gets a chance to enjoy new hiking and biking trails.

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

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Elections, Repairs, New Schedules and More

February invites us to slow down, connect, and take care of the small but meaningful things. This month, our library will be busy as a gathering place for civic participation, family connection, creativity, getting your clothing mended, and lifelong learning.

Early Voting at the Library

We are proud to once again serve our community as an early voting site, with voting taking place in our Community Room.

Early voting runs from February 12 to 28 (but not on February 14 and 15). Hours are Monday to Friday, 8 am–7:30 pm; Saturday, February 21 and Sunday, February 22, 10 am–3 pm; and Saturday, February 28, 8 am–3 pm.

Any registered voter may vote early at any of the county’s 11 early voting locations.

[See pages 16 and 17 for a full voter’s guide.]

Expanded Library Hours

We’re excited to remind everyone that our expanded service hours are now in effect, giving you more opportunities to visit, browse, attend programs, or simply spend time in the space.

Our new hours are Tuesdays: 9 am–6 pm; Wednesdays: 9 am–6 pm; Thursdays:

9 am–7 pm; Fridays: 9 am–5 pm; and Saturdays: 9 am–5 pm.



Sewing in the Stacks! (with WNC Repair Café)

Due to early voting, this sewing and mending clinic will take place right in the library, hence the nickname! On February 19 from 4–7 pm, bring items needing sewing or mending (at the latest about 6:15 pm to allow time for repairs). Repairs are free but not guaranteed. Volunteers are highly skilled and enjoy giving new life to your items. Interested in volunteering as a sewer? Contact WNCRepairCafe@gmail.com. Buttons may be replaced, seams may be saved,

and a good time will be stitched together.

New Story Time & Baby Gym Schedule

Our early childhood programming is designed to meet children where they are and give caregivers a welcoming place to connect.

Baby Gym, Wednesdays at 10:30 am. For babies ages 4–18 months and their caregivers. Enjoy mats for rolling, bouncing, and climbing, plus a baby ball pit and bubbles for sensory fun.

Preschool Story Time, Thursdays at 10:30 am. A lively program for children ages 3–5 featuring books, songs, rhymes, and hands-on activities.

Toddler Story Time (new time), Fridays at 9:30 am. For children ages 18 months–3 years. Expect stories, movement, and songs that may just get stuck in your head all day.

KIDS PROGRAMS

Afternoon Art Experience

Our popular series continues this February for ages 6–12. Participants explore artists and styles while experimenting with different materials and always leave with artwork of their own. February 13 and 27 from 3:30–4:30 pm.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Book Club

Our library book club meets in two formats each month. In person: Second Friday at 11 am at the library (February 13). Online: Third Thursday at 6 pm (February 19). Email jen.waite@buncombenc.gov for the online meeting link. Our February selection is *James* by Percival Everett.

Paper Play with Suzanne Becker

This much-loved series continues on February 6 from 1–3 pm with a session on Victorian Puzzle Purses, a historical folded-paper form once used for notes and valentines. Learn the folding technique and decorate your own. No experience is necessary but registration is required.

Mindfulness Meditation Offsite in February

Please note that Mindfulness Meditation will be held offsite for the month of February due to early voting. The group will meet Thursdays in February, from 3–4:30 pm, at the Flying Cloud Farm House at 1858 Charlotte Highway. This ongoing course series offers practical skills and tools for cultivating well-being by strengthening awareness of the body, mind and emotions.

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

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A Winter Reset with no Resolutions

by Amy Allemana

Winter is the season when the moon really gets to shine. With trees stripped bare and nights stretching longer, the moon seems bigger than ever. The poet and farmer Wendell Berry said, “To go in the dark with a light is to know the light. To know the dark, go dark.” Winter’s moon offers us a powerful opportunity to turn inward, unwind and reflect on our lives.

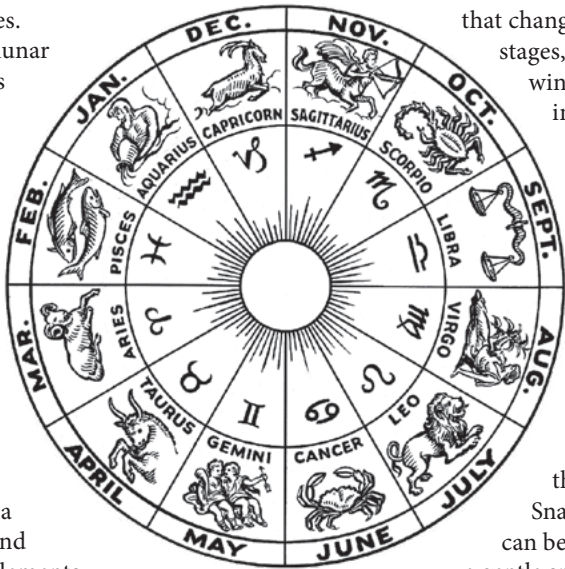
As a licensed clinician in private practice, I notice a consistent rise in anxiety and emotional distress beginning in January. Winter’s short days and cold nights, paired with the tradition of New Year’s resolutions, can feel especially heavy. In the US, we organize our lives around the solar Gregorian calendar, tracking time by the Earth’s orbit around the sun. This framework privileges fixed dates, long-term planning and instant productivity. For many folks, that pace doesn’t always match how real human change unfolds.

In my work as a therapist, I help people step back and ask new questions. What if anxiety is a signal rather than a personal weakness? One part of this approach is recognizing how our calendar can reinforce disconnection from natural rhythms. From a psychological perspective, we can symbolically explore another way of relating to time through

the moon’s cycles.

The Chinese lunar calendar follows the moon’s phases, making the New Year a wandering holiday that begins in February, at the second new moon. It moves through twelve-year cycles; each associated with a zodiac animal and one of the five elements. These pairings reflect a worldview that the universe—the stars, the tides, and the alternating rhythm of day and night—operate in a predictable circle of life. Like the seasons, change unfolds gradually, emphasizing preparation rather than sudden transformation.

This lunar orientation offers a compassionate reminder: instead of reacting to cultural urgency, we can allow the Lunar New Year to reshape our relationship with time and achievement. The Chinese zodiac offers a supportive approach, using animals and elemental symbolism as creative guides for engaging the year ahead. It reminds us



that change unfolds in stages, much like winter easing into spring.

The animals of the Chinese zodiac are arranged intentionally. We are currently concluding the Year of the Wood

Snake, a time that can be imagined as a gentle snake curled at the bottom of a basket,

sleepily awakening from hibernation and shedding its final skin. From a therapeutic lens, mental health deepens when we engage imagination and turn inward. Rather than focusing on resolutions, we might ask: What is still growing quietly beneath the surface? What needs more time? What energy feels natural, and what feels forced?

Beginning February 17, the Chinese Lunar New Year ushers in the Year of the Fire Horse. The careful preparation of the Wood Snake creates space for momentum, direction and heat. The shift from wood to fire is like embers

warming before a flame takes hold. What was clarified inwardly now begins to move outward with confidence. The Fire Horse reflects a shift toward purposeful action, where motivation emerges from inner alignment rather than compulsion.

Psychologically, orienting ourselves to lunar cycles reminds us that meaningful change doesn’t happen on command but emerges organically in both humans and nature. In a culture fixated on speed and immediate results, this perspective can feel radical. If you are feeling behind or pressured to change faster than you can manage, using a different cultural lens on time can transform a sense of personal failure into an appreciation for good timing and cyclical, symbolic and embodied rhythms of change. Feeling slow or uncertain doesn’t mean something is wrong. It may be a sign that important inner work is still underway, inviting us to rest, reflect and listen to the moon in the deep heart of winter.

Amy Allemana, LCSW, is a licensed therapist and equine-facilitated psychotherapist at Project HNG in Fairview. Through hands-on, ground-based work with horses, Amy offers clients of all ages a way to connect with their inner experience. For inquiries about the therapy program, please visit projecthng.org/programs or email amy@butterflymedicinecounseling.com.

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Seeing Shadows and Feeling Jet Streams

Groundhog Day is a popular tradition celebrated in the US and Canada each year on February 2. It derives from the Pennsylvania Dutch superstition that if a groundhog emerges from its burrow on this day and sees a shadow due to clear weather, it will retreat to its den and winter will persist for six more weeks. If it does not see its shadow because of cloudiness, spring will arrive early.

While Punxsutawney Phil claims to be the nation's official forecasting groundhog, he's not the only furry forecaster. There's a great website, groundhog-day.com, that's a source for lots of groundhog information and predictions for 2026. This site not only covers the more than 75 groundhogs in the US and Canada and their forecasts all in one site, but also has a notable additional listing of alternative groundhogs, which include: other species, taxidermized groundhogs, plush stuffed animals and folks in costume (think sports mascots). Some other notable contenders include General Beauregard Lee from Atlanta; Snerd from Garner, NC; and Pisgah Piper, a white tree squirrel in Brevard. Piper also predicts the winner of the Super Bowl.

While Groundhog Day is a way to



Pisgah Pete, of Brevard

have a little fun at mid-winter, climate records and statistics tell us that winter isn't over. Climatologically speaking, the three coldest months of the year are December, January and February, so winter typically still has a good bit to go when the groundhog comes out in search of his shadow.

The weather pattern over the last few months and even the next several, as well, are more typical of a weak "La Nina" winter, or neutral pattern. In short, that usually means that there are two competing jet streams—one out of the polar regions of northern Canada

and the second, a milder flow, bringing storms and milder air from the Pacific eastward across the southern US. [This column was written before Winter Storm Fran brought extremely cold conditions to our region at the end of last month.]

