

BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

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ABC petition spurs board indecision

by Dan Ward
Rumors of a petition drive to hold a referendum to close the Black Mountain ABC store caused the Black Mountain Town Board to table action on the Golf Club House and Cherry Street sidewalks until after the September 12 mixed drink referendum.

Before ABC income tax savings were voted by Ald. Jim Norton, the board had approved appropriating between \$2500 and \$4400 to have an off-duty Carolina Power and Light employee wire lights at the existing tennis courts.

The board developed cold feet about spending when Norton noted that he'd heard that a group was passing a petition asking for a referendum to abolish the Black Mountain ABC store. Apparently a counter maneuver to an upcoming referendum to decide whether mixed drinks should be sold here.

"Recreation is the first to go, anyhow. We stand to lose \$5,000 if we lose that store," Norton said.

The only board member to say he had seen the petition was Mayor Tom Sobol, who pointed out that it is past the Board of Elections filing deadline to get a store

referendum on the September 12 ballot with the mixed-drink referendum. However, Sobol voiced concern that both referendums could conceivably pass, with abolition of the ABC store necessitating discontinuance of mixed drinks.

"It's actually more money than this year's \$90-something thousand," Sobol said. "You're looking at well over \$125,000 (in revenues lost), including the tax on beer and wine."

"It's going to throw the whole town into chaos, there's no doubt about it," he added. He compared the possible cut to Proposition 13 in California.

No board member could say who was circulating the petition, although Ald. Ruth Brandon, the only board member against the mixed-drink referendum, said she thought "about six churches" were involved.

Because of the uncertainty over possible budget cuts if the ABC store closes, the board chose to table acceptance of bids to renovate the golf clubhouse and another proposal to use town employees to put as many feet of brick sidewalk on Cherry Street as possible for \$3600.

The board voted to take up both proposals again after the September 12 vote on mixed drinks is analyzed.



Gov. Jim Hunt chats with the Rev. Billy Graham of Montreat prior to the dedication of I-40 Black Mountain-Swannanoa bypass. (Dan Ward)

Sidewalks, streets, police seen as Swannanoa needs

by Clint Williams
Better police protection and better streets and sidewalks are the primary concerns of residents of the Swannanoa community, according to a survey conducted by the Swannanoa Community Council.

This spring, the Public Affairs Committee of the Swannanoa Community Council mailed 1418 surveys and 144, or slightly better than 10 per cent, of the questionnaires were returned.

"The Community Council had gotten to a point where it felt like it may have been away from the pulse of the community," explained David Alexander, a spokesman for the Swannanoa Community Council.

One of the more surprising findings of the survey, especially in the wake of Proposition 13, was the desire for more government in Swannanoa.

The majority of the respondents, 61 per cent, favored more community government in Swannanoa, while only nine per cent favored less. The remaining portion, 29 per cent, favored the same amount of community government.

When asked in what way could the Community Council become more involved for the benefit of the community, 29 per cent of those replying to the questionnaire said that the Council should solicit federal funds, and 23 percent favored the Council wielding more political influence. The ways the community feels the

Council could be more effective might suggest a desire for more government involvement, not less as suggested by the tax payers' revolt in California.

One of the other areas the survey suggested that the Council could do more was in further development of the clubhouse square area in Grovemont. 26 per cent of those who responded to the survey favored this.

Streets and traffic are considered the biggest problem in the Swannanoa community by 32 per cent of the respondents. Crime was considered the biggest problem by 23 per cent of the community, zoning by 19 per cent, taxes by 14 per cent, and water and sewers by 12 per cent of those answering the survey.

Almost two-thirds of the community would favor incorporation over annexation by another community (Asheville or Black Mountain) while 14 per cent would oppose the idea. One-fourth of the respondents had no opinion.

A somewhat surprisingly large minority, 29 per cent, were opposed to more industry in the Swannanoa area. 64 per cent were in favor of more industry moving in the area and 7 per cent had no opinion.

