

BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

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Arson investigated in motel fire

by Dan Ward
The State Bureau of Investigation and Black Mountain Police are investigating the possibility that arson was the cause of a blaze that destroyed the unoccupied Number 7 unit of the Travel-Eze Motel in Black Mountain November 28.

Black Mountain Det. Bill Stafford said that although the fire has not been ruled to be arson, police are following up statements by three witnesses that two suspicious young men or teenagers were seen wandering about the motel grounds prior to the fire.

Fire Chief Mack Kirkpatrick said four persons reported the fire almost simultaneously shortly before 2 p.m. Monday. The flames quickly engulfed the wooden A-frame, gutting it and causing an estimated \$9000 damage. Firemen and two trucks worked more than an hour to douse the flames.

Stafford said he has questioned the four who reported the fire and that the SBI has questioned others in an effort to determine if the fire was set by arsonists. He also said that an SBI arson special investigator was expected to be in Black Mountain Wednesday to investigate the fire.

Stafford said that no connection is seen between this fire and two other cases of confirmed arson in Black Mountain in the last two years.

In late July, arson was ruled as the cause of a fire on Lakey Street. A year earlier, a fire set by arsonists partially destroyed the Black Mountain Clubhouse.

The Black Mountain Fire Department made two runs last week. On November 22, two trucks and 17 men responded to a controlled burning on Walker Cove Road. No damage was reported.

Also that day, one truck and 15 men joined the Swannanoa

Fire Department in responding to a smoke report, caused by a pot on a stove, at the Juvenile-Evaluation Center. Minor damage was reported.

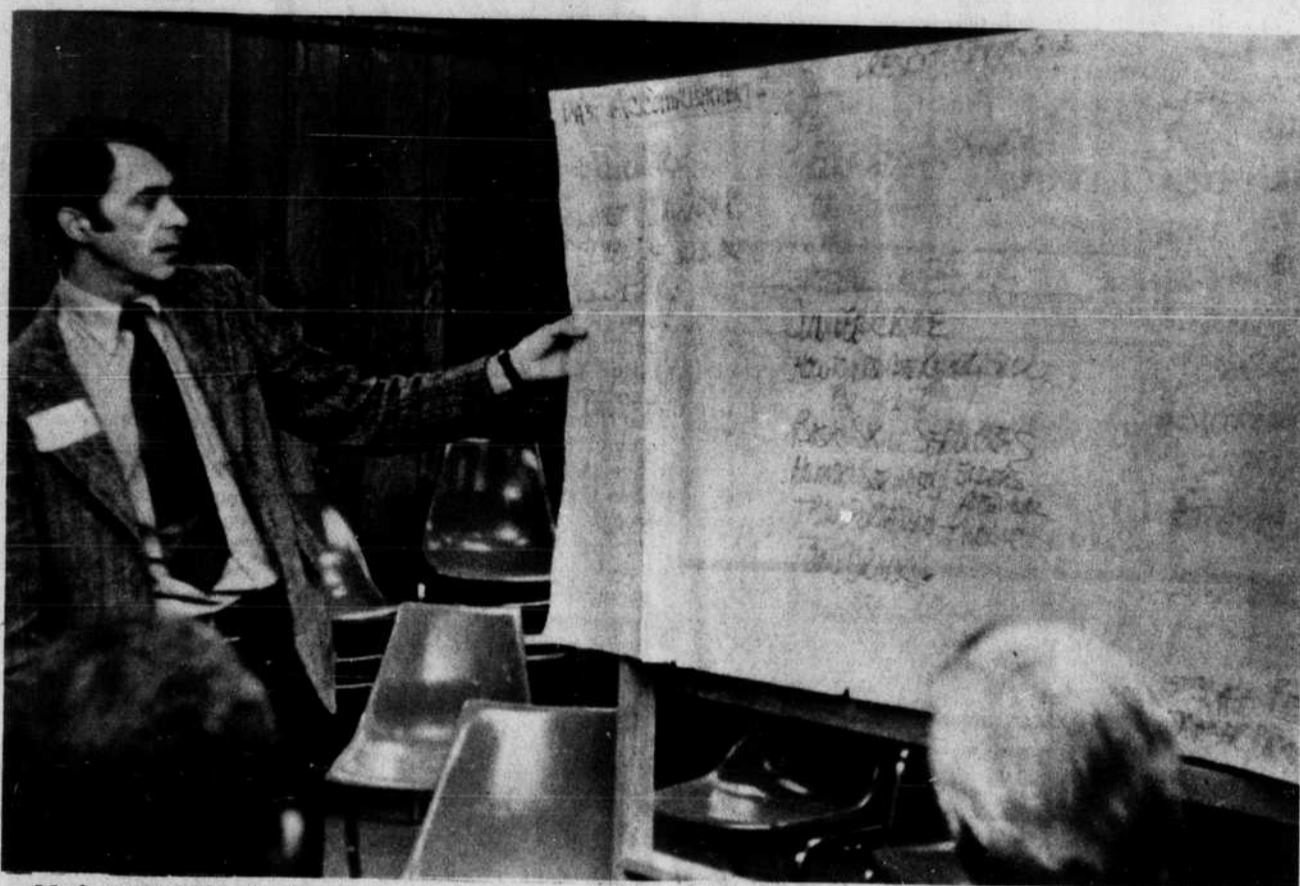
The County Ambulance Service made 30 routine and five emergency runs last week.