We have had quite a bit of back and forth between these two flows, starting last fall and so far this winter. The northern stream has brought us some cold blasts from central Canada but no real numbing or lasting cold. This more northerly flow put a damper on any medium-to-heavy precipitation events, with below-normal precipitation into early January, but we picked up a major rain event with 2 to 3 inches of rain. Our last two big rain events of more than one inch of rain were back in late September. In fact, in 2025 in Fairview, I measured just over 45 inches of rain, in contrast to 2024, when we had 69 inches. The average annual precipitation is 55 to 60 inches in the Fairview area.

Occasionally, the two jet streams merge and a storm will form in the Gulf of Mexico or off the Carolina coast. So far this winter, these Northeasters have brought snow to parts of the upper Northeastern US and New England. As these storms pull away, sometimes we

get a dusting of snow and strong winds on the back of these systems. However, so far, we've gotten a westerly flow of milder air with moderate temperatures. I think for the most part this back and forth will continue, with the milder air winning out a good deal of the time over the next two months. Maybe we will get some heavy snow—winter is not over by a long shot—even though we can start to notice an increase in the hours and minutes of daylight as we work our way through February and head toward the spring equinox in March.

Finally, if you need a little cheering up this month, take a look at this link (tinyurl.com/yup4xdeh) from *Our State* magazine, which features many winter blooming plants you will find in our area.

This Month's Question

This may be the last mention of snow in the column for a while. What are the typical extremes for snowfall in March?



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



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My Brother, The Fantastic Four and Many More

By Jan Bryan Dixon

My brother, Steven Michael Dixon, grew up and lived in Fairview. He was also a caregiver to my grandfather for many years and is still helping others today. In January 2025, Steven had an extreme health crisis that came out of nowhere. There were no warning signs. I called for help and four firefighters came from the Fairview Volunteer Fire Station.

That night, there was extreme ice and snow, making travel dangerous and difficult. Nevertheless, the Fantastic Four, as I call them, came and our family was grateful. Steven was taken to the hospital, but he would not recover. He was put on life support, and my mom and I knew we would not be able to bring my brother and her son back home. My mom made the decision to donate his organs to help other families in need and give them some hope.

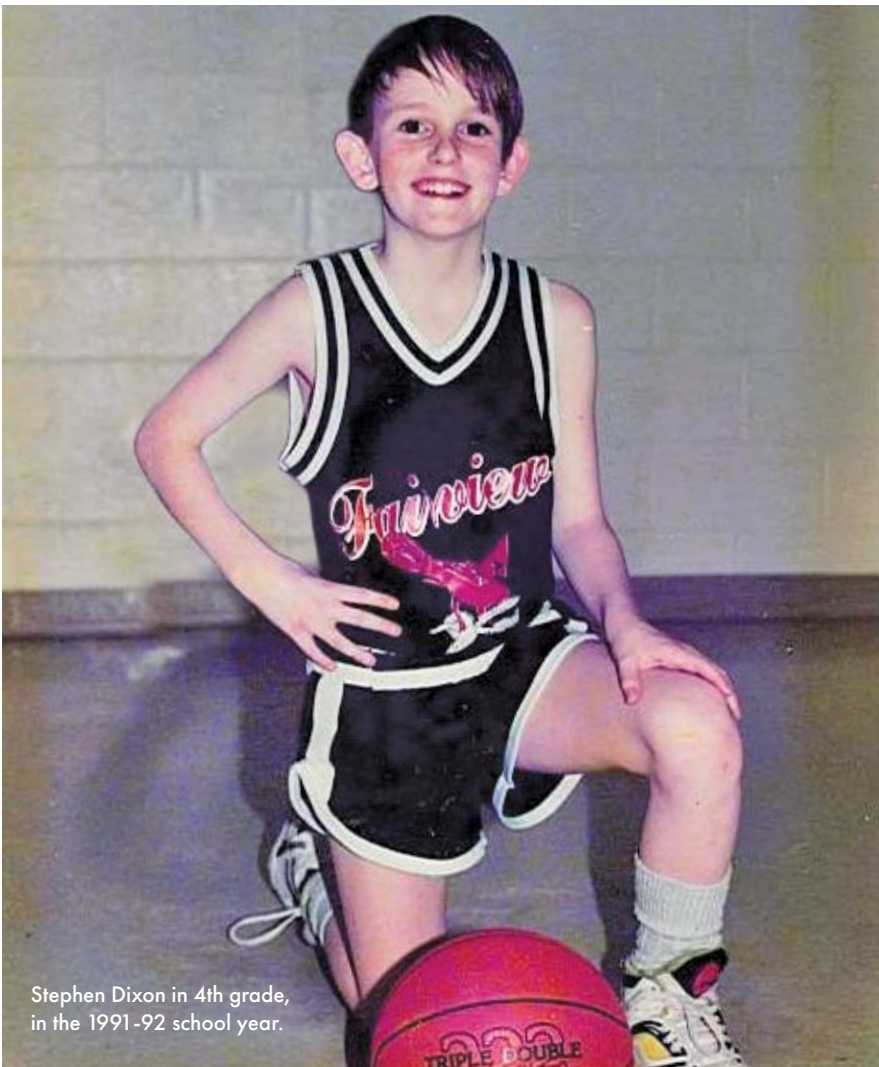
Two of the Fairview firefighters came by the room and gave my mom and me hugs that we needed in that moment. A few days later, they happened to be bringing others who needed help to the hospital, and they came by the room to check on us. They have hearts of gold! My brother's organs went to many people in North Carolina or South Carolina. I want to thank all of the amazing doctors, staff members and nurses in the ICU for helping to stop my brother's pain and suffering. They were all incredible. My brother is not here in Fairview at our

family's home anymore, but he is still helping people and their families like he helped ours for so many years. One of the organ recipients who received help from my brother's organs wrote a letter to my mom through the Life Share organization. She said she is thankful for my brother's gift of being a donor for her. She has a challenging road ahead, but was grateful for what she received. That is the gift of life.

I want to reiterate that my brother took care of our grandfather for many years as his nurse. There is no way our family could have taken care of my grandfather in those dark years without my brother's presence. One of my favorite Bible verses is 1 Timothy 6:7 from the New Kings James version: "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." The real treasure is your health and your family and close friends. Also having a relationship with our Lord and Savior helps because things can happen in an instant. I am thankful for my brother being here for 43 years of his life and knowing he is in a place that is free of pain.

I wanted people to know this story since our family did not have a funeral for him. I thought this story needed to be told and shared. The picture of my brother playing basketball is my favorite. I will also hold onto the memories of me and my brother fishing in Cane Creek, wearing our waders on a hot summer day.

God Bless.





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My Best Pasta Dish

Here's another pasta recipe. It's cold. We need the carbs.

Marcella Hazan brought real Italian cooking into American kitchens. Regional dishes. Simple ingredients. Easy methods. Amazing results. Her pasta Bolognese is a work of art and perfect for a weekend or snow day dinner. Everyone loves it. This is easy cooking, low and slow. You can nap. Twice. Just stir once in a while.

I've made this for 40 years. It remains the best pasta dish; the best sauce I know. If you've never had Bolognese, this will turn your idea of Italian food on its head. Enjoy!



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



PASTA BOLOGNESE

2 lbs vegetable oil
1 stick unsalted butter, divided
1 C chopped onion
1 ¼ C chopped celery
1 ¼ C chopped carrot
1 ½ lbs ground chuck
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 C whole milk, at room temperature
¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg (or a pinch of recently purchased, ground nutmeg)
2 C dry white wine (Italian if you want, but a not-at-all expensive Sauvignon Blanc does the job at my house)
3 C canned, whole tomatoes with their juice
1 lb of wide, flat pasta (tagliatelle or fettuccine work well)
Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

- 1 Over medium heat, warm vegetable oil and 6 tablespoons of butter in a heavy, 5-quart pot, like a Dutch oven, until butter melts and stops foaming. Don't let the butter brown. Add chopped onions and cook, stirring frequently, until softened and translucent, not brown, about 5 minutes.
- 2 Add chopped celery and carrots, stirring to coat with oil and butter, until softened but not brown, 3 minutes or less.
- 3 Reduce heat to low and immediately pour in whole milk. Bring to a low simmer, stirring frequently, until all liquid evaporates and fat at the bottom of the pan appears transparent.
- 4 Add ground chuck, salt (generous pinch of Kosher or a pinch of table) and freshly ground black pepper. Break up meat with a wooden spoon and cook, stirring occasionally, until meat is no longer red.
- 5 Stir in nutmeg. Pour in dry white wine and gently simmer, stirring frequently, until wine evaporates, about 1 hour, 15 minutes at our altitude.
- 6 Add tomatoes and juice, stirring well. When sauce begins to bubble, lower heat so the sauce cooks at a bare simmer—a few bubbles rising to the top now and then.
- 7 Cook, uncovered, 3 hours (or longer), stirring from time to time. (A clever, slightly irreverent cook might make this sauce in an oven-safe pot and, at this point, place that pot, uncovered, into a 300-325° oven). On the stove top (or in the oven), ensure the sauce doesn't get too dry or it will stick. If needed, microwave ½ cup of water and stir into the sauce, just enough to keep it moist. When sauce has simmered for the required time, allow any water to evaporate. When you notice the fat separating from the sauce, it is done.
- 8 Cook pasta in boiling, salted water, then drain and toss pasta with remaining butter. While pasta cooks, check the sauce's seasoning, adding salt or pepper as needed, and keep warm.
- 9 Toss pasta with sauce (I use the pasta cooking pot) and serve in warmed bowls. Add grated cheese and enjoy!