Swannanoa Council 'We stay low key'

by Clint Williams
The Swannanoa Community Council was formed "about 40 years ago," according to David Alexander, to provide "welfare for families of the community during specific hardship."

Although the providing of food and fuel for hardship cases is still a major role of the Council it has evolved into much more than a community welfare agency.

The Council, funded solely through the United Way, also supports a school nurse at the Swannanoa Elementary School, supports the Swannanoa Community Center, makes a donation to the Swannanoa Valley Medical Center and acts as a coordinating agency for various county-wide projects such as Quality Forward.

Because Swannanoa is an

unincorporated area, it is ineligible for 90 per cent of the federal funds earmarked for community improvements, according to Alexander. Consequently, one of the primary functions of the Community Council is to act as a lobbying group to represent the interest of the community.

"The community needs help because it doesn't have a source of funds to go to," said Alexander, "and it has been proven over the last 40 years that we (the Council) have accomplished things, tangible things, in the community we've gotten and we want to continue to do that."

Alexander pointed out the new four-lane bridge to be built in Swannanoa and the direct road to be built to the Bee Tree Industrial Park as

examples of effective action of the Council.

Despite its lobbying function, the Swannanoa Council is not intended to be a political arena, said Alexander.

"The Council has chosen to retain a low-key profile," Alexander said. "The Council has functioned over the years as an organization which is open and available to all the citizens of the community."

Alexander said that representatives from area schools, churches, clubs, industry, and businesses attend the quarterly meetings and that there is no set limitation on the number of people that can be active members of the Council. The only requirement for membership, Alexander said, is that one be a member of the Swannanoa community.

Favoritism charged in police action

by Dan Ward
An accident involving the father of Black Mountain is assistant police chief has led to charges of favoritism in the department and counter-charges of private individuals going out their way to harass police.

William Burnette of Black Mountain has said that Black Mountain Police Officer Myron Fineberg showed preferential treatment in not charging Harold Wiseman of Black Mountain with driving under the influence after a car driven by Wiseman was involved in an accident with that driven by Chris Carrier of Black Mountain July 7.

Burnette, who appeared at the scene of the accident shortly after it occurred, followed Fineberg as he took Wiseman and Carrier to the police station, and later followed Black Mountain Det. Don Ramsey as he took Wiseman, the father of assistant Chief Jim Wiseman, to Detox.

Fineberg said that he felt that the elder Wiseman, because of his attitude and relative sobriety, should not be charged, but listed "unsafe government" on the part of Wiseman as the cause of the accident in his report.

Assistant Chief Wiseman said that Fineberg showed favoritism in failing to charge Wiseman. Wiseman said that Fineberg called him to the scene shortly after the accident, at which time Jim Wiseman told the officer to "do what you think is right,

with no hard feelings if you charge him," Wiseman said. Wiseman said he backs Fineberg's judgement in the matter.

Fineberg also said that, because no witnesses came forward and the elder Wiseman was not inside his car when the officer arrived, Wiseman could not be charged with driving under the influence (DUI). Fineberg did say there were "a bunch of kids nearby"; but that it is not usual procedure to ask for witnesses at the scene of a minor accident. He added that Burnette, who is his next-door neighbor, was carrying out a vendetta against him.

Fineberg added that Carrier had agreed with his decision to take Harold Wiseman to Detox rather than charge him.

Carrier said he had been under the impression that

Wiseman had been charged when he agreed the man should be taken to Detox. Upon learning that Wiseman was not charged, Carrier, a Republican candidate for clerk of court, called for the resignation of Fineberg, Town Manager Mack Kirkpatrick and Mayor Tom Sobol.

Kirkpatrick supported Fineberg's action, but noted that he thought it was customary to ask bystanders at an accident scene if any had seen the accident.

"I can't say I totally agree that he (Fineberg) did the right thing, but I back up his judgement," Kirkpatrick said.

