

## Fire bounds still pending

by Clint Williams

Local industry voiced strong support for the retention of current fire district boundaries at an informal public hearing held Wednesday, May 17 at Owen High School.

Chairman R. Curtis Ratcliff, the only member of the Board of Commissioners present, opened the hearing by stating that the hearing was not official and "not required by law or anything, so obviously no decisions can be made tonight."

Before receiving comments

from the floor, Ratcliff presented to the group of approximately 100 Valley residents the four alternatives available for settling the boundary dispute between the Swannanoa and Black Mountain fire departments.

The first alternative — the commissioners could do nothing and leave the fire protection as it is, with some businesses paying Black Mountain on a contract basis and the rest, including most residential properties, giving voluntary contributions for fire protection. The advantages to this idea are that

it is the simplest and least expensive to the residents and businesses concerned. The only disadvantage is that the residents of Black Mountain are paying taxes to protect citizens and property outside the town.

In the second, Swannanoa could be allowed to expand to its four mile limit. This plan would raise taxes and insurance premiums on all property in the area.

The third alternative is the commissioners could negotiate a compromise boundary which might be agreeable to both fire

departments as well as the residents.

In the last proposal, the commissioners could also set up the entire area outside Black Mountain as a special service district, taxing the property in it at a uniform rate for fire protection from Black Mountain.

Of the four proposals, Ratcliff termed the one calling for a special service contract "the least desirable."

The majority of the comments from the floor were in favor of retaining the present boundaries, and most of the citizens who spoke were

representatives of local industry.

Their major reason for maintaining the current relationship with the Black Mountain Fire Department cited was the lower insurance costs they enjoyed as a result of the higher insurance rating of the "full-time" Black Mountain Fire Department. A spokesman from Ingles warehouse said that a shift in the boundaries would result in a \$35,000 increase in the company's insurance premiums. Chester Prentice, speaking for Highland Farms, said that he thought it expensive to "give eight or nine dollars to some insurance company in Minnesota for every dollar given to Swannanoa."

Fred Myers, president of the Swannanoa Volunteer Fire Department, prefaced his arguments for adjusting the boundaries by stating that he hoped that the boundary dispute would not cause a rift in the spirit of the Owen High School district, a district made up of both Black Mountain and Swannanoa.

Myers' primary argument for the expansion of the Swannanoa fire district was the need to expand the restricted tax base that the district now has.

He also questioned the "full-time" status of the Black Mountain fire department, citing the fact that there are only five paid firemen and not all are on duty at one time. He also said that not all of the district had a 7-suburban fire rating, as suggested.

### Fire cost analysis

## Response aside, money is issue

by Clint Williams

Economics, as well as efficiency, figures heavily in the raging controversy over the altering of the current fire district boundaries.

The primary argument

against the extension of Swannanoa's fire district to the four-mile radius approved by the state from the fire station, is that against the resulting increase in taxes and insurance costs.

Because the Swannanoa Fire Department has no paid full-time staff and is a volunteer fire department, the best fire insurance rating it can offer the residences of its district is 9AA. The Black Mountain Fire Department fire district has a higher 7-Suburban rating.

According to a memo issued by William M. Taylor of the Buncombe County Planning Board, "a typical example of a \$100 deductible, form No. 2 insurance policy, on a \$30,000

home, would be assessed the following premiums based on the different ratings: ' A \$30,000 home in the Black Mountain fire district would pay \$106 per year, while the same home in the Swannanoa district would pay yearly premiums of \$114-\$127. Based on the assumption that these proportions would be the same for any valued residence, the average insurance premiums for home owners currently in the Black Mountain fire district would increase 7 percent to 20 percent if the boundaries were changed to include these homes in the Swannanoa district, according to Taylor.

The contested area now enjoys tax-free fire protection

from the Black Mountain Fire Department, although many residences and industries in the area give donations to the department. Although no area by area break-down is available, donations totaled \$11,200.65 as of May 18.

Some figures for donations given by industrial and commercial concerns lying within the wedge of land under dispute are available. Singer-Kearfott and Drexel Heritage are two of the industries that have fire protection contracts with the city of Black Mountain. Singer-Kearfott gives \$1,000 annually, while Drexel contributes \$400 a year. WNC

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## Day care centers—not just babysitters now

by Dan Ward

The Valley's day care centers all stand as testimony that they no longer exist only as a babysitting service for working mothers, but have become early learning institutions where children can socialize at a young age.

Perhaps the most novel is the Warren Wilson Child Center operating behind the chapel at Warren Wilson College. Parents and college students keep the private center going.

The center began in 1972, and continues to be governed by a group of parents, making it a cooperative. The college

and church co-sponsor it.