Notes

- If it seems like I'm being bossy and heavy-handed about the milk, vegetable oil or browning, that's because I am. E-mail me if you want to know the reasons why. I love to hear from you.
- We Southern cooks have our biscuits and the fluffy vs. flaky debate. My Italian friends have their Bolognese and the tomato vs. tomato-less debate. I like both: biscuits and Bolognese.
- Low and slow cooking develops and melds flavors, but it also allows the meat to develop the tender, velvety texture that's a hallmark of this sauce.
- The nutmeg is probably the most important ingredient. It does some heavy lifting...all in the background.

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Agent Spotlight CHRISTY McFADDEN



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— Deb C.

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Getting to Know the Neighbors

For most of my adult life, I have been all work.

Not because I love being busy, but because that is often what it takes to keep an entrepreneurial journey moving forward. You show up, you get inspired, put your head down, and it's off to the races. You just keep going. Momentum has felt especially important during the last few years, and stopping too long after 2024 has felt a little risky.

As we prepared to move Wilderness Muse into Fairview Station at 1185 Charlotte Highway, something unexpected happened. The buildout slowed things down in a way I did not anticipate. Instead of moving from errand to errand, I found myself spending more time in one place and, as a result, with the people around me.

I started to get to know my neighbors. If you live in Fairview, you already know how this happens. You run into the same people again and again. Getting coffee. Standing at a takeout counter. Passing each other in the parking lot. Trying not to make eye contact as you check out in Food Lion. Eventually, sometimes even years later, those familiar nods turn into conversations. This is how connections can happen in Fairview.

In the same parking lot as my new storefront, The Local Joint and the

Joint Next Door are places many of us already rely on. They are dependable, familiar and consistently good. But when I stopped running in-and-out during construction, I realized that they are also gathering places. I would sit with a cup of coffee and hear about someone's kid starting school. I learned who grew up here and who moved here later. As someone who is surprisingly introverted, I found myself staying longer than planned, listening to good music, and talking with people I might not have otherwise met.

A few doors down from the new Wilderness Muse, Americare Pharmacy has been doing what good local pharmacies have always done. They know their people. They take time to check in. They are family-owned and -operated, with deep roots in the community. That sense of familiarity and care, the feeling that you are more than just a number, plays a big role in what makes this area feel like a neighborhood instead of just a stretch of highway.

Through everything, the *Fairview Town Crier* continues the steady work of keeping everyone informed. They share updates about events, meetings, announcements and local milestones. In a small community like ours, that kind of focus helps keep people connected and aware of what is happening around them.

It's a reminder that local stories at all levels still matter.

Getting to know my new neighbors has solidified the way that I think about the work we do at Wilderness Muse.

Creativity is often talked about as something you sit down and "do." On purpose. You make the thing, learn the skill, try the class. But I have been reminded this winter that creativity is also cultivated by proximity. By spending time in places where conversations happen naturally. By listening. By letting yourself linger long enough to be influenced by the people around you.

Renovating the carwash attached to the AMOCO and Local Joint at Fairview Station has required me to try something new. To slow the pace. To forge new relationships, not just paint walls and hang new shelves. To be reminded that creative spaces are not just about what is made inside them, but about the community that surrounds them.

Wilderness Muse exists to encourage curiosity and experimentation. To give people permission to try something they have never done before, whether that is picking up a new skill, attending a class, or simply stepping into a new space. What I have learned through getting to know my neighbors is that Fairview already does

this incredibly well. It creates room for people to show up as they are and grow.

Trying something new does not always mean starting big. Sometimes it means staying a little longer. Saying hello. Choosing the local place instead of rushing through your day. Those small choices add up!

As we settle into this new chapter, Wilderness Muse continues to feel like part of that rhythm. We are a creative space shaped by the people around us. We work to make creativity feel accessible and to help reflect the community that we are rooted in. Our growth has always been less about racing ahead and more about building something meaningful, together.

At the end of the day, Fairview shows us that progress does not have to be rushed to feel meaningful. Thank you for reminding us that community is something you build slowly, one conversation and one shared space at a time.



Leigh Shultis loves the unpredictable magic of the creative process. She is the owner of Wilderness Muse, 1536 Cane Creek Road. 458-4107.



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Vince Weitzel

“I was a flight engineer,” Vince Weitzel told me, his eyebrows raised as he leaned closer. “Do you know what that is?” I thought I did but asked him to explain anyway. “It’s like a flying mechanic,” he said with obvious pride. “If something went wrong during the flight, I knew how to fix it.”

We met at Vince’s home in Fairview, situated on land that had been in his wife’s family for generations. “She was born right down the road from here in 1930,” Vince said. “We built this house in the ’70s. Built it by hand.”

Vince and his wife, Novella Dalton Weitzel (1930–2023), met when he was stationed south of Miami at Homestead Air Force Base. “After high school, I talked with this Air Force recruiter and signed up with them. The aptitude test said I’d be a good airplane mechanic.” That test kicked off Vince’s career. The first plane he worked on was the B-47 jet bomber.

While at Homestead, Vince attended dances held at the USO in Miami Beach. Novella, working in Miami as a beautician at the time, attended the dances too. Vince and Novella began dating and married a year or so later. The couple had been married 66 years when Novella passed away from cancer in 2023.

In Florida, the newlyweds purchased an

8 x 28 trailer that they lived in with their young family. When Vince got out of the Air Force in 1960 and it was time to move, he hooked that trailer up to his car and towed it all the way to Fairview, parking it on Novella’s family land.

Vince began looking for work immediately, but jobs were scarce in the little mountain town. So, he opened a service station in Oteen, right where the Blue Ridge Parkway ended. “People would burn up their brakes coming down from Craggy Gardens,” Vince remembered with a little chuckle. “That’s where I made my money—brake jobs and other mechanic work.”

But that’s not all. “I had the first convenience store in this area,” he said proudly. “People who lived nearby would come to get gas, and they started asking if I could carry a few groceries as a convenience to them. So, I said, why not? That’s how I started selling bread and milk.”

The station did well; but Vince was also still in the Air Force Reserves. So, when he heard that the Georgia Air National Guard was looking to hire mechanics, he talked to a representative who invited him to apply.

“I went to Savannah for the interview and mentioned to the guy that my uncle had been a flight engineer and that I’d kind



of like to do that,” Vince said. “The man asked my uncle’s name and I told him. He said, ‘He was in my squadron!’” The unlikely connection surprised them both, and Vince was offered the job on the spot.

The new position required three-and-a-half months of training in Knoxville and then lots of travel from then on. It wasn’t ideal for a family man, and Novella did not love the idea (they had three children at the time). But she saw the value of the opportunity and agreed to it. She understood Vince’s drive. After all, by that time, she was managing her own beauty shop and a coin-operated laundromat. “She did really well,” he said.

Vince’s new job would be on a prop plane: the C-97 cargo plane. “I didn’t know anything about it at first,” he said. “I had only worked on jets.” Not long after he trained on the C-97, he pivoted again when the Air Force replaced it with the C-124—a much larger aircraft. “So, I had to learn a new plane,” he said, shrugging as if such a task was all in a day’s work. Vince would soon add one more plane to his resume: the C-130.

As the Vietnam War heated up in the 1960s and ’70s, the Air Force needed help hauling cargo. “It was a 12-day trip to Vietnam. Six days over and six back,” Vince said, explaining that cargo planes flew “low and slow,” unlike jets that could climb to higher altitudes and travel at greater velocities. “We flew at about 8,000 feet and 200 mph. Today, an airliner cruises at around 35,000 feet and 600 mph.”

The Vietnam years were difficult. “Everyone was so against the war in Vietnam,” Vince said, sobering as he recalled that time. “I’d get off the plane in my flight suit and people would turn away. Even people you never thought would shun you, they did it too.” And that wasn’t even the worst of it. Vince continued, “Usually, we took cargo over and came back in an empty plane. But sometimes we would pick up coffins to take back to the US.” Vince quieted, clearly thinking of those dark days.

After a couple of decades working with the military, Vince got his license as an FAA flight engineer. “I was hired by Southern Air Transport, a commercial airline out of Miami, working on the civilian version of the C-130, the Lockheed 382.” He was still in the Air National Guard, working for them as necessary. With Southern Air Transport, he would fly to Miami from Asheville, sometimes adding a stopover in Savannah for a military assignment. Then, he would fly from Miami back to Asheville.

In 1987, he got out of the Air National Guard but continued working with private cargo companies, eventually making it back to a jet plane. “It was an old PanAm 747,” he said, smiling. “They just took the seats out and made it a cargo plane!”

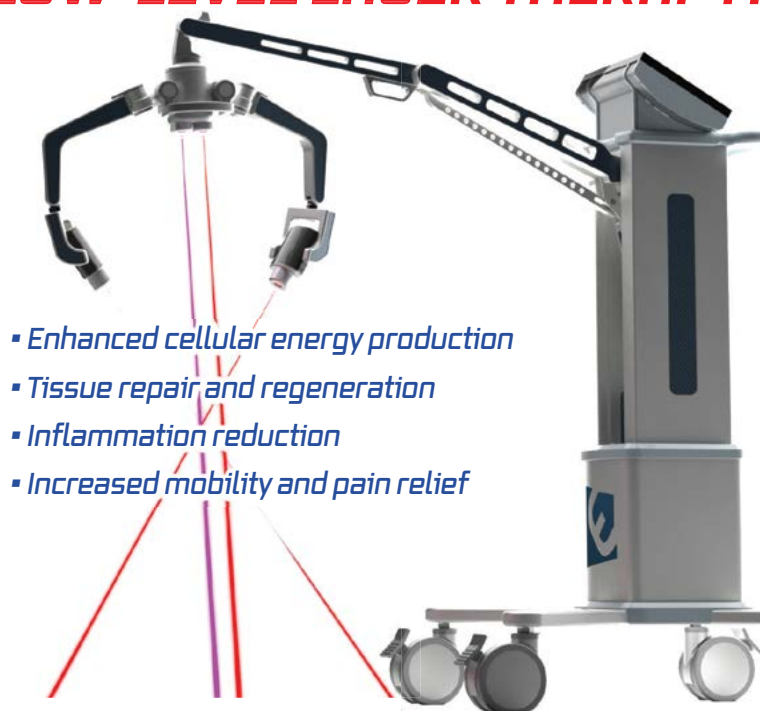
Working as hard as he did for so many years took a toll on Vince, though. “In 1994, I had a heart attack, so I retired in 1995,” he said. “By then, I had 11,000 flight hours just on the C-130, military and civilian combined.” 11,000 hours is equivalent to roughly 458 days, or 15 months. And remember, that’s just one plane; he also logged flight engineer time on the C-97, C-124, and on a jet or two.