Sobol said that as soon as Burnette had complained of the incident to him, he asked Kirkpatrick, Police Chief Crai Slagle and Assistant Chief Wiseman to carry out an

investigation.

"As far as I'm concerned, if Carrier is calling for my resignation, it's because he is running for office and wants to make a name for himself," Sobol said.

Sobol added that, as of Monday, he had not yet seen a report of the investigation.

Fineberg denied that Wiseman had been given treatment different from anyone else.

"There are a lot of people the police will just send home with their families. I've even picked some up from McDowell County and had their family come to take them home," he said. He added that it is customary in police departments throughout the state to simply release persons thought to be drunk to their families or take them to Detox if they show a "good

attitude."

He added that he thought Burnette followed him and made the allegations of favoritism because of dispute going back years. Burnette denied having bad feelings toward Fineberg or Wiseman, saying he was only anxious to see everyone "got the same treatment."

by Dan Ward
Local dignitaries hobknobbed with Governor Jim Hunt June 19 as interstate traffic once again crept through Swannanoa and Black Mountain during the

I-40 opened at last traffic jam

official opening of the segment of I-40 bypassing Black Mountain and Swannanoa.

The Rev. Billy Graham of Montreat began dedication ceremonies for the 6.4 mile section of highway with an

invocation. The well-tanned evangelist praised the highway for the safety it will bring.

Black Mountain Mayor Tom Sobol preceded Hunt with a short address in which he forecast a prosperity for the

'Tigers' tales never get old

by Clint Williams
"We got into Minchou and a Japanese soldier got into one of the chow lines with us. One of the Chinese officers saw him and shot him right in the line, just about three people in front of me. I didn't eat any supper that night."

That is just one of the many stories that will probably be re-told by Leo N. Williams when he travels to the 31st convention of the 14th Air Force Association being held in Duluth, Minn. July 26-30.

Williams will be among 600 former servicemen who served in China during World War II attending the convention.

The 14th Air Force was the first Air Force to be formed overseas, according to Williams, and was formed from the American Volunteer Group—better known as the "Flying Tigers." Originally, 100 pilots and 200 ground crewmen were recruited to aid the Chinese against the invading armies of Japan. The men were not official American military representatives, but mercenaries who were highly paid and received and "unofficial" bonus of \$500 for every enemy plane shot down.

During three years of service in China, Williams said, the 14th Air Force lost 500 airplanes to all causes while destroying 2,600 enemy planes and probably destroying an additional 1,500

planes that got lost... and later transferred to the 16th Fighter Squadron, where he served as a radio operator.

Williams spent most of his time in Kweilin where he guided in lost fighter planes and "ferryed troops into Manchuria." Although a Japanese bomber base was only 25 miles away and his base was the frequent target of bombing raids and strafing sorties, the greatest danger Leon was in was in the United States.

"The only time I ever got shot down was in Norfolk, Virginia. I was pulling tow-targets. The fighter pilots weren't supposed to shoot within 10 degrees of the tow-target ship, but this one pilot in a P47 came in and shot the whole tail off the dang thing and put us down," Williams explained.

The plane and crew were able to land safely, he continued, laughing.

In 1975, at a convention in New Orleans, Leon Williams was awarded the Chinese War Memorial Medal.

"They (the Chinese government) awarded the unit the medal right after the war, but the orders were lost and not found until almost 30 years later," Williams said.

Leon and his wife were among 250 members of the 14th Air Force Association to be the guest of the Republic of China (Taiwan) Air Force in 1976. The members of the association were "treated royally" during the visit.

Williams is in charge of the arrangement of the 1979 convention to be held August 1-5 at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville. There he will get the chance to host a group of friends who mutual experience and the passing of the have drawn closer together.

Voluntary cuts in water asked

by Dan Ward
Black Mountain Town Manager Mack Kirkpatrick has asked that persons receiving Black Mountain water voluntarily cut back on water consumption because the level of the town's reservoir last week dropped to five feet below the spillway.

