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Snowy tree branches create a contrasty maze. (Dan Ward)

Golf Course fixups get board approval

by Dan Ward

The Black Mountain Town Board gave the go-ahead to the first stages of renovating the golf course clubhouse. In order that work inside the clubhouse may be started, the board followed a recommendation of the Recreation Commission in asking Golf Pro Ross Taylor to move out of the facility by March 15. A number of persons from the Recreation Commission objected when Ald. A.F. Tyson asked that Taylor be given a monthly allowance to compensate for the loss of free housing and utilities at the clubhouse. Tyson noted that Taylor is paid only \$101 per week by the town, less than some part-time employees. Audience members pointed out that Taylor has been receiving profits from pro shop and golf cart concessions at the clubhouse, as well as free rent, utilities and gasoline. The board agreed on a \$200 per month housing allowance to be paid to Taylor to compensate him for loss of housing and utilities.

Green Fees
The board agreed to go \$25 beyond the Recreation Commission's recom-

mendation by raising green fees at the Golf Course to \$125 per year for town residents, plus \$25 for each additional family member, and \$150 per year for out-of-town residents with \$25 for each additional family member. The former cost was \$100 for residents, \$125 for non-residents within the Owen School District and \$200 for those outside the Owen district, plus \$25 for immediate family members. While most Recreation Commission members said they felt the increase was a fair amount, some objected to the increase coming before renovations are completed. According to one person, membership at the golf course, now at 115, would double when better facilities are provided. New membership prices will go into effect on May 1, with all memberships held until that time pro-rated. In the future, memberships will always come due on May 1 of each year.

Recreation Budget
A number of Recreation Commission members said that they wanted a better idea of how much money they have to work with in planning recreation expenditures.

Tyson pointed out that the proper procedure for a committee is to present its needs to the board and let the board try to find the money to appropriate as it sees fit. He noted that the time for presenting all but the more urgent needs is when the next budget is drawn up May and June.

Mayor Tom Sobol said that the commission could be kept informed of how much money has been budgeted and spent through their representative board member, Ald. Jim Norton.

Norton noted that the recreation budget now includes \$3600 in non-earmarked funds. Sobol added that another \$1000 will be returned to the recreation budget when lights found inappropriate for the tennis courts are returned to the distributor.

Ald. Ruth Brandon told the commission members that they should have little trouble

in communicating with the board because of their good working relationship with Norton.

An ordinance passed by the board after the discussion ensures that all revenues brought in by the golf course will be earmarked for recreation spending. The golf course generates \$51,000 per year, while recreation spending is approximately \$70,000.

Gang Mower

The board chose to put off a decision on whether to purchase a new gang mower or repair the old one. Low bid for a new mower, with a life expectancy of 10 years, was \$4,124. A cost estimate for repairing the present one to last another year was \$1,602.

Norton, who recommended getting the old gang-mower repaired, said he heard that a new gang-mower could be purchased for \$2,600. Tyson said that Taylor should be contacted to find out whether the repaired mower would be adequate. Sobol said the matter will be taken up at the regular Town Board meeting March 13.

Golf Course Improvements

Norton listed a number of improvements needed at the golf course, as recommended by the Recreation Commission. Sobol asked Town Manager Mack Kirkpatrick to pass the recommendations on to Taylor, along with a request that a report on the improvements be submitted by Taylor to the board in 60 days.

Land Use Plan

The board voted unanimously to endorse the Land of Sky Regional Council Land Use Plan. The plan, introduced at the regular February board meeting, recommends what directions growth take to prevent "negative development" in the future.

Vanderbeck Settlement

After a great deal of discussion on the propriety of ever having given a part-time building inspector full-time employee benefits, the town board agreed to pay James

Vanderbeck, former building inspector, \$100 for unused sick time.

The board added a provision that stated that part-time employees would no longer receive benefits reserved for full-time employees. Sobol directed that a message be sent to all part-time employees of Black Mountain to that effect.

Vanderbeck resigned as town building inspector at the request of Town Manager Mack Kirkpatrick and had already been given over \$300 in severance pay.

Clubhouse Bid Awarded

The town agreed to award a contract to renovate the lower floor of the Lake Tomahawk clubhouse to Neal Bartlett, who submitted a low bid of \$25,650.

The town has received about \$23,000 in grant funding, matched with about \$7000 in town funds, to renovate the lower floor for senior citizens activities. Money not used for construction will be spent on tools and materials.