Since retiring, Vince has been busy. He has a paint and body shop on the property where he has restored antique cars. And he takes care of the land. “Look out there at that field. I have to mow that whole thing!” Right now, it’s even harder to get that done because his tractor is not working. “It’s a Ford 8N Tractor; the best tractor ever made,” he told me. “I don’t know what’s wrong with it, but I’ll figure it out!” Clearly, you can take the mechanic out of the air, but you can’t take the spirit of a mechanic out of the man.



Rev. Dr. Aileen Mitchell Lawrimore is the pastor of Ecclesia Baptist, which meets at 607 Fairview Road. She blogs at aileenmitchelllawrimore.com.

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A Key to Injury Prevention in Pickleball

As pickleball continues its rapid rise as one of the fastest-growing sports, medical professionals and movement specialists are drawing attention to a critical but often overlooked factor in player health: pelvic and lumbar mobility. While the sport is widely praised for its accessibility across age groups, the repetitive motions and sudden directional changes inherent to pickleball place significant demands on the lower spine and pelvis—areas that, when poorly conditioned, can become sources of chronic pain and injury.

Pickleball combines elements of tennis, badminton and table tennis, requiring players to lunge, rotate, bend, and accelerate repeatedly over the course of a match. These movements rely heavily on the coordinated function of the pelvis and lumbar spine, which together serve as the central hub for force transfer between the upper and lower body. When mobility in these regions is restricted, stress is often displaced to surrounding joints and tissues, increasing the risk of injury.

According to physical therapists and sports medicine experts, limited pelvic mobility can compromise hip rotation, a fundamental movement pattern in pickleball strokes and court coverage.

When the hips fail to rotate efficiently, the lumbar spine often compensates by twisting beyond its optimal range. Over time, this compensation can lead to lower back strains, disc irritation or facet joint pain. Similarly, inadequate lumbar mobility can alter posture and movement mechanics, placing excess strain on the hips, knees and even the shoulders.

Lower back pain is already one of the most common complaints among recreational pickleball players, particularly those over the age of 50. Many of these athletes enter the sport with preexisting stiffness from prolonged sitting, previous injuries or age-related changes in joint tissue. Without targeted mobility work, the demands of pickleball can exacerbate these limitations rather than improve them. Pickleball looks deceptively simple, but the sport requires rapid trunk rotation, lateral movement and repeated forward flexion. If the pelvis and lumbar spine aren't moving well, something else will pay the price.

Improving pelvic and lumbar mobility has been shown to reduce injury risk by allowing forces to be distributed more evenly throughout the body. Proper mobility enables smoother transitions between movements, better balance

and improved shock absorption during quick stops and starts. It also enhances stroke efficiency, as rotational power can be generated from the hips rather than forced through the lower back.

Preventive strategies typically focus on dynamic mobility exercises rather than passive stretching alone. Controlled pelvic tilts, hip rotations and lumbar spine articulation drills can help maintain joint health and neuromuscular control. These exercises are often incorporated into warm-ups to prepare the body for play, as well as into post-game routines to reduce stiffness and promote recovery.

Experts emphasize that mobility should be paired with core stability to protect the spine during high-velocity movements. A mobile pelvis without adequate muscular support can be just as problematic as a stiff one. Strengthening the deep abdominal muscles, gluteals and spinal stabilizers helps ensure that increased mobility translates into safer, more efficient movement on the court.

As pickleball organizations and clubs increasingly prioritize injury prevention, education around movement health is gaining traction. Some facilities are beginning to offer pre-play mobility sessions or workshops led by fitness

professionals, highlighting the importance of proper preparation—particularly for new players eager to jump into competitive play.

The message from healthcare professionals is clear: maintaining pelvic and lumbar mobility is not just for elite athletes. For recreational pickleball players of all ages, it is a foundational component of longevity in the sport. By addressing mobility limitations early and consistently, players can reduce their risk of injury, improve performance and continue enjoying the game well into the future. Physical therapists can customize a plan to your specific restrictions to improve your pickleball game.

As pickleball's popularity shows no signs of slowing, attention to the body's central mechanics may prove essential in keeping players healthy—and on the court—for years to come.



Allison Fender is the owner of Unified Therapies, located at 145 Charlotte Highway, Suite 40. She has a Doctorate of Science in Physical Therapy with a concentration in Neurology. Learn more at unifiedtherapies.com or 414-2368.

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Primary Election Guide

Primary election day is March 3. Early voting will take place on February 12, 13 and 16 to 28. Due to changes in state law, you will need to present an acceptable photo ID to vote (or vote provisionally).

A majority of our readers live in the 28730 ZIP code. The races and candidates below are representative of what most voters in that ZIP code will see on their ballots. However, a ZIP code is not a precinct, and other readers live in Gerton, Fletcher and Asheville. You can find your sample ballot and precinct information on the state Board of Election’s website (see info on facing page).



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Voting 101

Are you registered at your current address? If you have moved and not updated your registration, you can do so and vote on the same day only during early voting at any location.

If voting in person on Election Day, you should always vote in your precinct. If you vote in another district on March 3, you'll have to fill out a provisional ballot, which is reviewed by the Board of Elections and could be rejected. See the "Find Your District" section below to find out how to get your correct info.

Has your district changed? The elections in 2024 were the first with some redrawn districts. If you did not vote last time, don't assume you'll vote where you always have! See the "Find Your District" section below to find out how to get your correct info.

Get unbiased, nonpartisan information about registration and voting from the county's Board of Elections. Go to buncombecounty.org/vote or call 250-4200.

REGISTRATION

To vote in NC, you must be a US citizen and resident of NC who has lived in the county where you intend to vote for at least 30 days. You must also be 18 years of age or older. You must not be currently serving a felony sentence (including any probation, post-release supervision, or parole). You cannot claim the right to vote elsewhere.

The deadline to register is February 6, 5 pm. If you are registering to vote by mail, forms must arrive by the same date and time as above. You can, however, register and vote with same-day registration during early voting, February 12, 13 and 16 to 28.

How to register (three options)

Register online

If you have an NC driver's license or ID, go to the NC DMV's website (payments.ncdot.gov). After you log in, you can submit a voter registration application (or an update).

Fill out a printed registration form

English: tinyurl.com/ncvoteenglish

Spanish: tinyurl.com/ncvotespanish

You may fill out the form online and print it. Or you can print it and fill it out.

Printed forms are available at county election board offices, public libraries, high schools, and college admissions offices.

Mail the signed and completed form to: Election Services, PO Box 7468, Asheville, NC 28802-7468.

Register in person

Visit the county elections office at 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville.

If you have moved since the last election and are currently registered to vote in Buncombe County...

Fill out a form found at the links listed above and then hand deliver (59 Woodfin Place, Asheville), mail (PO Box 7468, Asheville, NC 28802-7468), fax (828-250-6262) or email (elections@buncombecounty.org).

College students

College students can register and vote in the jurisdiction of their residence. Students who consider their school addresses their residences may register and vote in the county where the school is located.

PHOTO ID INFO

- Voters will be asked to show a photo ID when voting in North Carolina.
- However, if you do not have an ID, you can still vote with an ID Exception Form and a provisional ballot, or vote with a provisional ballot and return to the county Board of Elections office with your photo ID by the day before the county canvass.
- The address on the photo ID does not have to match the voter registration records.
- There are a few exceptions.

Acceptable forms of ID include a NC driver's license, military or Veterans ID cards issued by the federal government, and college student and public employer ID cards that the State Board approved for use in voting. For a full list of acceptable forms, go to tinyurl.com/ncvoteid.

Registered voters who do not have an acceptable form of ID for voting purposes can get a free photo ID from the county Board of Elections office. You may also register to vote at that time if needed. Voters will be able to get IDs printed on the spot. ID cards can be issued at any time during regular business hours, except for the period following the last day of early voting through Election Day.

Voters also can get a free ID from the NC Division of Motor Vehicles.

Voters who vote by mail will be required to include a photocopy of their ID with their ballot or complete a Photo ID Exception Form for Absentee Voting. The photocopy will be placed in a special envelope to protect the voter's personal information on their ID.

Acceptable proofs of address include NC driver's license; government-issued photo ID with address; current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document showing name and address; current college/university photo ID paired with proof of campus habitation (some schools, such as Warren Wilson, transmit a current student roster to the Board of Elections).

FIND YOUR DISTRICT

To confirm or find your precinct, go to vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup and enter your name, then click on your name on the next screen. You'll also find a sample ballot. Or call the county Board of Elections at 250-4200.

EARLY VOTING

The one-stop "in-person" process permits voting at any designated location prior to election day. Early voting is available on February 12, 13 and 16 to 28; Monday–Friday, 8 am–7:30 pm and Saturdays from 10 am–3 pm (except for February 28, from 8 am–3 pm).

Local early voting site

Fairview Library – 1 Taylor Rd., Fairview.

For other sites, go to vt.ncsbe.gov/EVSite, find "Buncombe" in the drop-down menu, and then click "Find Sites."

