

# BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

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## Kirkpatrick named manager

by Dan Ward

In a public forum interrupted by jeers and cheers, the Black Mountain Town Board voted 4 to 1 to hire Mack Kirkpatrick, Black Mountain Fire Chief, to replace Town Manager Jon Creighton at a special meeting December 15. Kirkpatrick began duties as town manager December 19.

Robert's Rules of Order, adopted by the board two weeks ago, fell aside as audience members heckled persons in support of soliciting applications for the vacancy, and cheered for aldermen opposing it.

After hearing discussion on whether to advertise for applicants for town manager the board voted 4 to 1, with Ald. Ruth Brandon opposing, to accept Kirkpatrick as town manager.

Brandon opposed because she was in favor of giving others an opportunity to apply and because she did not know what Kirkpatrick's qualifications were, she said.

Ald. A.F. Tyson, after objecting to hiring a town manager without taking competitive applications, voted to hire Kirkpatrick when it became apparent that the other three board members were set on hiring Kirkpatrick that evening.

"Whatever this board decides to do, I hope that the group will rally and go by that decision," Tyson said.

Tyson did qualify his vote, saying "I would kind of hate to see a man like him (Kirkpatrick) put in a pressure cooker-type job like this."

Ald. Michael Begley and Jim Norton said that there was a need to hire a new manager immediately so that, as Norton said, "we can get on with town business."

Norton stated that he already had a candidate, Kirkpatrick, in mind and was obliged to vote for him because he had promised to those who voted for him.

Begley said that he would support taking applications if the board did not agree to hire Kirkpatrick.

A number of persons from the audience spoke out on the hiring process.

One man said that the town, like a corporation, should hire from within to provide incentive and get a manager with loyalty to the town.

Gay Fox asked that the board give Kirkpatrick, as well as other applicants, the right of "due process" through competition and a decision based on qualifications in choosing a town manager.

Hugo Thompson said that the town needed a "professionally competent" person to act as manager, citing the complexity of the job as a need to obtain a manager with training and experience in town management.

In spite of Mayor Tom Sobol's

call for cooperation and solidarity at the board meeting December 12, "what you (the board) did in the next three hours divided this town all to pieces," Thompson said. Paul Griffith pointed out that although the board was in a hurry to get town management back to normal, it would take three to six

months to train Kirkpatrick for the job, making a one-month period to take applications for the job a relatively short time.

John Fore, owner of Burger Hut, said that in opposition to earlier remarks that former Town Manager Jon Creighton had done a good job ad-

ministratively, he knew of at least one instance in which Creighton failed to perform his duties at a cost to Fore of \$15,000. Fore said that he would be happy with whoever the board hired to replace Creighton "as long as it is someone we can talk to."

Mayor Sobol noted that although Kirkpatrick had not

submitted an application for town manager, his name had been under consideration for the post since C.D. Lindsey resigned as town manager two years ago.

"It's no secret that we've been talking about Mack for this job for the last two months - two years even," Sobol said. "I'm sure he'll accept."