Conference champs

Mary Ann Myers goes up for two of her 21 points, leading the Warlassies to 63-51 win over Hendersonville to win the girls Little MAC championship Friday. The girls later beat Pisgah 79-52 in the first round of the Division 8 Tournament. (Chip Huggins)

Smith to speak here



McNeil Smith, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, will speak to all interested area residents from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Friday, February 24, in a coffee hour to be held at the Black Mountain Library Education Room. According to a Smith campaign worker, the social will be a get-acquainted with a session with the candidate. The session will be part of a two-day visit by Smith to

Western North Carolina that will include talks in a number of communities and on the UNCA campus. The spokesman said Smith will welcome all questions from area residents on the Smith campaign. The tour of Western North Carolina is sponsored by Friends of McNeil Smith. Smith is campaigning for the Senate seat currently held by Republican Jesse Helms.

Apron Lady still sewing strong

by Dan Ward

Nobody has to tell Claudis McGraw about the power of the written word.

Since the Black Mountain resident was featured in articles in Southern Living Magazine and the Charlotte Observer, she has been swamped with requests from all over the country for her services as the "Apron Lady".

At 87, the soft-spoken Apron Lady finds herself answering three letters per day and practicing her 36-year-old craft of apron-making for a demand that is far above her ability to supply.

"I don't have to do it for a living now, you see," Ms. McGraw said. "It never seems like work to me, really. I enjoy it so much."

"Yesterday I sold almost every apron I had. You wouldn't believe it. I sold to one from Hendersonville, one from Black Mountain, Winston-Salem, two from Illinois and two left from here to go straight to China. They were in a hurry to get some aprons to take to China—they were missionaries here for the conference in Montreat. Yes, and one was going to Alaska," she noted.

Knowing her aprons are being worn around the world makes the seamstress proud. "It's sort of a booster, don't you know. It makes you feel good," she said. Although she gets constant requests from all over the country to mail aprons, she said she prefers not to send them by mail because of the trouble involved in packaging and mailing. She does feel honored by the requests, however, and answers three letters daily.

Ms. McGraw began apron-making, a craft she still speaks of with the enthusiasm of a novice, while a businesswoman in 1942.

"I had a coffeehouse down here and I made my own aprons. I made myself six of

them and I thought they were so pretty I took them out front and hung them up. I've been selling them ever since," she said.

When she turned to apron-making for a living, Ms. McGraw showed remarkable marketing expertise. She sold her aprons wholesale to an exclusive New York City dress shop and was hard-pressed, with a staff of 12, to keep up with orders. When Amy Vanderbilt bought one of her lacier creations, Ms. McGraw found herself catering to the celebrity crowd.

"When a celebrity has one it's amazing," Ms. McGraw said. "It will blow right up and blow right up until you run out of that particular kind of material."

When Greta Garbo was in North Carolina on vacation, her agent bought one of Ms. McGraw's aprons for the star, "who likes to cook," the Apron Lady said.

In a very short time, an entire bolt of the same material was used up and sold in the form of the Greta Garbo apron.

Other aprons have gone to actor Ben Johnson and the former president's daughter, Luci Johnson.

"One thing that boosted my business was in 1941, I believe, when the quintuplets were born in Canada," Ms. McGraw reminisced. "I made five of the tiniest white Organdy pinafores and put them on the railing. I sold them to everybody from little white-haired ladies downward," she said.

After huge successes with the Greta Garbo Apron and the Gone With the Wind Apron, "I got so busy I had to quit naming them," she said.

Now, with a staff she has voluntarily trimmed down to herself alone, Ms. McGraw turns out only a few aprons a week, which she sells for \$5 to

\$12 each. The number she makes varies.

"It depends which one it is. It depends on what sort of mood I'm in," she said.

