

Mountain Laurel Acres annex complaints heard

by Dan Ward
 A handful of residents of the Mountain Laurel Acres subdivision engaged in long, and at times, heated, discussion on the annexation status of their property with the Black Mountain Town Board August 28.

Question of whether all 19 lots comprising the 21 acre subdivision came into question when tax rolls were updated this year and property owners who thought they lived outside the town received bills.

According to records research done by Paul Griffith, the area was annexed to the town in 1966 based on a petition from Mrs. J.C.

Nanney. However, some parcels had been sold prior to the final reading of the annexation approval.

To further confuse the situation, a local bill through the general Assembly that year formally annexed that property, and has been interpreted by Town Attorney Bill Eubanks, the League of Municipalities, and the Attorney General's office to over-ride any improper procedure followed in annexing those lots through the town, with the exception of a lot bought by J.W. Blankenship, Jr. before annexation proceedings began.

The board heard testimony from Mr. and Mrs. A.W.

Wilhelm, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Lehman, and Mrs. M.C. Dickens that they did not want their respective properties within the town limits.

The board, after hearing the opinion of Eubanks, asked the attorney to ask the League of Municipalities and the Attorney General for a more in-depth study of the Mountain Laurel Acres issue and to give the board a more specific opinion on whether those who do not want to be within the town limits may be removed from annexation, either by local ordinance or legislative action when the General Assembly reconvenes in January.



The sun shimmers off the stream flowing from Lake Tomahawk. (Dan Ward)

2nd fire truck in accident here

by Dan Ward
 As Black Mountain firemen were still disputing a report on a wreck involving one of its pumps, one of the department's tankers crashed into the assistant chief's Cadillac, apparently of its own accord.

According to Town Manager Mack Kirkpatrick, Assistant Chief Sterling Poe pulled the tanker backwards into the fire department garage August 28 to find the source of a noise coming from the hood. After checking under the hood, Poe left the truck in neutral, but applied both the hydraulic and mechanical brakes to the truck before shutting off the ignition. He then went into the fire house to get assistance from Fire Chief Gary Bartlett.

While inside, the truck rolled across the parking lot, doing extensive damage to Poe's private car, Kirkpatrick said. He added that two firemen who were the first to arrive at the scene reported that both brakes were still engaged. Inspection of the brakes showed they are in proper working order, Kirkpatrick said. The truck suf-

fered a smashed right fender. "What's really strange is that when the battery is dead, we have to use crowbars to get the truck rolling out of the garage," Kirkpatrick said. "And, of course, that's without the brakes engaged."

Although there is no evidence that someone caused the truck to roll from the garage, Kirkpatrick said he has not ruled out foul play in the accident. He said that a number of lesser misfortunes suffered by city vehicles indicates either vandalism or an extremely bad run of luck.

The accident comes in the wake of a report issued by American LaFrance, Inc. that an accident involving a Black Mountain fire truck on August 1 was not due to mechanical failure.

In that accident, a pumper driven by David Bradley Norton, a fireman in training, crashed into the home of Mr. and Mrs. J.E. MacMahan on Old U.S. 70 at Blue Ridge Road, totally destroying the house.

Chief Bartlett refuted LaFrance's findings, saying the company is apparently

disclaiming any blame for the accident.

According to a letter sent by LaFrance by Regional Sales Manager Doyce L. Ford, inspection and testing of the pumper showed that the brakes were functioning and that there were no defects in the steering. Ford did note that inspection of one of the brake linings showed they had been subjected to excessive heat.

Ford went on to write that the brake linings, engine, air compressor and power steering pump were not original equipment and did not meet American LaFrance specifications.

Bartlett said he checked with Broughton Hospital in Morganton, from whom Black Mountain bought the truck and who had bought it new, and found that the brake linings had been inspected, but never replaced. He also said that replacement of the other equipment mentioned had been done to specifications given by Gene Hall, LaFrance district service director.