ABSENTEE / MAIL VOTING

Requesting a Ballot

Anyone may request an absentee ballot for any reason. The deadline to request is February 17, 5 pm (request earlier to ensure it's received in time). Complete a request form (find at tinyurl.com/absentinc) and return by mail (PO Box 7468, Asheville, NC 28802) or in person (59 Woodfin Place, Asheville).

Once your form has been received, an

absentee ballot will be mailed to you.

Submitting a Ballot

Absentee ballots must arrive at the Buncombe County Election Services office (59 Woodfin Place, Asheville) on or before March 3, 7:30 pm. You may still vote in person if you have requested an absentee ballot. A voter's near relative may also request and return an absentee ballot. For active duty military, their family members, and US citizens living abroad, please visit FVAP.gov and follow the absentee ballot instructions to receive a ballot. When voting by mail, you must include a photocopy of an acceptable ID or complete an ID Exception Form.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Research races and candidates at the following websites, which all claim to be nonpartisan:

- Votesmart.org
- RealClearPolitics.com
- Ballotpedia.org
- PolitiFact.org
- [League of Women Voters lvvab.org](http://LeagueofWomenVoterslvvab.org)

DO YOU LIVE IN HENDERSON COUNTY?

For our readers who live in Gerton and Fletcher, visit hendersoncountync.gov/elections for more information.

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Kindness Matters at Fairview Elementary

Helping young learners understand and practice kindness is one of the most impactful things we can do for their social-emotional growth. At the elementary level, kindness can be taught through modeling, interactive activities and consistent reinforcement so it becomes a natural part of their daily lives.

Counselors at Fairview Elementary School (FES) teach lessons on empathy, kindness and showing compassion in Friends & Feelings classes students attend each week. They also offer small groups such as Friendship Club that focus on many kindness components. Classroom teachers also teach kindness during their morning meeting times as they discuss why it's important to be kind and how you should always treat others the way you wish to be treated.

When students were asked what kindness means, one said, "It means being nice, just because." Another said, "It means being helpful, patient and understanding." When students were asked why kindness matters, one said, "It makes people feel good and be happy." Another said, "It's what makes the world a better place."

The first week of February is National School Counseling Week. Fairview Elementary would like to give a special

When students were asked what kindness means, one said,
"It means being nice, just because." Another said,
"It means being helpful, patient and understanding."
When students were asked why kindness matters, one said,
"It makes people feel good and be happy." Another said,
"It's what makes the world a better place."

shoutout to counselors Katie McCracken and Erin Schlecht and thank them for the examples of kindness they share every day. February 17 is Random Acts of Kindness Day. FES staff and students would like to challenge the community to do something kind for your neighbors, family and friends on this day and the days that follow. Intentional acts of kindness can transform lives, strengthen communities and improve mental well-being.

Families who wish to talk more about kindness may choose to explore books such as *What Does it Mean to be Kind* by Rana DiOrio, *Kindness Starts with You* by Jacqueline Stagg, *One Smile* by Cindy McKinley, and *Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed* by Emily Pearson.

How can you model kindness? Let that car merge. Let the person with only one item go ahead of you at the grocery checkout. Share a smile with a stranger. Encourage your children to include kids who have a hard time finding someone to play with at recess or partner up with someone who is sometimes afraid to ask to be part of a group. Say please and thank you. Hold the door for someone. Wave at your neighbor as you drive by. Acts of kindness are easy, free and can mean a lot to someone who needs a little something extra in that moment. You never know the difference you can make simply by being kind.

Kenya Hoffart is a staff member at Fairview Elementary School.



FES second grader Brayden Sullivan, who believes kindness is a great way to show love

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After 30 years in the classroom, A.C. Reynolds Middle School bids farewell to eighth-grade social studies teacher Robert Gouge. Known for his steady presence, humor and genuine care for his students, he leaves a legacy beyond lesson plans. Gouge says he'll miss the students and community most. Fairview celebrates his service and wishes him a well-earned retirement.

ACRHS STUDENT OF THE MONTH
Dagny Rockoff

ACRHS Counselor Leann Perry described Dagny as a force of nature, one of those rare students whose enthusiasm and drive make a lasting impression on everyone she meets. Her involvement with the Sources of Strength program at ACRHS highlights her dedication to fostering a supportive and hopeful environment.

Dagny works as a teaching assistant at her temple and is involved with the Asheville Youth Rowing Association. Her GPA of 4.44 is a reflection of her hard work and ambition. Dagny's unique perspective and zest for life bring a refreshing energy to any room she enters. *All winners receive a special mug from the Crier. Congrats, Dagny!*



PARENTING POINTS TO PONDER
WHAT'S STRONG WITH YOU?

During the week of Christmas, when our whole family was together for the first time in four years, I caught myself offering unsolicited advice to one of my adult kids before the day had even really begun. He looked down and quietly said, "I'll figure it out, Mom."

That simple response told me everything. I hadn't shown up in a way that invited connection. What he needed in that moment wasn't my "expert response"—it was my vote of confidence. And I felt that familiar tug of regret almost immediately.

Most of us understand, at least intellectually, that each of our kids is wired differently and responds differently. Still, in the rush of daily life, it's easy to forget how quickly our words can shut a child down—until we see it happen right in front of us and feel it in our gut.

Many of us were raised hearing some version of "What's wrong with you?"—spoken outright or implied. The focus was often on fixing, correcting or improving. Recently, I read a reframe with just one word changed: "What's strong with you?" That question stopped me in my tracks.

So this week, I'm trying a small experiment—and you might want to try



it too. I'm choosing one child or family member and paying attention, not to what needs fixing, but to a strength they have—their persistence, their humor, their sensitivity or their ability to notice others. I'm asking myself: When was the last time I actually said that out loud? And then I'm noticing what happens to our relationship when I do.

My words to practice in 2026 are: Grace, not haste. It feels like a tall order, and I'm up for it.

Christi Hurd is a PCI Certified Parent Coach and retired educator who helps parents build stronger relationships and find more joy in the parenting journey. Learn more at grace2growfamilycoaching.com.

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A Drive Down Memory Lane in Fairview

I've lived in Fairview since I was 3 years old, making the prospect of living anywhere else so foreign I can hardly imagine it. Yet, in just a few short months, I'll be living in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. WHAT?!

I'll be using the columns I have left to commemorate Fairview and all it means to me. All I have to do is close my eyes and vivid images of our little stretch of Charlotte Highway come into view. So, I decided to take you on a tour of the road we all know so well, from the perspective of a life-long, teenaged, nostalgic Fairview-ian.

The familiar blue mountains of WNC bring comfort, but I'm not welcomed home until I'm driving up Minehole Gap. Further down the road, the lot now under construction will forever be the location of my favorite fruit stand, where I begged my parents to stop and buy watermelons and peaches. Next, you pass Asheville VeeDub, a place I have never been and will probably never go, but with its old vehicles and painted storage container, it is iconically Fairview.

It's funny how certain images are etched into my brain from years of riding shotgun or in the back of the school bus: the sunlights at the animal hospital; the metal roofs of the storage

facility; the tattoo shop next to Smokey and the Pig. All small and random but drilled into memory by countless drives past. Then comes Windsong, where I spent the COVID years fishing, catching frogs, and embarking on other crazy outdoor adventures.

Next, you have the kudzu stretch, only slightly taken on by the more recent addition of goats. Passing Childcare Network, I am reminded of trekking through the woods for fun to pick the twins up from daycare, stopping in to say hello to friends at High Country before heading home. Then you pass The Willows sign, my perch in the mornings when awaiting the school bus. The Local Joint comes most notably next, self-explanatory in all its communal importance.

Skipping on down a ways, you reach Fairview Elementary—which I'll expand considerably on next time—the school I grew up in; the gym I first played basketball in; and the place that gave me an honorary family through the Dad's Club.

Continue down the road, past the seemingly random semis, and the scenery changes to lush, rolling hills. You will eventually make it to a fork in the road. Take a right, and you'll find the horse stables, where I became close friends



Just north of this stretch of Charlotte Highway is the site of the writer's earliest memories, the Fairview Library.

with Breazy, every little kid's favorite mare. Take a left, and you'll come to the hub of Hickory Nut Gap Farm, where I held chicks on my kindergarten field trip, got ice cream after trail rides, and waded in the creek while eating every berry we had just picked. Continue on Sugar Hollow Road and you will come across the charming barn my family visits every Christmas for our reading of the birth of Jesus Christ. The barn is famous in the family for its rope swing.

Next, whip a quick U-turn and head back the way you started. You'll pass a massive hog and some loud cows. Of

course, here you could turn back to the stables, head along past them and end up in Lake Lure. However, as young Ansley can attest, bring a book because you won't have cell service, and also a bag for when the car sickness kicks in.

But no! Head back to where you came, past the fire station with its trailer of aluminum cans and the "Fire Danger Today" sign seemingly always—and concerning—on "high." Eventually, you will make it to Food Lion, where I am guaranteed to run into an old teacher or classmate. The store is also known for their generosity in supporting Dad's Club events!

