

THE YANCEY JOURNAL

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10¢



Donation Helps Special Class

Mrs. Georgia Burleson, Micaville Blue Bell Plant Manager, presented a \$200 check from the Blue Bell Foundation to Boyd Deyton, Principal of Micaville Elementary School on Tuesday, January 13. The contribution is for use by the school's Trainable Mentally Retarded class, which is taught by Mrs. Patricia McIntosh and her assistant, Pauline Livingston.

Annual School Board Report:

High School Is Highlight

This is the third annual report by the Yancey County Board of Education and covers the calendar year of 1975.

Highlighting the year's events were the continued progress on construction of Mountain Heritage High School and accreditation of the county school system by the State Department of Public Instruction.

Building of the Mountain Heritage High School, just off Highway 19E West of Burnsville, started in the fall of 1974 and work has progressed steadily as scheduled. Latest reports from Juno Construction Company, general contractor, sets completion date at June 7, 1976. The school consists of 117,000 square feet including a seven hundred, seventy five seat auditorium and a gymnasium with a seating capacity of twenty four hundred. All basic academic areas as well as a comprehensive vocational department will be housed at the new plant. The Board of Education continued to spend considerable time on matters pertaining to the new school. Arrangements for construction of the water line to the school required much attention by the Board, but was resolved by the Town of Burnsville constructing the line with a grant from the State and funding by the County. Low bids for science equipment in the amount of \$49,600 and living center and classroom equipment of \$59,750 for the new high school were accepted on October 14, 1975.

ACCREDITATION
At the August meeting of the State Board of Education in Raleigh a certificate of accreditation was presented to the Yancey County Schools and was accepted by Claude Vess, Board Chairman. The accreditation culminated many, many weeks of work and entailed documentation of the present school situation, enumeration of strengths and weaknesses and establishment of goals. Principals, faculty members from each school, administrative personnel and board members met in June with an inspection committee from Raleigh and reviewed the comprehensive plans for Yancey County Schools. The Yancey system was only the seventeenth unit out of one-hundred and fifty-one in the state, to be accredited by the state de-

partment.

APPOINTED PRINCIPAL

In March of 1975, Mrs. Cara Cox, principal at Cane River High School was appointed principal of the new high school. Mrs. Cox is now spending much of her time planning for next school year and visiting other schools to observe programs and study curriculums. Other major personnel matters during 1975 included the reappointment of Edgar Hunter as superintendent July 1, 1975-June 30, 1979, and Frank Robinson as principal at East Yancey High School. Reduction of Title I Federal funds necessitated the elimination of one aide position at six of the elementary schools in the fall of 1975.

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS

Teachers at all schools have been asked to sign a letter of intent regarding their wishes as to school assignment for the coming year. Principals for the middle schools selected last week are Kenny Sparks-East Yancey and Boyd Deyton-Cane River.

The Board is meeting during January with parents, teachers, and interested citizens in each school to discuss grades to be housed at the middle schools beginning in the fall of 1976. The plan presently in effect and approved by the Department of Public Instruction includes only the seventh and eighth grades at the middle schools. Capacity of the Cane River and East Yancey plants are approximately four hundred and fifty each. The projected number of seventh and eighth graders for the 1976-77 school year is 528 students.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM
The consolidation of the high school athletic program

'Progress Edition'

The Yancey Journal is planning to publish a special "Progress" edition on February 26, 1976. This issue will be mailed to every boxholder in Yancey County. Those who wish to submit articles or pictures for this paper are urged to bring them in as soon as possible, as a special edition of this kind takes several weeks to prepare.

was followed by the appointment of the following coaches: Ernie Hughes, varsity football; Joe Kruk, varsity boys' basketball; Beth Thomason, varsity girls' basketball; Ben Deyton, J.V. boys football; Carroll Fender, J.V. boys basketball; Blaine Whitson, J.V. girls basketball. All home football games were played at the East Yancey stadium. Home basketball games are played at the Cane River gym. The Mountain Heritage boys varsity basketball team boasts a six-two record and is ranked number five in Western North Carolina.

HIGH SCHOOL BAND

The Mountain Heritage High School band received their green and white uniforms the day of the first home football game and performed at each home game last fall. The band participated in the Asheville Christmas Parade in late November and plans a concert for the spring.

MHA TESTING

In September, the Board approved a plan for offering instruction to certain physically handicapped children in the county who are unable to attend school. Later the Board contracted with the Area Mental Health Association to do testing of special education students.

NCAE INVITED

During the year, the Board voted unanimously to extend an invitation to the NCAE to have a representative present at all regular board meetings. Policy stipulating that corporal punishment be used only after other disciplinary means have been employed, be administered only by a professional personnel and in the presence of another staff member, that a record be made and that parents be notified, was established June 30, 1975. The Board changed the policy on the use of school facilities by outside groups to five dollar charge for fuel and lights plus an amount to be determined by the principal for janitorial services, supervision, etc. Policy concerning religious groups at East Yancey was re-affirmed; approval of a Bible Club sponsored by the school with no one person nor group to meet with the club at the school consistently.

Eleven thousand, nine hundred and eighty-five dollars was spent by the Board

No School Friday- Teachers' Work Day

Friday, January 16, will be a teacher work day in all Yancey County Schools. Students will be given a holiday that day.

Although weather conditions have already caused a loss in school time this month, it is still necessary to give the teachers a day to work on records and report cards. Each school administrative unit in the state is now required to include in its school calendar a total of 17 work days for teachers each

year. On these days teachers work on reports, attend workshops for professional improvement, or do other types of work essential to the promotion of a good instructional program. While most of these days are scheduled at the beginning and end of the school year, some are scheduled throughout the year for record keeping purposes.

First-semester report cards will be issued to students on Monday, the 19th of January.