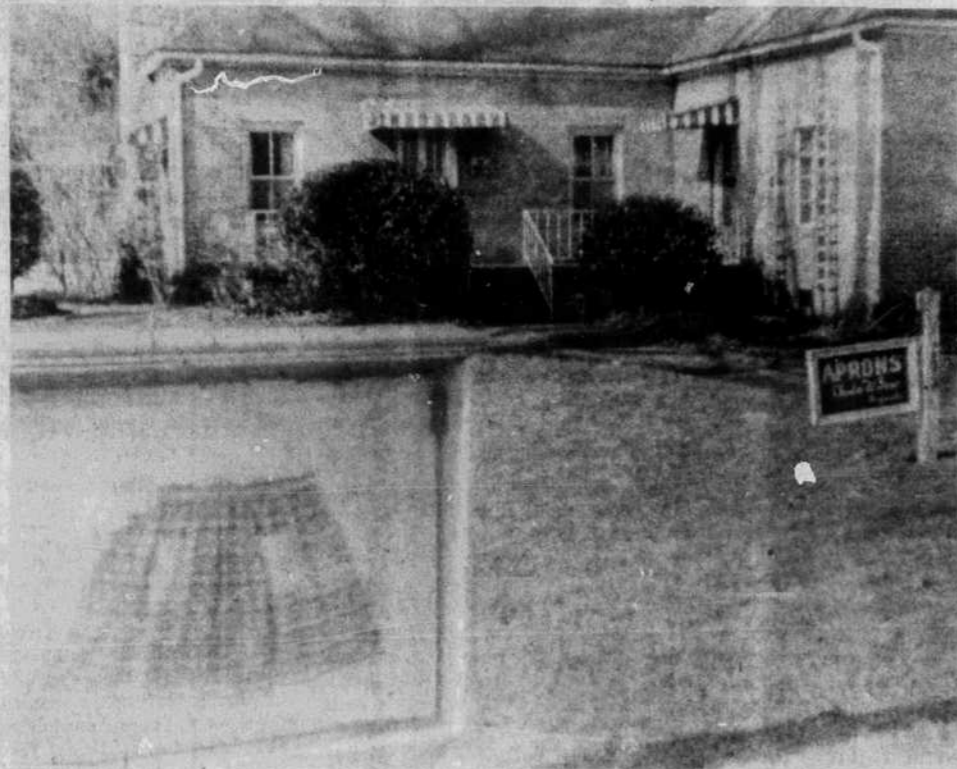
She said she makes them now for the joy of work and the unending desire to create something different.

"I use one basic pattern. I just use that and add on and take off. That's where it gets fun, you know," she said. "The best part is trying to think of something different to do."

"The nice thing about pretty aprons is that I think they make a person want to be a good cook. Good aprons for good cooks," she said with a polite chuckle.

The Apron Lady, who at 87 doesn't regard herself as old, expressed her philosophy on activity and aging.

"Retired people should keep busy—it keeps them from thinking they are old. Besides," she noted wryly, "it keeps them out of mischief."



The home of Claudis McGraw, the Apron Lady, on State Street in Black Mountain. Ms. McGraw declined to be photographed. (Dan Ward)

Burglars net candy, soda, cigarettes

Black Mountain Police are investigating a breaking and entering at Mr. Zip on February 20 between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 6:45 a.m.. The store has been conducting an inventory of missing items, which includes two canned drinks, candy, gloves and six packs of cigarettes, police said. They did not gain entry into the safe, according to Det. Bill Stafford. Entrance into the store was gained by breaking a front window. One adult and one juvenile suspect have yet to be questioned, police said. Montreat Officer Randy Halford arrested Kenneth Long of Montreat on seven warrants, including worthless check charges in Utah, South Carolina and North Carolina. Long was also charged with possession of marijuana.

A four-wheel drive vehicle was used to drive on Black Mountain Golf Course February 19 while the occupants stole eight greens flags, police said. There are no suspects at this time.

Officers Bill Fortune and Halford are holding a seminar February 24 for auxiliary police in issuing citations and investigating accidents.

On Wednesday, Officers Don Ramsey and Det. Bill Stafford are giving seminars on drugs and investigations of criminal offenses to auxiliary police. The public is invited to both seminars.

Black Mountain Police answered 254 calls this week and issued one citation arrested two for public drunkenness, one for driving under the influence and assisted four motorists.

Comment through laughs

by Dan Ward

For the last few weeks, the Black Mountain News has had an extra touch of humor and timely comment on local issues in the cartoons of John Baker.

Baker, a student at Montreat-Anderson College, plans to study commercial art and holds some hopes of breaking into the exclusive and small group of professional news cartoonists.

Although his only experience in cartooning to date has been on his high school paper, Baker has shown an amazing knack for knocking out simple and poignant cartoons with only hours notice.

Baker's images hit home, as well as the funny bone. When a handful of people showed up for a grant hearing, Baker's depiction was of a meeting room empty except for a frustrated chairman and bored janitor. Baker said he chose the image over another idea of depicting citizens unable to get to the meeting because of pot-holed streets and broken water mains.

"I decided to go with the more positive idea—to support the committee," Baker said. Often, he must draw more than one cartoon before he creates the message he wants.

"One idea will take a complete drawing," he said. "If I don't like it, I throw it out and start again," he said. Drawing the cartoon is

relatively simple, he said. The most difficult part is getting the idea (or light bulb—as it were) for the cartoon.

"It's like a flash of inspiration," Baker said. "I think about what sort of message I want to get across—

whether to get behind the issue or poke fun or whatever."

In any case, Baker plans to continue betting cartooning experience through the News—and helping us to laugh at and better understand ourselves through caricature.



John Baker and friend.