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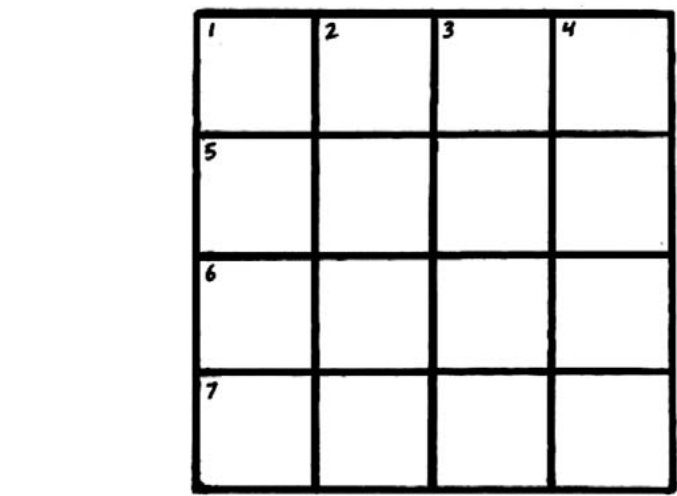
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- Across**

 - 1. Once _____ a time...
 - 5. Pawn to e4, for example
 - 6. Connect
 - 7. Abbreviation following Rocky or Appalachian, say
- Down**

 - 1. Utterance of unsurety
 - 2. One who pens an ode or a sonnet
 - 3. Baking necessity, almost always
 - 4. Brooklyn-based ballers

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, his son, Wayne, and his cat, Esme.

Find the answers at the back of this issue.

Soon, you'll pass the library, the center of my earliest memories in Fairview. My grandma would bring my cousins and me to the reading mornings, where we would treat the chairs like tunnels to be crawled through and explored. We could also properly dress up when it came time for Fancy Nancy events. Let's not forget to mention the play corner, with the hottest commodity being the dolls, or the massive box computer with reading games. Then comes Hilltop, Fairview's favorite ice cream stop. I remember the days when you ordered inside, a special treat after a half day of school.

Continue along Charlotte Highway and I could point out nearly every stop on my elementary school bus route, bus 144 (and then 100, and then 99—but most importantly 144 because that's how I remembered 12 x 12 in the 3rd grade). On past the trusty, life-saving Dollar General, take a detour down Old Fort Road to Troyer's, now Terramonga, for the best cinnamon roll of your life or continue straight to MoJo's, now Day-moon. A right turn onto Old Charlotte Highway, around the back of Signs Of Hope, will take you along my bus route, back into Fairview. Continue straight, down Minehole Gap and, depending on

the time of day, you are in for one of the most stunning sunsets of your life.

This column is merely a list of memories associated with inanimate objects seen along our stretch of Charlotte Highway. It doesn't include the people I've met along the way. But as the sun is setting on my time in Fairview, I'm savoring these familiar roadside sights, grateful for each one and the memories associated with them. I am about to step into a town in which every aspect is foreign. No more familiar faces, stores or even cars. (Here's a shoutout to the other Star Wars-themed car I seem to follow out of Fairview every morning!).

So thank you businesses and homes, people and places, that make Fairview home and give me something to look forward to every decorative season, every drive home. A piece of me will always live here, cultivated and comforted by you, who make Fairview special.



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

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Telling the Truth at Cane Creek Middle

Let's face it: People don't always tell the truth. That goes for kids, too. Holding kids accountable for the things they do and/or say can teach them valuable life lessons.

When I was 9 or 10 years old, my brother (five years older) was given the awesome responsibility of babysitting me. Now, my brother imagined himself to be a ladies' man. Around the corner from my house lived Claudia. Any time he was responsible for babysitting me, he would sneak out of the house and walk to Claudia's. He always waited until I was asleep, probably because he thought I couldn't "rat" him out then.

Being a bit of a dramatic kid, every time he left, I would wake up and use a flashlight to read the Britannica or the World Book. I learned all sorts of useless information by doing so. I can still remember that the tallest oyster shell pile was in Virginia. But, in my imagination, every creaking noise in our settling house was either a ghost or a burglar.

One night, while my big brother was skulking about at Claudia's home, the noises were particularly frightening. My house was a split level. My bedroom was at the top of the stairs. On that particular night, the creaky noises had me shaking with anxiety. There was only one thing to do. And I did it. I crawled out of bed, laid down on the floor and dragged my bow and arrow out from under the bed. I stood up to string it. I hooked up the arrow. I tiptoed to my bedroom door. Quickly, I whipped my head out the door. I saw a dark person standing in front of my mother's breakfront, which was filled with my mother's priceless China.

I yelled from my room, "Get out of my house!" But the person didn't leave. I yelled louder, "Get out or I'll shoot you with my bow and arrow!" Still, they didn't leave. So, I bore down deep in my soul for courage and jumped up. I drew my arrow back and let fly.

The sound of shattering glass convinced me that I was safe and that the person was gone. It never occurred to me what would happen next. I quietly walked back through my door, and I went to sleep. An hour or two later, I was awakened by screaming. My parents were furious for some reason and were yelling at my brother. I thought I

should go and get the pat on the back for protecting my home, but the more they yelled the quieter I got and the deeper I slipped under my covers. They thought my brother was stupidly playing with his bow and arrow set and shot the breakfront. I didn't say a word in his defense—ever. No matter how many times they yelled the word "stupid," I never said a word. I lived with guilt and shame for decades. I finally decided that the only way to make things better was to confess my evil and cowardly ways to one and all.

When to tell the truth was the problem. The perfect moment came at last. One night we were eating dinner with my folks at the self-same house. My brother and his wife sat across the table from my wife and me. I slowly stood up. I looked at mom and dad. Everyone looked perplexed. I asked for quiet.

"Brother, mom, dad, I have a confession to make. Do you remember the night the breakfront was smashed with an arrow? Well, it was me. I shot the arrow."

Silence. Then my brother chimed in. "No, I was the person who shot the arrow."

Silence. Then I chimed in. "Well, you shouldn't have done that." We all laughed.

The lesson: Here at school and in real life, the further you get away from the truth, the bigger and more embedded the lie gets. Until, maybe, you can't tell truth from fiction. I suspect that sometimes the truth is harder to get at with the passage of time. At school, I think it is important that parents act as their child's best and most loving advocate. We administrators sometimes know the truth of an event, and the parent (the child's advocate) sometimes (dare I say it) gets it wrong. By the way, speaking for myself, sometimes I get it wrong, too. Yes, I do. That is where trust comes in. School staff and parents alike need to have faith in the good wishes we all have for the growth of our shared children.

I'm not sure what, if anything, I learned from my confession. I do know that teaching children to be honest in the first place (when they do something wrong) could save decades of guilt and shame.

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



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The Vanishing Coin Trick

Magic isn't just about tricks—it's about wonder, creativity and learning to make people smile! Here's a classic pocket trick any kid can perform using just a cup, a coin and a piece of paper. Best of all, no special props are needed.

What You Need

- 1 see-through cup (plastic works great)
- 1 small coin
- 1 piece of paper
- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- One napkin

The Setup and Performance

Cut out a paper circle that fits snugly over the mouth of the cup and tape or glue it in place. The paper should match the color of the table so it blends in. (Picture 1)

When the cup sits on the table, the paper circle should be hidden by the rim. It will look like a normal cup. (Picture 2)

Show the audience the coin on the table in plain view.

Show the cup—don't reveal the paper secret. Hold it in such a way that the audience can't see the paper over the opening, then place it facedown on the table.

Cover the cup with a napkin, then lift and place it over the coin. Remove

the napkin and show that the coin has vanished. (Picture 3)

Tips for Success

- Practice lowering the cup smoothly.
- Keep the bottom of the cup tilted away from spectators.
- Make the paper circle match the table pattern or color as closely as possible.
- Add a story! Maybe the coin is "tele-transporting to outer space."

Level Up

Try making the coin reappear from your pocket, shoe, or behind someone's ear. A little acting makes it ten times more magical!

Greg Phillips is a pastor, magician, and comedian who loves using creativity to inspire wonder and joy. He enjoys sharing stories and tricks that spark imagination and faith. Learn more at GregPhillipsMagic.com or PastorGregPhillips.com.



PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2



PICTURE 3

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Oliver Eagan Burns

Born at exactly 10 pounds on April 4, 1985, as the only child to John Oliver Burns Jr. and Allison Lacey Burns in Birmingham, AL, Oliver came into this world a bundle of joy and continued to share that love and joy of the world with all those who would pause and listen. With the kindest and most generous soul imaginable, Oliver saw the world in a way few others could. He navigated life always questioning and eager to learn.

In 2011, he found his way to Appalachian State University to study geology. There he met Diane Creamer Burns, and they were joyfully married in 2015. Together they created a beautiful life. They traveled the world and explored the unknown together, eventually settling in Asheville in 2019, where they put down roots.

Oliver joined the Asheville Water Department, where he proudly made fresh drinking water for the residents of Asheville as a Water Treatment Plant Operator at the Bee Tree facility. He was there on September 27, 2024, when Hurricane Helene hit western North Carolina. He watched over the Bee Tree Dam, kept his coworkers safe, and helped provide food and water to the community until there was a way out. He then helped evacuate his Bee Tree community neighbors to safety.



He was a son, brother, nephew, cousin, friend and hero to so many and a beautiful husband to Diane Burns. On January 3, 2026, Oliver passed away with his loving wife by his side. His passing leaves this world a little less bright. He was preceded in death by his parents John Oliver Burns Jr. and Allison Lacey Burns, and grandparents John Oliver Burns Sr., Alice McCutcheon Burns, James Curry Lacey Jr., and Bettilou McWhorter Lacey. He is survived by his wife Diane Burns.

Together may we rekindle and carry on his love, kindness, curiosity and spark for this life. His legacy will live on in each of our hearts.

In his memory, please consider giving to Appalachian Wildlife Refuge, World Wildlife Fund, or a charity of your choice.

"The next time it rains, jump in the puddles and think of me." —Oliver

Plain Browsers and Scam Alerts

As we add more security or privacy extensions, like Norton Safe Web or Malwarebytes Browser Guard, some sites stop working for certain tasks. You should always have a plain, unadulterated browser—Vivaldi, Opera, Brave, DuckDuckGo Private Browser—and then you can copy the non-working website address from the address bar into your plain browser to see if things function differently.