Although approximately 13 feet of water remains in the reservoir, Kirkpatrick said he feared that the water table is drying up because of the long period of dry weather here.

He added that a great deal of water was lost when a main

line broke recently, and again when a fire hydrant broke last week. He did not, however, predict a need for mandatory water rationing such as imposed last year.

In other action concerning Black Mountain water, Kirkpatrick said that approval of a well site on town property behind Pizza Hut was withdrawn by the County Health Department last week when it was learned the site is in a flood plain.

Kirkpatrick said that the town may be able to retain the site if it relocates a short piece of sewer line and creates a berm to keep out flood water. He said he has been given no decision by health officials as of Monday, but that the town is considering another site south of State Street for an additional well.

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Top attraction at the hour-long ceremony however, was the governor.

Hunt mingled with spectators prior to the ceremony, shaking hands with most Black Mountain aldermen and kissing former Mayor Margaret Slagle. He spoke for some time with Graham.

Hunt told the audience that completion of the bypass is an important milestone in a goal of connecting ends of the state with four-lane highways. He said he had to fight east-state influence to push for better roads in the mountains, a statement that drew applause.

"The counties of Western North Carolina are no longer the lost provinces of the state," Hunt added.

Other persons recognized at the gathering included Montreat Mayor John Abernethy and N.C. Rep. Gordon Greenwood of Black Mountain. Representatives of the Department of Transportation, Asheville government, and commissioners from Buncombe and McDowell counties were also recognized.

(see photos inside)

Police Report

Black Mountain police were again involved in a high speed chase last week as Officer Bill Fortune and Det. Don Ramsey apprehended two Swannanoa youths for drag-racing. Michael Nitchman, 18, was charged with willful speed competition with another

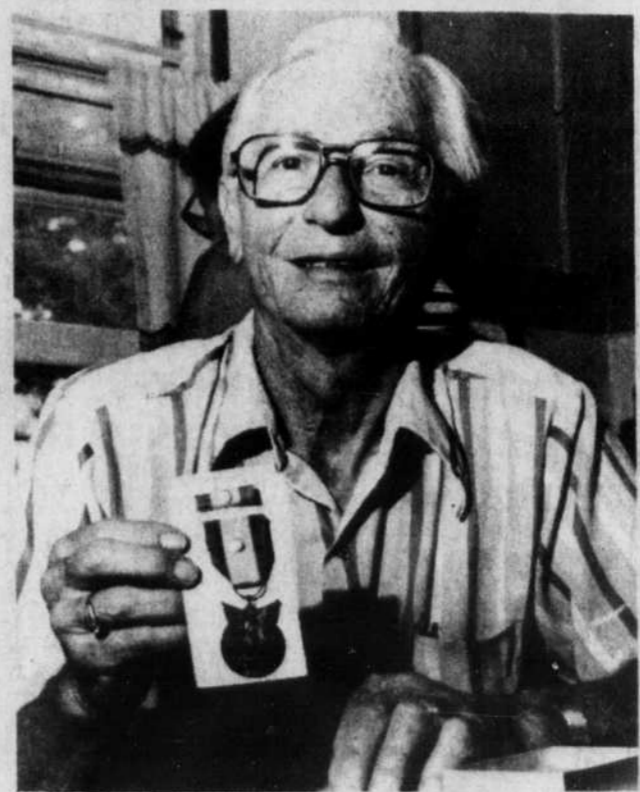
vehicle, failure to yield to a blue light and driving 100 mph in a 45 mph zone.

Timothy Scott Bradley, 17, was arrested on the same charges, plus driving under the influence.

Two Black Mountain youths were arrested Monday for breaking into a candy

machine near Robo Car Wash Monday, according to Det. Ramsey. Tommy Cornett, 18, and Charles Craig, 17, were both charged with damage to a coin operated machine and larceny of its contents.

Police responded to one accident and received 258 calls last week.



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