Bartlett also said that although the brakes worked when LaFrance representatives tested the truck, they did not grab hold as quickly as they should have. He suggested that the brakes failed when Norton tried to stop at Old U.S. 70 because the fireman had been driving the truck around curves on North Fork Road for the previous 20 minutes, causing the brakes to heat excessively through constant use.

Bartlett said Assistant Chief Poe, who was a passenger in the truck at the time of the accident, said that Norton did apply the brakes, without effect, before swerving to avoid a car and hitting the house.

Bartlett said that no disciplinary action will be taken against Norton as a result of the accident.

Damage on both the truck and house are still being determined.

Fire bounds meeting set

A meeting was expected to be held Tuesday evening between officials representing Black Mountain and Swannanoa Fire Districts to come to a compromise on a proposal by the Swannanoa Fire Department to expand its district eastwards.

The meeting, set for August 29 at the Swannanoa Fire Station, followed an earlier meeting in Black Mountain between officials to reach a compromise at the request of

the Buncombe County Commissioners.

Expected to attend the meeting were Black Mountain Fire Chief Gary Bartlett, Ald. Ruth Brandon, Fireman Freddie Robinson, Swannanoa's Board of Directors and Attorney Martin Nesbitt.

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Child abuse charged

A Swannanoa man has been charged by Black Mountain Police with child abuse when it was discovered that his two-year-old son suffered extensive bruises while in his custody.

According to Black Mountain Det. Don Ramsey, police issued a warrant on Paul Pressley August 28 shortly after the child was returned to the custody of his mother, who lives in Black

Mountain.

Two breakins are under investigation this week.

Suspects remain to be questioned in connection with the breakin and larceny of \$180 in cash and two lighters from the Bill Studenc residence at 516 Asalea Ave. some time between August 14 and 28. Studenc was on vacation at the time, police reported.

On August 27, a breakin at the Vivian Buckner residence at New Bern Apartments netted an Instamatic camera and small amount of cash, according to police. Suspects in that case also remain to be questioned.

Police recovered a number of towels, wash cloths and pillow cases stolen from the Travel-Eze Motel last week. Nobody was charged with the theft.

'Booze in Black Mountain?'—London asks

by Dan Ward
 ed. note — Although we are opposed to the growing popularity of the media becoming the news, and although we have a policy of not printing rebuttals to mistakes other media have made, we would like to make an exception considering liquor-by-the-drink has left Black Mountain to international reckoning.

In short, the article leaves the reader with the impression that Black Mountain residents, who usually spend all their time picking their teeth with broom straws, are ready to pick up their muzzle-loaders over mixed drinks.

To continue, Drogin also works as a stringer for the Washington Post. The Post, apparently sensing good reader interest in a feud between modern day likker-swillin' hillbillies and Bible-thumpin' preachers, reprinted the story under the headline "Black Mountain Folks Split Over Demon Rum Referendum."

Apparently, mountain feuds have international appeal, because a British Broadcasting (BBC) reporter, seeing the Post story, called on Allison and Mundy to entertain and inform the stolid, but beer-swilling, Londoners.

Paul Reynolds, a BBC interviewer, called Mundy from New York, asking him to be recorded for a London broadcast. Mundy at first refused, referring the newsmen to the Rev. Edgar

Ferrell, chairman of a coalition against liquor-by-the-drink. The newsmen called back when he found the minister was on vacation.

"The information I gave him was just general stuff," Mundy said. "I told that man it's not a person against

person thing. It's just that the church is against an issue. Mainly I just bragged on Black Mountain."

Afterward, Reynolds called John Allison, Jr., former owner of Wonk's Dymaxxon Bar on Cherry Street.

"What they were looking for

is mayhem," Allison said. "They thought from the article that it was neighborhood against neighborhood. They were looking for barricades in the streets. I told him this wasn't Northern Ireland. He was also interested in brown-bagging — how it works. He

thought that was hilarious. "They wanted to know about the influence of the religious retreats. I told them it was very simple — they come here only in the summer and don't vote in elections. "I think he was disappointed," Allison concluded.