Citizens Organize To Provide Cemetery Care

At a public meeting on Friday, January 9, a group of concerned citizens voted to organize an Academy Hill Cemetery Association. The

purpose of this organization is to provide for the future care, maintenance, and improvement on a permanent basis of the Academy Hill Cemetery in Burnsville.

The following officers were elected: Mrs. Bruce Westall is President; Mrs. P.C. Coletta, Secretary; Mr. Fred Proffitt, Treasurer.

It was voted to undertake a campaign of three months to secure funds and contributions to be placed in a trust fund, from which the income can be expected to provide for at least nominal care and maintenance of the cemetery.

A committee composed of Mrs. Nancy Styles, Mrs. Leleh Johnson, and Mr. Fred Proffitt was appointed to obtain and deliver to the Association's secretary the names and mailing addresses of as many persons who should share concern for the future of this cemetery. Anyone wishing to make a donation to this worthy cause can mail his contribution to Mr. Fred Proffitt, Treasurer.

Board members Romie Burns, Charles Gillespie and Claude Vess attended the district school board meeting at Tuscola High School in March.

for the major part of the cost of a multi-purpose building at Pensacola School.

PROPERTY TRANSFER

The Board transferred one and six-tenths acres at Bald Creek to the County to be used as a site for a new day care center; one and one-half acres at South Toe was deeded to the County for lease to the South Toe River Volunteer Fire Department. The Oak Crest School site was transferred to the County as a site for a multipurpose building to be constructed with a grant from TVA and HUD.

Board members Romie Burns, Charles Gillespie and Claude Vess attended the district school board meeting at Tuscola High School in March.

Conservationist Urges Care For Natural Resources

garbage elsewhere in the county.

Careful conservation of soil is also another resolution we should strive to meet. On an average acre of land in North Carolina 2 tons of topsoil are lost each year. It takes nature a thousand years to build one inch of topsoil, so we should try to protect and keep all the soil we can from washing away. This can easily be done by planting grass, shrubs or trees on bare and eroding areas in our yards,

fields, and road banks. Only 1-2 lbs of tall fescue or bluegrass and 9-12 lbs. of 10-10-10 fertilizer will establish a good cover on 1000 sq. ft. area and will also add beauty.

With a little initiative and pride we could all conserve more of our natural resources and beautify Yancey County at the same time.

From the District Supervisors and staff of the Soil Conservation Service, we wish you a Happy New Year!

CB Club Donates To Victims

The Mineral City C.B. Club Board of Directors and members met Sunday afternoon, January 11. In the business conducted at this time, the Club donated \$200 to the March of Dimes. They designated \$100 of the sum for Mitchell County and \$100 for Yancey County. They also donated \$200 to the Oliver Payne family whose home was destroyed by fire last week; and \$100 to the Livingston family in Ledger who also had a fire.

The C.B. Club will be having a coffee break February 14. Everyone is invited and there is no admission charge.



Gem Shop Owner, Jim McKinney, Studies Amethyst Cluster

Amethyst Cluster Display; Best Ever Found In State

BY WILLIAM F. JUD

"This could easily be the biggest and best amethyst crystal cluster ever found in North Carolina," says "Junior" Jim McKinney, owner of The Gem Shop three miles north of Spruce Pine, N.C. "In fact, it may be one of the best amethyst specimens in the world."

Although amethyst, a purple variety of quartz, is not an uncommon gem stone, it rarely is found in such large, clear, well-crystallized masses as this one. The specimen weighs 170 pounds, or a bit over 385,000 carats. Orchid-colored and deep purple amethyst crystals the size of golf balls jut by dozens from this unique rock. Individual gems up to 400 carats in weight could be cut from several of the crystal points.

Junior owns the specimen in partnership with Bill

Collins, owner of the emerald mine near Spruce Pine, L.A. Sigmon and his family of Lincolnton, N.C., found the stone last winter buried in mud in the wall of a 300-foot long, 15-foot deep prospecting trench cut in the Reel amethyst mine off secondary road 1417 between Dellinger Branch and Leepers Creek ten miles from Iron Station in Lincoln County, N.C. The Sigmons found a total of about 350 pounds of amethyst that day in a vein of quartz, garnet, and mica which cuts mica schist country rock.

Good gem-quality amethyst is hard to find on the market. Prime Brazilian cut stones sell for up to \$10 a carat. Several jewels have already been cut from the other Reel mine amethysts found with Junior's specimen.

"I'm sure there is more amethyst in that trench," Junior says. The Reel mine has been worked for amethyst for more than ten years and is

open to collectors and rock-hounds on a fee basis. Several years ago Junior tried, unsuccessfully, to lease the mine. The October, 1975 issue of Lapidary Journal carries a news item about the amethyst find that produced Junior's prized specimen.

Junior says that the amethyst's purple color is permanent, but the rock could be damaged by freezing. Tiny holes within the crystal are partly filled with water which moves about as the rock is turned. If the water froze, it could cause the amethyst to split and pop.

For now, Junior plans to keep the amethyst specimen on display in his shop three miles north of Spruce Pine. If he sells it, he says, he would prefer to see it go intact to a museum, rather than be sliced into jewels. One of Junior's customers wants to buy the amethyst specimen and have it cemented into her rock fireplace as ultra-expensive decorative stone.



YANCEY COUNTY COUNTRY STORE

71-60
TEMPERATURE
72-62°
60-50°

Hairdressers To Attend Meeting

There will be a meeting held January 23 in Mayland Tech Cosmetology Department for all cosmetologists from Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties to decide whether there is enough interest in becoming an affiliate to the North Carolina Hairdressers and Cosmetology Association.

All hairdressers are urged to attend.



Conservationist Cites Water Polluted With Metal