Look-alike domains are still being used for malware and scams. Sometimes we type a domain name incorrectly; sometimes search results use letters in the domain name that look similar to what we expect. This is where that old-fashioned skill of bookmarking known and good sites can save you. Access your bookmarks or favorites and avoid searching for a site in your browser's search bar.

Gmail users may soon be able to change their email address to a new one, so long as it is available. There is no published schedule for when this will roll out to US users, but when it does you will find it as an option at myaccount.google.com/google-account-email.

Users of duckduckgo.com may not have noticed that there is an AI version of that search engine at duck.ai. They

promise that your interactions with the free and slightly older versions of popular AI models are kept private and won't be used for any AI model training. You can always pay for access to more modern versions, but what you are buying is that privacy. Otherwise, go straight to ChatGPT.com or google.ai and help their models learn from your tasks.

If faced with needing to change a bunch of passwords, first create a long list of random passwords that you can pick from as you move through all the places you need to change. Passwords are easy to make: look around the room, pick three or four objects and colors as a string of words, put a number somewhere in the middle, and ditto for capitalizing a letter and inserting some kind of punctuation mark. Then you are ready to quickly change a bunch of passwords, keeping track of which ones are used where.



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Solving Real Problems in Raleigh

Winter is in full swing here in the mountains, and I am focused on how I can be your best representative down in Raleigh when the “short session” opens in April. Though the legislature did not technically end its session back in July when we should have, there has certainly been a lack of significant lawmaking since the summer. We have been scheduled to meet for one week per month over the last six months but have really only had full voting sessions a couple of times. We still have yet to pass a budget and are now the only state in the country that hasn’t done so.

Though there are only a couple of committees that have met semi-regularly since July, I happen to be on two of them. One is the Oversight Committee, which is designed “to ensure that the government operates as efficiently and as effectively as possible to meet the needs of the citizens... Oversight is a fact-based, bipartisan endeavor that examines agencies and programs and acts to make corrections when necessary, including enacting legislation. The goal of this committee is to investigate how the government works (or doesn’t work) and hold leaders to an expected standard of excellence and integrity.” This is a worthy goal, and I do think that having

a committee in the legislature that is focused on holding the government accountable is a critical part of the democratic process.

While the Oversight Committee began 2025 with a good-faith effort to bring in the heads of different state government agencies and to learn about their agencies and their efforts to ensure efficient operations, unfortunately, I felt that the leadership of the committee shifted their focus toward an effort to score political points. In December, the committee called the Chapel Hill/Carrboro School Board Chair and Superintendent before the committee to discuss that school system’s alleged failure to follow state law. In the end, there was no concrete outcome. The next meeting of the committee will be focused on crime in Charlotte, and I expect it to continue the trend toward trying to score political points in an election year. The chair of the committee has also attacked the Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools on social media, so we may see an attempt to bring our local school leaders down to Raleigh.

I was also appointed to serve on the newly formed House Select Committee on Property Tax Reduction and Reform, which was established in December 2025 “to study options to reduce the

property tax burden on taxpayers in North Carolina.” While the committee has only held two informational sessions, I am hopeful that it will keep the focus on the property tax burden that has become a real challenge for many folks here in Fairview and across the state.

Many assume that rising home values are entirely to blame for increasing property taxes, but the reality is more complicated. Our property taxes in NC are collected by county governments and are used to support county services, as well as the towns and cities within the county. The amount that property owners pay is based both on the value of the property and a rate that, in Buncombe County, is set by the county commission.

Property tax collections make up the majority of the funding for these local governments, which also receive some sales tax collections. This tax revenue is used to fund our local law enforcement, fire departments, schools and other services. As we look at changes to property tax collection, it is important to look at both the burden on property owners as well as the services that are provided by our local governments. It is true that local governments across the state have been under pressure to raise rates, and this is especially true here in WNC following Helene. Local governments have

been under mounting pressure over the last decade because the state government has pushed a number of costs down to the local level. This change is largely driven by the effort to significantly reduce state income taxes and to eliminate the corporate tax rate in the coming years. The end result is that property owners (and renters as well, as they end up paying this tax through their landlord) have taken on a larger share of the tax burden. In my view, we ought to return to a more balanced approach that allows local governments to continue to pay our law enforcement and county workers a fair wage and ensures that the state government funds school operations sufficiently.

As your representative in Raleigh, I am always up for a conversation with my neighbors about this or anything else that may be on your mind. Reach out if you have questions or thoughts about how we can improve the lives of people in our wonderful community



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

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The Mountain Lily, Part 1

Horses and cattle were grazing along the French Broad River in August 1881. Suddenly, they heard a strange sound. They gazed a moment and then turned and ran away. They had never heard the sound of a steamboat whistle before. Most of the farmers had never heard the sound before, either, unless they had traveled along the Mississippi or Ohio River.

The Mountain Lily was built to carry passengers and freight between Asheville, Horse Shoe and Brevard. Chartered as the French Broad River Steamboat Line, it was called the “highest steamboat line in the world.”

A bill was introduced in Congress to improve rivers and harbors. Those who opposed the bill were the first to use the phrase “pork barrel legislation.” And Henderson and Buncombe County wanted their share of the spoils.

Around 1875, a bill was introduced in Congress to set aside \$25,000 to deepen the French Broad River from Asheville to Brevard. Colonel Sidney Vance Pickens was believed to be the person who came up with the idea. He was the one who built the first streetcar line in our area. He was a relative of Robert B. Vance, who was a WNC congressman from 1873 to 1885. Pickens talked Vance into introducing and sponsoring the bill.

It passed, and the clearing and deepening of the French Broad was done by the US Army Corps of Engineers. When the project was done, it had cost the taxpayers \$45,000 to \$50,000. The French Broad was cleared of stumps and tree trunks that had been lodged in the river for centuries. Underlying rocks were blasted out of the way.

In many places, the river was so narrow that they had to build jetties along the river to deepen it. The remains

of some of these jetties can still be seen along the riverbank from Penrose to Brevard.

On May 6, 1881, a deed transferred three-quarters of an acre of land from Richard Ledbetter to S.V. Pickens, the president of the French Broad Steam Boat company—“a certain piece of land lying on the east bank of the French Broad River.” The company bought this tract of land to put up a ticket office, passenger depot and landing dock for the loading and unloading of freight.

In the summer, a celebration was held. Word had spread all over Henderson, Transylvania, Buncombe and Polk counties. Men had been tacking up signs and posters on every cross road, tree, post and out building. “Come to the big picnic and barbecue at Horse Shoe in Henderson County,” read the advertisements.

The steamboat had not even been built, but the owners described it to the crowds. They said prosperity that had never been dreamed of would occur in the French Broad Valley. They said Hendersonville and Brevard would become large cities.

The money to build the boat and to get it in full operation would come from the selling of stock for “only 25 dollars a share.” And the people were so enthusiastic that all the shares of stock were sold that day, with people begging for more.

To supervise the build, Captain Averell, from Norfolk, VA, or a boat builder from Charleston, SC, was brought in—reports differ. In any case, the contract was let out and the boat was built by an experienced boat builder.

Bruce Whitaker documents Fairview-area genealogy.

COMMUNITY CONTACTS

PUBLIC SERVICE

Sheriff’s Department—250-6670
Fairview Fire Department—628-2001
Garren Creek Fire Department—669-0024
Gerton Fire & Rescue—290-6194
Reynolds Fire Department—298-5200

CALL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

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A.C. Reynolds High—298-2500
A.C. Reynolds Middle—298-7484
Cane Creek Middle—628-0824
Fairview Elementary—628-2732

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Cane Creek—
(rentals) canecreekcc.com
(other inquiries) canecreekcc@gmail.com
Fairview—338-9005
Spring Mountain—545-9092
Upper Hickory Nut Gorge—625-0264

POST OFFICES

Fairview Post Office—628-7838
Fletcher Post Office—684-6376
Gerton Post Office—625-4080

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Wow (interj.): This is not a compliment. It's a word used by a woman who is amazed that a guy could be so stupid.

*

What building has the most stories?
Answer: A library.

*

Statistically speaking, 6 out of 7
dwarves are not happy.

*

Just went to the doctor. He said he'd like to talk to me about my weight. I said, "Well, it was about 45 minutes but at least the chairs were comfy."

*

I said to my wife that to have peace in the home we need to leave our problems at the door. She agreed—and now I'm locked outside.

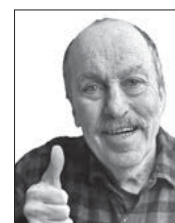
*

People who like my jokes are generally super magical, happier, more

intelligent, and better looking than those who don't. According to a study I just made up.

*

The CEO of IKEA has just been appointed as the Prime Minister of Sweden. He's currently assembling his cabinet.



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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Winter in the Mountains—Chills, Flu Bugs and Life

It is the middle of winter, and yesterday was nearly 65 degrees. All the songbirds are busy at the feeders and bring me so much beauty and joy, as odes to the quality of the gorgeous winter light and the clarity of the air here in the mountains. I may be in the minority, and perhaps it's because I was born in northern Minnesota, but I do love winter. I need four seasons, and I celebrate all of them, as each season is a sacred cycle that feeds my body and soul.

Like many, I came down with the flu last month and ended up getting double pneumonia overlaying it all. I ended up in the hospital for three days at Advent, which was a godsend as I needed IV antibiotics after three days at home with chicken vegetable soup, broth and lots of sleep. And even though I use plant-based medicines regularly, I still needed some higher-powered medications to restore my body to health, and I am grateful for them.

But now that I'm home and grateful to be in my humble little cabin surrounded by gardens, I am once again utilizing wild medicinal plants and mushrooms to fortify my body and build back my immune system. We have a lot of evergreens on the land, so one tool is making a simple pine needle tea

sweetened with a little honey. I fill a pot with water and add white pine needles and wild chives—which are rather intense, garlicky winter wild edibles that grow everywhere on the land—along with a bit of turmeric and ginger. All of these botanical wonders are rich in anti-oxidants and are gently restorative to the human body.



