

# BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

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The fog crept on little cat feet around rooftops as drizzle held on last week. (Dan Ward)

## New HUD grant hearings set

by Dan Ward

The Black Mountain Town Board, at a special meeting November 27, gave the go-ahead for a new set of Community Development grant hearings, upped its settlement offer to a couple whose house was destroyed by a town fire truck August 1 (see related story on page one), and approved the purchase of a new police car.

The board formally approved reapplying for a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development grant of up to \$500,000. To reapply, the board must call two public hearings on what the grant should be used for.

Dates for those two hearings have been set for December 7 and January 4, both at 7 p.m. at Town Hall. Based on input at those hearings, the town will submit an application for a project to improve living

conditions for low to moderate income persons.

Results of those hearings is expected to lead to reapplication for money to install 10 inch water lines and fire hydrants in the Cragmont

Community.

An earlier application for water improvements to the Cragmont area was rejected, along with all but two other grant applications from the western part of the state.

Becky Williams, grants

coordinator for the Land-of-Sky Regional Council, told the board that the fact that HUD has moved the grant deadline up to early January, a favorable rating on the town's earlier application, and pressure put on HUD after the high percentage of rejections of grant applications from the mountain area earlier all indicate Black Mountain's chances of acceptance are very good this time. Out of a 500-point scoring system, Black Mountain came only 35 points from being awarded a grant last time, she said.

Mayor Tom Sobol noted that the town's chances are better now that the board has adopted an affirmative action plan for minority hiring.

Ms. Williams said that the area that hurt Black Mountain the most was a lack of either assisted housing or housing rehabilitation programs. In that respect, she said, the HUD rules discriminate against smaller cities and towns, where urban-type slums do not exist.

She added that, should Black Mountain receive the HUD grant, the town will stand better chances of receiving Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funding. The town now has an application pending for ARC money to build a 1 million gallon water reservoir.

Police car

The board accepted a bid of \$6,895.83 from McMurry Chevrolet for a new Malibu to replace a 1975 Chevrolet with over 100,000 miles now used by the police department.

Ald. Mike Begley at first protested buying a new police car until the McMahan settlement was finalized, but later voted with the board to buy the car. A lower bid of \$6,570 for an LTD was submitted by Woodcock Ford, but Assistant Police Chief Jim Wiseman said the police preferred the smaller Malibu. Because the Town Board allocated only \$6,000 toward purchase of a new car, the police will have to find the additional money within the department budget.

The board voted 4-0 in favor of the long planned purchase. Ald. A.F. Tyson was absent.

## New damage settlement offer rejected

by Dan Ward

The latest settlement offer given by the Black Mountain Town Board to an elderly couple whose house was destroyed by a fire truck has been rejected, according to John McMahan, representing his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J.E. McMahan, whose home on Old U.S. 70 was destroyed.

John McMahan approached the board at a special meeting November 27 with an updated list of expenses of removing and replacing the house destroyed by a Black Mountain fire truck driven by fireman-in-training Brad Norton August 1, and told the board an earlier offer of \$30,741 was unacceptable. McMahan said the cost of

removing the old house, putting in a \$17,000 modular home, and replacing shrubbery has come to \$28,116. He asked the board for \$29,661 to cover unexpected expenses and as some compensation for time he has taken from work — worth an estimated \$3000 — to supervise rebuilding.

The fair market value of the former house was appraised at \$16,870.

Noting that the town contingency, or reserve, fund contains \$13,000, and that Maryland Casualty, the town's insurance company, will pay \$10,000, Ald. John Klutz proposed the board offer \$22,500. This, Klutz said, would leave \$500 in the town budget for emergencies over

the next six months.

Ald. Ruth Brandon offered another proposal — to give the McMahans the total replacement cost of \$28,116. Her motion died for lack of a second.

Klutz's proposal carried by 3 to 1. Ald. A. F. Tyson did not attend the meeting.

John McMahan said Tuesday he would consult with his lawyer to decide whether to push for a higher offer or to take the settlement to court. He said he feels the town is exempt from governmental immunity because the truck was being used for a training drive, not a fire call. Town Attorney Bill Eubanks, at the meeting Monday, said he feels

the town is exempt from a suit under state law.

McMahan and Ald. Brandon argued that the couple should be compensated for all costs incurred in reestablishing them in a living arrangement similar to that they enjoyed before the accident. Other board members and Eubanks said that, if the full cost were paid, the value of the property would be increased by \$13,000 — at the expense of taxpayers. Eubanks said it was standard procedure to compensate accident victims for the cost of lost property — not replacement costs.