The Swannanoa Fire Department made two runs last week.

On November 22, one truck and seven men joined the Black Mountain Fire Department in answering a smoke report at the Juvenile Evaluation Center. Minor damage was reported.

One truck and 11 men answered a false alarm of a truck fire on US 70 November 25.

Sue Adams and Steve Crisp are now taking Emergency Medical Technician training.



Moderator Mike Booher examines lists supplied by workshopers on Black Mountain's past achievements, present struggles and future goals in order to get a feeling for the town's character. (Dan Ward)

Town workshop produces ideas

by Dan Ward

About 30 Black Mountain citizens participated in a four-hour town workshop November 28 designed to teach persons a different approach to town problem-solving.

The method, based on corporate "think-tank" brainstorming methods, removes individual problems from a jumble, categorizes them with problems of a similar nature, and finds simple, common solutions—all arrived at by town citizens.

The purpose of the workshop, one in a series of town meetings North Carolina, is "to recapture the vitality and enthusiasm of those early meetings and to rekindle the spirit of grassroots democracy and local initiative," according to its sponsors, the Institute of Cultural Affairs.

As part of the program, one group wrote an anthem for Black Mountain and designed a logo for the town, depicting a sourwood tree superimposed over a background of mountain peaks with the motto "Black Mountain, N.C. Sourwood City."

The workshop was chaired by Mike Booher and Kathleen Smart, who have led similar workshops in towns nationwide.

Participants included representatives of various civic organizations. The only present or newly-elected town board members present were Mayor Margaret Slagle, Mayor-elect Tom Sobol and Ald. A.F. Tyson.

Among concrete proposals to come out of the session were the need to provide group transportation—notably car pools, Dial-a-Ride, or a minibus—to shuttle between Warren Wilson College and town, to provide diverse recreation for youth, and to

educate the public to promote cooperation and understanding.

Many of the town's problems boiled down to a lack of communication in town, workshopers decided. The most popular method of increasing communication in the group decided, was to form a civic council made up of representatives of existing organizations, and to ask civic organizations to make sure at least one representative attends all town meetings.

Another proposal was that the town publish a handbook on town services and channels for getting things accomplished. It was also noted that there is a growing tendency in town to expect others to get goals accomplished.

As an example of how the workshop process works the subject of youth recreation was poignant. Among problems listed were juvenile crime, a migration of youth—especially those who are college educated—away from town, a generation gap in the town population, and a lack of entertainment attractions.

Through grouping of these problems, citizens found that an important first step to solving all these problems would be to provide more recreation for youth.

Many persons at the meeting expressed an interest in holding similar workshops on a larger scale within the town. Some also noted that a longer meeting was necessary to fully explore problems and their solutions.

What the group found were the main challenges to Black Mountain were getting people to cultural activities or the activities to the people, locating industry and business in or near Black Mountain and thereby raise the employment rate and provide more services locally, create business incentives and better the relations of townspeople and

businesses, increase communication between age groups and between town officials and citizens, and inform townspeople and schoolchildren about what their officials are doing and how.

Proposals were made for only two of the challenges. In order to increase communication and cooperation

between the town government and people, it was proposed that a civic council be formed, community leaders visit schools, media be fully utilized, including regular radio spots, more workshops be held, and that tours be offered of local businesses and services.