"One thing that's exciting for the children is that they get to meet foreign students," said Director Kathy Mosely. "They come into contact with all sorts of people."

Like other Valley day care centers, the children at taken on field trips where they can learn more about their surroundings. Trips include visits to the Nature Center, libraries, fire departments and picnics.

During the summer, the children take less trips and are allowed more time to interact with each other, Mrs. Mosely said.

"We want to give each child

a chance to develop their own personalities—feelings. We talk a lot about things," she said.

"We try to get away from sex stereotypes—where girls play with dolls and boys with trucks." A mixed group of children nearby verified that as a girl dumptruck driver picked up a load of sand from a boy truck driver in the sandbox.

The main attraction of the day care center, however, seems to be its connection with the college.

"The students give us an opportunity to provide a lot of personal attention," Mrs. Mosely said. Students will work with the children as part of their required campus work requirement or as part of a

class project. Some will visit just to experience the openness and simplicity of children.

"Some guys, especially during the summer, come down and play with the children. It's really neat. I guess they're just lonely," the director said.

Many of the practices at the center have sophisticated reasoning behind them.

Students are taken seriously in their comments so that Mrs. Mosely and teacher Beth Collins can help the children when they are struggling to understand concepts about the world around them. Treating them more like adults allows them to "develop a positive self-concept," Mrs. Mosely said.

Each child also has a cubby hole, so that he or she can collect things of individual value—be they rocks or bottle caps or whatever. Having a space of their own instills a feeling of responsibility.

While in most ways it is not unique from other centers,

Warren Wilson's seems to demonstrate that the centers have evolved into a needed alternative to simply day-time care.

"In a lot of ways, it's a lot like the home-type atmosphere," Mrs. Mosely said.



A wind-warped pine is silhouetted in the sunset as seen from Shining Rock, near Brevard. (Dan Ward)

## Courts sought in Montreat dispute

by Bill Lamkin

The North Carolina attorney general's office is asking a court decision on whether the trustees of the Mountain Montreat Association are operating legally.

George W. Boylan, assistant attorney general, confirmed we are in the process of working up a complaint "to be filed with the Buncombe County Superior Court."

The N.C. attorney general's office was asked a year ago by the Rev. Parker T. Williamson of Lenoir, to investigate whether the Montreat Management Council is constituted legally under terms set forth in its

declaration of trust.

The request came in the wake of a sale of two buildings, the Fellowship Hall and Howerton Hall, by the trustees to Montreat-Anderson College for use as dormitories.

Boylan said the association was established in 1890 as a private organization to administer some 4,000 acres of land in the Blue Ridge Mountains that had been given to the church. In the early 1900s, some of the holders of stock in the association decided to put the stock into trust. A declaration of trust was prepared, under which the association was to operate. The trustees, as a self-

perpetuating board, were to elect their successors and the church was to nominate candidates.

But in the 1960s, Boylan said, the trustee board was phased out of existence because the church began to elect the trustees. Boylan said

Williamson asked the attorney general's office to look into the situation, since the state oversees charitable trusts such as this. Boylan said it will take a couple of weeks for his office to prepare the court action. "We are not taking sides," he explained. But, he

said, there are questions that need to be answered. These answers will be of benefit to the state in future cases, he noted.

Boylan said the present members of the Montreat (continued on page 10)

## Clean-up Day set June 17

by Dan Ward

Plans for a Swannanoa Valley Cleanup Day have been made, and volunteers have begun work to enlist groups and businesses for projects to be done June 17.

Bertha Jones and Dot Watkins of the Black Mountain Town Improvement Committee met with the Black Mountain News and set June 17 as the day for a Valley-wide clean-up and fix-up.

The committee approved a plan to enlist civic organizations in general beautification projects and businesses in self-beautification projects for the day. Suggestions included painting, planting flowers, and designing attractive window displays for businesses; and roadside litter pickup, recycling drives,

cleaning vacant lots and painting unsightly brick walls for civic groups.

The Swannanoa Valley Chamber of Commerce and Town of Black Mountain have endorsed the Cleanup Day plans.

Groups and businesses that have already agreed to help either in promotion or with a project for Cleanup Day are the Black Mountain News, Boy Scout Troop 50, the YX Club and Appalachian Wind-chime Factory.

The committee also recommended that churches be asked to promote and organize their own projects. The Black Mountain News will serve as a center for coordinating and promoting various projects. Persons who wish to serve as advisors for business projects may also contact the News at 669-8728.



Teacher Beth Collins mediates turns on the tire swing at the Warren Wilson day care center. (Dan Ward)



## Brides!!!!

Be sure to get your engagement or wedding announcements in to the News by Monday evening to be included in our special color June Bride edition June 1.

Photos will be returned.