An earlier request by the McMahans for the town to pay \$551 in medical expenses incurred as a result of the

accident was dropped, when that amount was paid by Maryland Casualty.

John McMahan told the board Monday that he believed they reneged on an unwritten agreement to replace the house and supply town employees to do some of the work.

## Two SVFD directors quit

Two members of the Swannanoa Volunteer Fire Department Board of Directors resigned at the November 24 meeting of the board — apparently spurred by the confirmation of Jim Adams as chief.

Ralph Coffey and Ken Crawford, both of whom had earlier resigned as firefighters, resigned Friday as directors after voting for four applicants for chief went in favor of Adams, who has been acting chief for the last three months.

Coffey could not be reached for comment.

Crawford, a 5½ year veteran of the department,

said his decision came as the result of "a lot of little things that just came to a head."

"They've got guys in there who don't know how to do the job. There's some who like to run red lights and the sort. I just got a belly full," he said.

"It seems to me the board is split, and they want somebody there who won't do the job," he said. Crawford did not criticize Adams, but noted that Adams has only two years experience on the force.

Crawford, Barbara Settle, and David Strickland had also applied for the chief's position. Barbara Settle, although she resigned earlier from the force along with her son and

husband, has remained on the board of directors.

The recent resignations follow resignations over a month ago of a handful of firefighters as a result of an apparent division between factions of the department. One fireman who remained, Barry Roberts, said last week that "the department is running as smooth now as it's ever been."

Acting directors to replace Coffey and Crawford will be appointed by the remainder of the board to serve out the remaining terms, which expire in June. Crawford said he did not know whether he will run again for director in June.

## 30 years ago

Santa Claus was in the news in the Black Mountain News 30 years ago this week.

The polar philanthropist was due to arrive for his yearly visit, sponsored by the Black Mountain merchants and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, on a trailer loaded with candy. The News was accepting letters to Santa.

Southern Bell announced plans for a Black Mountain phone directory—the first ever. The directory would be geared toward Black Mountain, but would include Asheville listings. Southern Bell decided to give the town its own listing because subscribers had jumped to 613, with 264 on the waiting list.

That amount was up from 200 in 1940.

The Swannanoa Men's Club Minstrel set for Friday was billed as the "greatest benefit minstrel since Al Jolson." E. N. Howell, publicity man for the amateur production, claimed half a dozen Broadway talent scouts would be at the show. Proceeds were to go to the Swannanoa Community House.

Cecil Nanney, in one of the few articles carrying a byline, lauded the undefeated Black Mountain Darkhorses and listed the season standouts. First names were not always included. Standouts, in order of importance given by Nanney, were Capps,

White, Milbee and Charlie Reese. Capps scored 10 touchdowns during the season, averaging 44 yards for each one — two of those for 80 yards. A photo on page seven showed modern day pilgrims arriving for Thanksgiving — a ship load of displaced Europeans beginning a new life in America.

A feature story in the second section was about Duke, a police dog trained by Nazis in Germany and brought to the U.S. by George Ennett of Montreat. The war ended before Duke could do his duty to the Reich. He became the first animal member of the Black Mountain ASPCA.

In advertising, the News

was selling Christmas cards, Ellington Studios was doing Christmas portraits for \$6, and Viverett Radio featured a Santa saying, "I'm plugging electric appliances for Christmas."

For 35 cents, adult could watch any of five movies, including State of the Union with Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn, and Hold That Ghost, with Bud Abbott, Lou Costello and the Andrews Sisters. Children could get in for 15 cents, tax included.

Western Auto was promoting "practical gifts," such as a mixer or iron, for Mom for Christmas. Rice's Quality Store had Lionel train sets for \$15.95. And that's the way it was.

## JEC runaway rate down

There has been a significant decrease in admissions and runaways at the state's five training schools for delinquent youth in the past few months. The schools are operated by the N.C. Department of Human Resources/Division of Youth Services.

The Juvenile Evaluation Center, in Swannanoa, experienced a considerable drop in the runaway rate, according to Director Don Padgett.

According to Padgett, the number of runaways dropped from "somewhere in the neighborhood of 50" in July to nine in September and "about 10" in October.

"Since status offenders are no longer admitted to the state's training schools, we are experiencing a decrease in student population," said Robert Atkinson, assistant director for Institutional Services in the division.

From July through October 1977, there were 363 youngsters admitted to the five training schools. For the same four-month period in 1978, there were only 222 admissions.

Status offenders are those who commit crimes for which an adult would not be arrested, such as truancy or running away from home.