To enrich the cultural experience of the citizens, it was proposed that the key was transportation. As forms of transportation, the group suggested approaching local taxi services, reinvestigate Dial-a-Ride, organize car pools, get volunteer youth as drivers, use church and school buses, investigate grants for a shuttle system and talk to existing bus lines about extending their services.

Meet the Board

"New Attitude"

by Dan Ward

at this time is in general law practice, particularly property transactions, he sees his law training as a benefit to the board.

"All through law school, they teach you 'how to think like a lawyer,'" he said. "Before I take office, I intend to read the state laws that deal with municipal government," he added.

Begley sees the new board as the beginning of a "new

attitude" in town government. "I think we've got a board that can work together," he said. He also noted that citizen interest in town government has increased, meaning that this board will be closely scrutinized.

"The people seem much more informed now," he said. "Even if they aren't informed, they seem to be very aware of the attitude problem in this town."

"I think what we need is a town government that is more responsive to the average citizen," he said. "A lot of people I talked with were very concerned about not being able to personally meet with the persons in charge of the town."

"The big problem we've had until now is with the town management," Begley said. "There's not the sort of empathy there should be."

Begley said that he and the board will study thoroughly a way to make the town manager's office "low-key and friendly."

Begley, a lifetime resident of Black Mountain, is hesitant to classify himself as either a progressive or conservative in future goals for the town.

"I think that Black Mountain is a town with a character about it. That should be maintained. I, personally, would not like to see Black Mountain become just another suburb of Asheville."

"On the other hand, I don't believe Black Mountain should stand still. I think the interstate offers many opportunities," he said. One specific future trend, Begley said, will be an expansion of the business district south of the railroad tracks.

Although Begley's specialty



Black Mountain Firemen hand hose up a charred stairway to put out flames second level of A-frame at Travel-Eze Motel. (Dan Ward)

Henry Logan

Pro guidance spurs clinic

by Dan Ward

When Henry Logan came wrong from a layup

during his third year as a professional basketball player, and his first game with

the Virginia Squires, it signaled the end of a promising basketball career.

Five years and seven operations on his knee later, he is more involved in athletics than he could have dreamed.

For the past five years Logan, of Black Mountain, and two other former professionals, Benny Lake and Johnny Bailey, have coached a basketball clinic for boys and girls, mostly underprivileged, aged 10 to 18.

From a few youngsters at the first YMCA-sponsored clinic, the program grew to 100 would-be pros last summer.

The classes cover more than basketball. Guest lecturers coach the kids on the need to stay in school—and to stay away from drugs and alcohol. "Stay in school—I try to stress that that's the important thing," Logan said. "A degree is something you have all the time."

Because the camp is held only during the summer and has not shown a profit, Logan, holds down a full-time position as health care technician at Western Carolina Center's Satellite Unit at WNC Hospital. Working with reformed children seems a far cry from professional athletics, but fits in well with Logan's outlook.

"I love kids," he said. "Here, I get the best rewards seeing some kid do something he couldn't do before."

In addition to the basketball camp, Logan, Lake and Bailey

play exhibition basketball at local schools. Lake played on the Harlem Globetrotters, has worked on a basketball clinic in Vermont and at the Juvenile Evaluation Center. Bailey, in addition to playing for the Harlem Stars, has worked as an alcohol and drug abuse counselor.

"What I'm trying to do in Black Mountain is to get together a team I'd like to play in the Recreation League," said Logan, who also has experience as a recreator.

In the meantime, the former pro has plans to enlarge the basketball clinic to a live-in camp.

"What we want is a live-in camp. Then we could get a lot of pros to come down and stay with us," he said. Visiting pros to the clinic in the past have included Marion native Hawthorne Ringo, who plays for the New York Knicks.

Also, the trio is negotiating a contract for a one-hour spot on local television each Saturday to hold a televised basketball clinic.

In any case, Logan, who plans to build a home in Black Mountain for his wife Valerie, son Vance and himself, has big plans and hopes for the clinic designed to build character as well as bodies.

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Two arrested in breakin

Two youths, aged 14 and 16, have been charged with breaking and entering of the E.M. Fanning summer residence at 112 Ninth St. on November 17 and with larceny of \$600 in property from that house.

The 16-year-old, according to Det. Bill Stafford, who arrested the two November 18, was charged as an adult. That youth's name could not be

obtained by press time. The stolen property was recovered, another police spokesman said.

Black Mountain Police answered 82 calls last week, they arrested two for public drunk, two for traffic violations, investigated five auto accidents and assisted Black Mountain Fire Department twice last week.