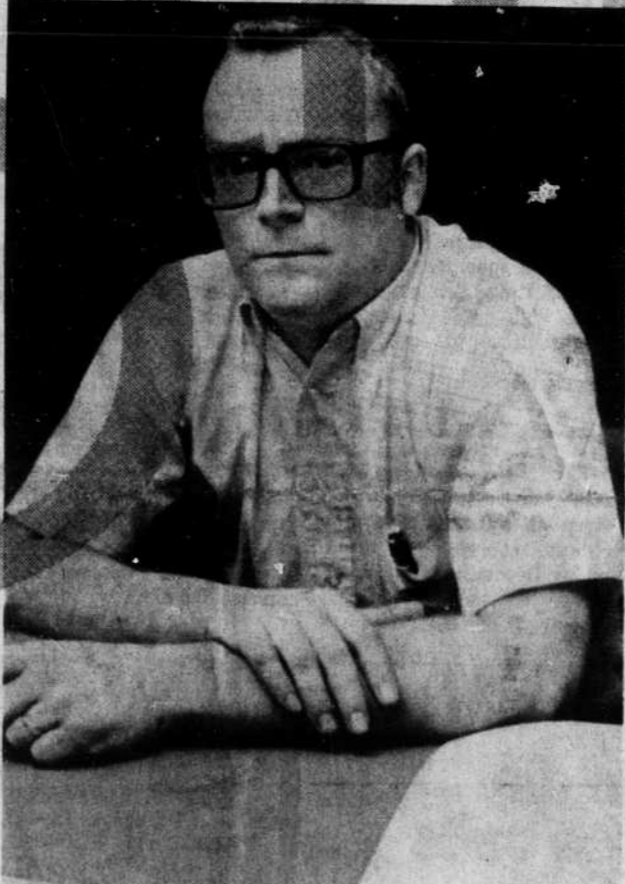
### Mack Kirkpatrick

### 'Looking forward to job'

by Dan Ward

Jon Creighton, perhaps knowing that his successor would be installed before the

weekend, began clearing his desk out at Town Hall on December 13, the day after the Black Mountain Town Board voted 3 to 2 to fire him.



On Monday morning, December 19, his successor, Mack Kirkpatrick, was already dispatching leaf pickups and getting a grasp on the enormity of an application for a Community Development grant.

"I'm really looking forward to it," Kirkpatrick said of the job as town manager. In addition to overseeing for town employees, Kirkpatrick holds the title of town clerk, tax collector, and either finance officer or treasurer.

His duties range from having stray dogs picked up to discussing book-long applications for \$300,000 grants with federal officials. He will be responsible for writing and balancing the town budget and keeping records of all public meetings and town business.

"It's been hectic," he said of his first day as town manager. In addition to town manager, he will remain in his position as fire chief until fire department personnel approve a replacement. Assistant Fire Chief Sterling Poe declined on moving up to the chief's position.

Although Kirkpatrick brings little to the office in the way of training for town management, he has shown himself to be an outstanding leader in the fire department.

A director of the State Fire Chief's Association, he has in the past taught workshops on modern equipment in which he is considered a specialist.

Although he is somewhat familiar with town budget practices and grant-writing through his 12 years in the fire department, Kirkpatrick's most often cited attribute is his ability to get along with citizens.

"Mack is a really nice guy," said one alderman recently. "I have no doubt that someone called him at 2 a.m. with a water problem that he would be right out there."

"I like people - I really enjoy being with and talking to people," said the soft-spoken Kirkpatrick. The 35-year-old father of three has lived in Black Mountain all his life.

Kirkpatrick said that he did not see his appointment as the beginning of a turnover in personnel in the town.

"Nobody is going to lose his job," Kirkpatrick said. "I've heard those vicious rumors, and they're not true. There are no plans to replace any town employees at this time," he said.

Kirkpatrick said that Creighton has offered to assist him with any problems that come up during the next month.



Everybody loved a parade as the largest Christmas parade held by the Swannanoa Valley Chamber of Commerce progressed down State Street. See more parade photos in special Christmas Greetings supplement inside. (Dan Ward)

## Flood slides available to groups

North Carolina Transportation Board members Mrs. Helen H. Little and John Millard Gilkey said that a slide presentation on flood damages in the western part of the State is available to groups and clubs in the counties of Mitchell, Yancey, Madison, Buncombe, Mc-

Dowell, Rutherford and Burke.

Mrs. Little and Gilkey noted that the purpose of the slide presentation is to inform area residents about the massive damage done to private property and to the State's highways and bridges during the heavy rains and flooding in

early November.

The public may contact the following by telephone to arrange for a presentation to their groups and clubs: John Millard Gilkey - (919)694-4955, Division Engineer, J.H. Medlin - (704)253-6721, or the Public Affairs Office, Raleigh - (919)733-3463.

Secretary of Transportation Thomas W. Bradshaw, Jr. said, "Our employees have been working around-the-clock to make emergency repairs and to reach isolated homes. We would like for those citizens of North Carolina who are not aware of the extensive damages to see

some examples of what happened and to understand what DOT faces in the way of repairs."