Push for barn theater gets school backing

It was a strange series of events that led to a British newsmen calling Johnny Allison and John Mundy August 28.

It began with a Charlotte Observer reporter, Bob Drogin, who came to Black Mountain to interview a number of people about the September 12 liquor-by-the-drink referendum. One of those people was Mayor Tom Sobol.

"He seemed like a really nice fellow at the time. We sat by the pool and talked for two hours, and when it was over, he printed the two worst lines possible of what I said. He made us all out to be a bunch

of Snuffy Smiths," Sobol said.

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downstairs lobby. The loft of the old cattle barn became the site of the first theater-in-the-round in Western North Carolina.

Resident actresses included Betty Alexander and Victoria Green of Black Mountain and Elaine Hunter Meyer of Asheville. Other Black Mountain residents who participated in the productions were Ralph Singleton and his wife, Dana, who acted as ushers, and Earl Brotherton who directed & protuberated by waving lanterns. Patsy Clarke of Asheville and Harriett Terrell of Black Mountain were responsible for costuming.

Gordon Greenwood of Black Mountain, state representative, was one of the group of local citizens who formed the Silo Circle Angels to assist in raising funds for the season.

In the early 60's, the barn reverted to its original purpose. Agricultural students at Owen High School were involved with a cattle project and a registered Angus herd was kept in the barn. At present the barn temporarily houses athletic equipment for the school. Although there are no school funds available for the project, plans are being considered which would revive the old Silo Circle Playhouse by means of a joint school-community effort.

Grady Rozzell, Owen district representative of the county school board, is studying the

proposed project for implementation.

H.H. Zeugner, Buncombe community schools coordinator, would oversee the project. "I feel that the Silo Circle Playhouse will be a major step in reviving community interest in our Owen area public schools," he stated.

Charles Lytle, principal of Owen High School, indicated an interest in updating the theater project for area

drama students and interested citizens.

The county schools cultural arts supervisor, Dorothy Hampton, would like to see the barn become a place where arts activities can take place. "Community involvement will be needed, including volunteer labor and materials before any renovation can take place. We hope it will give students and residents of all ages an opportunity to work together," she commented.

Buncombe County Schools Superintendent Dr. N.A. Miller, Jr. thinks that the building might be used as a young children's theater, a speech center, puppet theater or a classic film site. Small musical productions could be performed and art exhibits by both the schools and the community could be held, he stated.

"Revival of the old Silo Circle Playhouse is an exciting idea," commented

Tinker Lauer. "Perhaps the community could work with the students to put on a play which would provide funds for the theater. There may not be costumes in the barn loft, but the barn is still there along with its memories of the past and hopes for the future."

Any individual or group interested in pursuing the Silo Circle Theater restoration may call the office of the Buncombe County Community Schools Coordinator at 274-4286 or the office of the Buncombe County Schools Arts Supervisor at 274-7744.

Labor Day driving care urged

The Labor Day holiday weekend, according to Highway Patrol Commander Colonel John Jenkins, is one of the most dangerous weekends of the year on North Carolina's highways. Since 1972, some 145 persons have been killed on the highways during the Labor Day holiday period, which this year begins at 6 p.m. on Friday, September 1, and ends at midnight on Monday, September 4. Sixteen persons died during the 1977 holiday.

Jenkins said the leading causes of fatal accidents during the holiday period are usually the same as any other weekend — speeding and drunk driving.

Jenkins said troopers will be on the highways over the weekend strictly enforcing all traffic laws, with special emphasis on speeding motorists and drinking drivers. Every piece of speed-timing equipment and the special fleet of unmarked patrol cars will be in operation, he said.



Bruce Wilshire and Tinker Crawford in rehearsal scene from "The Rainmaker." July 1978 (Ed DuPuy)