I bring the water to a boil, add the pine needles and assorted herbs, and let it steep for a while. I sip it throughout the day—simple and easy. These remedies go back for millennia and are part of our cultural heritage.

I also am a big believer in the power of medicinal mushrooms. Since I have an abundance of frozen chanterelles

and dried reishi mushrooms at home, I use these frequently. I add the reishi chunks to herbal tea, as reishi is one of the more common wild mushrooms that grows in these mountains in abundance (or one can purchase it commercially). Reishi has been used for thousands of years. In China, it was once considered to be the mushroom of the gods, reserved only for royalty. Chinese medicine is extraordinarily sophisticated and beneficial, so reishi is a good thing to keep on hand for the winter months, even if one is healthy and not compromised in any way.

It's a blessing to have so many chanterelles stored for the winter, and I frequently add them to stir fries with rice. These mushrooms are not only delicious but filled with nutrients and plant-based compounds beneficial for promoting health. Any member of the Allium family—garlic, onions, chives, wild onions—is a powerful and delicious medicinal. They are good in combination and part of my essential foods that happen to do double duty in promoting good health.

Shiitake mushrooms are available all over WNC. They are easily cultivated and are another primary medicinal mushroom, with a long legacy on

the medicinal frontier—and they are delicious. Many scientists these days are busy studying the beneficial components of plant-based medicinals, and the research and data on shiitakes is quite promising.

I have an old bumper sticker that says "Eat something wild every day," and I think it's a good maxim for living in our modern world. Nature is the source for every pharmaceutical ever made, and I firmly believe in the power of regularly tapping in to the living world of wild edible and medicinal plants and mushrooms, as it allows me to feel more connected to nature, to these magical ancient mountains, and to life.

My hope is that all of you have a healthy, joy-filled new year. We have a way to go before winter will be over, but I truly hope you each enjoy the many gifts winter brings us on the journey we all are sharing in this life.



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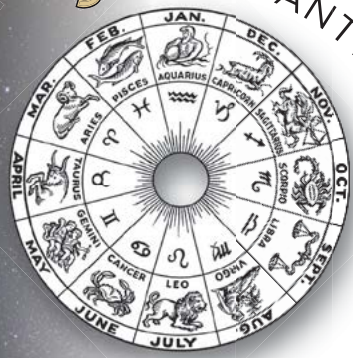
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MEET A MEMBER

Courtney Stephens
Sow the Magic

What brought you to Fairview?

I moved from Asheville to be in a smaller, softer town to raise my kids. I was also expanding my business and needed more room to grow herbs and flowers for my products. We were tired of the hustle, and growing up visiting my grandmother in Lake Lure left me with such great memories of this beautiful area—it felt like the right place to put down roots.

What got you started in your own business?

Back in 2007, I started selling handmade bath products on Etsy and soon connected with reps and wholesale platforms that helped grow my brand into 5,000 retail locations across the country.

How can Fairview residents help support your business?

If you're ever in need of an easy and fun gift, we converted the old donkey barn into a magical little farmstand gift store. It's where we showcase handmade items, bath products, vintage treasures, small bouquets and a few plants we insist on growing each year because they're just too fun not to. It changes weekly and we are always open to hearing what we could provide, grow or make for our neighbors!

What's the most unusual thing that has happened to you in Fairview?



After searching for our future home in Fairview for over a year, I was out driving around looking for another property when I pulled into the driveway of my current house (which wasn't for sale) and told my sister, "Gosh, I wish this house was for sale. It is perfect!" Two months later while at Texas Antique Week, it was listed. I called my mom immediately and said, "Go look at that house!" I put in an offer within days. It felt like fate.

What are your hobbies and/or passions?

I love antiques and vintage homewares. I head to Texas Antique Week every year to hunt for inspiration and treasures for my farmstand and my booth at The Garage on 25 in Fletcher.

What's on your bucket list?

I still need to make it to Europe (for more antiques, of course). But for now, I'm so content living in this great community with my two sweet kids who are growing up too fast. I'm letting the roots grow and enjoying this very special time.

FBA Updates

February Meeting

The FBA invites local business owners and community members to a meet on February 18 at 6 pm at Elderflower (1611 Charlotte Highway). Attendees will hear from Elderflower owner Annie Spindler, learn about her business, and enjoy a guided tour of the space. The evening will also feature a talk by Blaine Greenfield on "The Platinum Rule," a practical approach to communication, customer service, and working with others. Open to all; refreshments and potluck provided.

Membership Renewal

Please renew your FBA membership and take advantage of our benefits, including attending meetings and networking, and having your business listed in the *Town Crier* monthly. Members who don't renew by February 15 will be removed from the Fairview Business Association listing in the March issue of the *Crier*.

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The Cove at Fairview	628-4967	Appalachian Dispensary	338-0039
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Uptalent Consulting	450-4197	Pristine Acupuncture & Wellness	442-8451
INSURANCE		WINDOW CLEANING	
Butch Greene Hemlock	338-9125	Gerald Ontl	252-305-0045
ESCO Insurance Agency*	231-6577		

* Current board member

Advice for Choosing a Location to Buy a Home

- Pick a location that supports your daily life and routine.
- Make sure essential amenities are close and convenient.
- Look at the area's growth and long-term potential.
- Compare taxes, insurance, and overall affordability.
- Check noise, traffic, and privacy at different times of day.
- Consider the school district quality for future resale value.
- Evaluate community feel, upkeep, and general safety.
- Think about commute times and road access.
- Look for lifestyle fit—mountains, suburban, or in-town living.
- Trust your instincts, but make sure the numbers make sense.

Jenny Brunet is a Fairview resident with decades of experience in real estate and construction. She enjoys sharing practical, local insights to help neighbors better understand the community they call home. Cool Mountain Realty & Construction. 628-3088. coolmountainrealty.com.

Insurance Isn't Just about Stuff Anymore

Home insurance rates are not based

solely on what you own anymore. More and more, they're based on how you behave.

For years, pricing focused on the house: roof age, location and replacement cost. Now, carriers also look at patterns such as claim history, payment habits, maintenance/condition notes, inspections, and even how often you shop around. Think of it as an "insurance score."

Frankie, a local homeowner and small business owner, learned this after filing two smaller claims in three years. Both were legitimate. But at renewal, his premium jumped. Nothing about the house changed, but the profile did. To insurers, multiple small claims can signal higher future risk, even if you never have a major loss.

The point is not to "never file a claim." It's to understand that every claim becomes part of a long-term record seen across the industry. It's best to use insurance for sudden surprises, not as a maintenance plan.

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

Don't Stop the Beets: Simple DIY Cold Frame

Don't let winter end your season. A cold frame is an easy, low-cost way to keep

growing year-round. A cold frame is a bottomless box with a clear lid, placed directly over garden beds. You can build one in an afternoon using scrap lumber and an old window or clear plastic for the top. Position the frame facing south to maximize sunlight and tilt the lid slightly so rain and snow slide off.

You'll need the following supplies: lumber (untreated/rot-resistant): 2 x 72" (sides), 2 x 34.5" (front 12", back 18"), old storm door/window or polycarbonate panel, exterior screws (2 1/2"), 2-3 hinges (optional), drill, level and tape measure. Optional: insulation (straw, leaves, weather stripping) and corner brackets.

Instructions

1. Site: Choose a south-facing, well-drained spot, ideally over a garden bed.
2. Build frame: Lay side boards parallel; attach front (12") and back (18") boards to create a slope. Square corners and secure with screws; add brackets if desired.
3. Attach lid: Hinge the lid to the tall side or rest securely on top.
4. Insulate: Add weather stripping or pack straw/leaves on cold nights.
5. Plant and maintain: Vent on sunny days and close at night.

Nicole Coston is the executive director at Root Cause Farm. For info, visit rootcausefarm.org. 26 Joe Jenkins Road, Fairview.

How Mountain Air Affects Skincare Needs

If you split time between Florida and our mountains, you've likely noticed the difference. Florida's humid air does half the moisturizing work for you. Here at elevation? Your skin faces an entirely different challenge. Mountain air contains far less moisture, and UV exposure intensifies with altitude, even on overcast days. What works beautifully in humid coastal climates simply can't protect against our dry, high-elevation conditions.

Mountain dwellers need richer, more protective formulations—organic plant oils, nourishing butters and potent botanical extracts that create a genuine moisture barrier.

Seasonal residents often ask why their Florida routine leaves them tight and flaky here. The answer? Your skin needs different support for different climates.

Give your mountain skin what it demands: small-batch, organic skincare crafted specifically for high-altitude living.

With 47 years as an esthetician and the founder of the first day spa in Texas, Brea Gratia excels in acne and aging skin expertise, offering sought-after solutions. She is the owner of Gratia Botanica, 4 Olde Eastwood Village Blvd., Asheville. 333-5345.

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BOB WILLIAMSON, CPA has served Fairview and surrounding areas for over 12 years. His office is at 1185 Charlotte Highway, Suite F, in Fairview. Bob is looking forward to helping the community with tax and accounting needs. Call 828.338.0314

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NEW MONTHLY PICKLEBALL SOCIAL. Feb 22 and March 22. Fairview Community Center, 2.5-4.0 ranked players only. Limited spots. For more info and availability please email Lizbopp@gmail.com.

Crossword Answers

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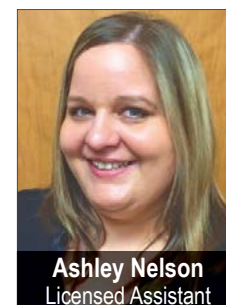
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