## Safe driving sought for holidays

Approximately 38 may die in traffic accidents in North Carolina over the long Christmas and New Year's holiday weekends, the N.C. State Motor Club has estimated.

Last year 44 persons were killed on Tarheel highways during the two holidays. Twenty-nine persons died during the Christmas holiday and 15 during New Year's. The main causes for these fatalities were unsafe movement, speeding, and following too close.

This year the state will count its toll from 6 p.m. Friday, December 23, through midnight Monday, December 26, for Christmas, and from 6 p.m. Friday December 30 to midnight Sunday, January 1

for New Year's.

"Our holidays would be far less tragic if drivers would obey the 55-mph speed limit and practice safe driving," said Peter Vasko, director of public relations of the statewide motor club. "We must slow down, be more alert, and refrain from drinking while driving."

Vasko advised drivers to check road conditions with the highway patrol in case of snow or rain, especially in the mountains.

Through November, the North Carolina death toll stands at 1,311 fatalities, some 52 less than a year ago. This gives us encouragement that drivers are becoming more alert and safety minded, Vasko said.

## Black Mountain Fire

The Black Mountain Fire Department made two runs last week.

On December 18, one truck and 10 men responded to a car, belonging to Jerry Madison Jones, on fire on US 70 west.

The next day, one truck and

14 men responded to a truck fire on North Fork Road. The truck belonged to Billy P. Haney.

The county Ambulance Service made 12 routine and five emergency runs, and was not needed on three.

## Swannanoa Fire

The Swannanoa Fire Department reminds citizens that they should take extra safety precautions during the holidays to make sure that Christmas trees do not dry out and that they are not kept too close to a heater.

The department made one run on December 13. Two trucks and nine men responded to an accident on US 70 east in which a truck belonging to the City of Asheville overturned.

## Face study needed to sketch reality

by Dan Ward

If you ever find yourself being stared at as you gulp your morning coffee in a local cafe, don't be alarmed - it's probably not the CIA.

"Sitting by a cup of coffee, I watch every move and sip and how they talk. I try to see what makes them tick, too," said Geraldine Watson Field, who studies faces to help her in her profession and hobby, sketching portraits.

"You have to study people,"

she explained.

A native of England who has lived in this country since 1942, Mrs. Field learned to sketch at the Brighton School of Art in England and at the University of North Carolina. Now she sketches portraits on afternoons at the Depot or by appointment.

The daughter of a famous English poet, Sir William Watson, Mrs. Field said she is fascinated with people, particularly "the expressions that pass on their faces."

She said her favorite sub-

jects are children.

"Children are very nice for me - they're always so bubbly," she said. She added that she has not had much trouble with fidgety children who cannot sit still for the 15 to 30 minutes it takes to do a color sketch. "Sometimes it's difficult, but the parents usually say 'you sit there, or else, while I go shopping,'" she said.

The artist, who claims to have sketched thousands of faces, will do portraits from 1-3 p.m. daily at the Depot at a cost of \$10 and up.



Geraldine Field begins a sketch of Peggy Perley at the Depot. (Dan Ward)

## Meet the Board

### 'Stronger ties needed'

by Dan Ward

Ed. Note - This is the first of a series of three on the new members of the Montreat Town Council. The council is made up of three persons, one of whom is chosen from among them to be mayor.

John Abernethy, newcomer to Montreat government, was chosen by councilmen Andy Andrews and Ivan Stafford to be mayor because, as he said, "My experience has been in the area of presiding, and these two men have tremendous strength in input." Abernethy said that because Andrews and Stafford have served on the council in the past, they are better able to understand the special problems and technical aspects of Montreat's affairs.

A Presbyterian minister, who is director of Church Relations at Warren Wilson College, Abernethy has lived in Montreat for about four years since leaving a ministry in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

He said that the major goal of this council is to "strengthen ties" between resident and out-of-town property owners, the Mountain Retreat Association and the College. A newly-organized voter's league is working toward that goal