Beginning in July status offenders could no longer be sent to the training schools by the courts. Instead, they are referred to community-based alternative programs such as specialized foster care, group homes and others.

"This reduction provides additional flexibility to the staff to work with the students," said Atkinson.

"Better incentive programs can be operated, for example, when staff is available to supervise and transport students to activities they

have earned the opportunity to enjoy. When the population is high, the schools have to curtail extracurricular activities because of lack of staff. This creates an atmosphere of boredom for the children," he stated.

According to Atkinson, the training schools are also experiencing a decrease in runaways. In the past two months, there has been an 80 percent decrease in the number of students who run away. The schools, which had previously been averaging around 30 to 40 runaways per month, now average eight to 12 per month.

Stonewall Jackson School in Concord and Juvenile Evaluation Center in Swannanoa showed the most significant decrease followed by Dobbs School in Kinston. C.A. Dillon School in Butner

and Samarkand Manor in Eagle Springs also showed decreases.

"We feel that the recently added personnel and the double coverage of students in the cottages has helped us reduce the number of runaways," said Atkinson. "Time and money have also been saved in looking for the runaways — we don't have the extra expense of going 50 to 100 miles to pick up an apprehended child. We have also saved on the damages committed on citizens' property by the students when they run," he stated.

Atkinson said that based on reports given to him by the schools, double coverage of the students has increased morale particularly among the cottage parents.

Governor Jim Hunt added 54 cottage parent positions to the

five schools following the death of an employee at Juvenile Evaluation Center and alleged sexual involvement between students and staff at Stonewall Jackson School. These two schools received the majority of new positions.

## Russell and Rose Hilliard

## Youthful missionaries leave for 10-month cruise

by Dan Ward

Russell and Rose Hilliard of Montreat left Tuesday for a 10-month voyage that will begin in the Caribbean, travel the east coast of South America, and end up in Europe. But the brother-sister team won't be hob-nobbing with millionaires and dining on caviar. They will be hard-working members of a team selling books and Christianity at every port.

The voyage is not a first for Russell. Two years ago, at 19, he sailed aboard the N.V. Doulos, Greek for "bond servant," around Africa as part of the staff for the book exhibit ship belonging to Operation Mobilization.

The ship, like the N.V. Logos ("word") that will cruise the South American coast, was a sort of traveling library-bookstore. Most of the books on board are textbooks and classics for countries where school books are hard to come by. The other 40 per cent are Christian books, making the ship a roving mission.

"Our communications are very low key," Russell said of the visits, "mostly personal conversations." Before the ship arrives, an advance

publicity person gets the word out that the ship is coming. It is usually arranged to have the president or other official open the exhibit on arrival. After that, Russell said, it is up to the staff to go out and personally invite people to the ship to look over the books and discuss Christianity.

The ship, he said, is a miniature Christian society made up of people from all over the world.

"Something of interest is that all of the crew is Christian, also," he said. "They've given up tremendous salaries to work on the ship."

More interesting, perhaps, is how the voyage is financed. Operation Mobilization does not advertise a need for donations, Russell said. Rather, they ask everyone to pray for money — and somehow it all comes in. The Doulos, at half the size of the Logos, costs \$2000 per day alone to operate, Russell said. All the staff, in addition, are expected to pray for enough donations to cover their room and board.

Russell and Rose, at 21 and 22, respectively, will be two of the youngest members of the Logos staff. The average age,

Russell said, is about 29, and almost half are married. Schools on board teach staff members' children in English, Swedish or German. The ship also has its own hospital.

"The reason so many people from different backgrounds can live together is that Christianity unites us," Russell said. "Sometimes, when people hear it's a Christian ship, say 'that must be heaven on earth.' It isn't, obviously — we aren't all perfect. There is a lot of work to be done, and we all get very tired."

The rewards, however, are worth the work, Russell said. Most ports, he said, give the ship a "very warm reception." And, as can be expected, staff members have some very unusual experiences along the way.

One, he recalled, occurred when he and others were going door-to-door in a Moslem neighborhood in Capetown, South Africa, on his last voyage. Failing to find anyone at home, they went to the local mosque, where a religious leader agreed to let them speak at the evening Koran reading.

That evening Russell stood before the packed mosque and

invited them to the ship. Then he told them what Christian beliefs are.

"It was very quiet. You could hear a pin drop," he said. His fear of talking to a hostile

audience was unfounded. "To my surprise, when I finished, they all came up to me for invitations to the ship," he said.

Russell and Rose, having spent their early years as children of missionaries in Spain, look forward to using a language they learned before English.

