

Second class postage paid
at Black Mountain, NC 28711

Thursday, December 7, 1978, Vol. 25, No. 7

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Moral education due, speaker says

by Dan Ward
The president of Mars Hill College told a relatively small audience at the annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet at Assembly Inn December 4 that education now must focus on confronting moral issues and provide a liberal arts background to meet changing social patterns.

Fred Bentley, 43-year-old president of the Baptist college, told a crowd of less than 100 that technological growth has created new moral debates, such as "test tube" birth and artificial life supports, and has contributed to phenomena such as the break-up of the family unit, homosexuality, and multiple career changes.

To combat and adapt to trends, he said, colleges need

to stress studies in the liberal arts to provide a broader educational background, and to give students a philosophic base to try to deal with new moral questions. He added that society in general needs to work toward maintaining family unity — the root of most moral decisions.

"In small towns such as Black Mountain you have the advantage of remaining somewhat close-knit, with the family unit still very important," Bentley said. "We should all try to keep that unity."

Bentley's address followed short speeches by outgoing president Bob Dickey and incoming president Carl Bartlett.

Dickey praised the chamber for innovative thinking — particularly in

regard to Sourwood Days festivities — during the last year. He also lauded Chamber Manager Ed Weber for being responsive to the needs of the community.

Bartlett, in a short speech, said he would like to see the Chamber and community work more closely for the good of the Valley.

Included in the program was an award of appreciation to Ed Miracle, who has served as treasurer for the organization for a number of years. The award, written by Weber and read by Dickey, jested that Miracle did a fine job of doctoring the books for the IRS. Miracle declined reelection to the post for the upcoming year.

Blessings and the benediction were given by the Rev. Edgar Farrell. George Pickering introduced Bentley.



Fred Bentley addresses the Swannanoa Valley Chamber of Commerce. Incoming President Carl Bartlett is to the left of the podium, former President Dr. Bob Dickey to the right. (Dan Ward)

New hearing for HUD grant December 7

The Black Mountain Town Board has set December 7 at 7 p.m. as the time for the first of two public hearings on what project the town should propose for use of a Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development grant. The meeting will be held at Town Hall.

The purpose of the grant would be to make improvements for lower income neighborhoods or to provide facilities for the elderly or handicapped.

An earlier set of hearings in Black Mountain resulted in a proposal to install 10-inch water mains and fire hydrants in the Cragmont Community. Funding for that project was rejected earlier this year. However, a representative of the Land-of-Sky Regional Council has stated that the town stands a better chance now of getting a grant for the project, should citizen input suggest that the water lines are still the priority project for the town.

Firemen hurt by light fumes

Four Black Mountain firemen were overcome by noxious gas when they were inspecting a faulty lighting fixture at the De-tox unit at WNC Hospital November 28. The four were taken to Memorial Mission Hospital, and were released shortly after. Two trucks and 22 men responded to the report of fumes. No damage was reported.

Two trucks and 19 men responded when an alarm at the Ingles warehouse malfunctioned November 29. Damage estimated at \$5000 resulted from a fire in the kitchen of the Tommy Stepp residence at 817 Rhododendron Ave. November 30. Two trucks and 17 men responded. The county ambulance service made two emergency, 17 routine and one unneeded run last week.



Black Mountain Fire Chief Gary Bartlett and Captain Steve King check out a new FMC pumper at McMurry Chevrolet. The pumper replaces a 1952 model truck the town will sell. (Dan Ward)

Tree lighting Saturday

A short, but festive tree lighting ceremony has been set for the Black Mountain Clubhouse at Lake Tomahawk for 7 P.M. Saturday, December 9.

The ceremony, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and organized by Jack Clevenger and Margaret Slagle, will begin with an

official lighting, probably by Mayor Tom Sobol.

Included in festivities will be a visit by Santa Claus, who will give candy to children and hear their Christmas requests, and Christmas music on the piano.

Mrs. Slagle said the event will replace the annual Christmas parade for the

Swannanoa Valley. Although planning has been done by the Chamber of Commerce, she said the tree-lighting is a community affair.

"It's not just Chamber people—we encourage community involvement," she said. Because the event will be on a Saturday evening, the

program will be kept short so that "people can just stop by for a moment on their way to other engagements," Mrs. Slagle said.

Two trees, rather than the former one, have been placed on the lake this year. Chamber Manager Ed Weber said he hopes to arrange for three floating trees next year.

One year in office, agree that they disagree

by Dan Ward
If there is one item the present Black Mountain Town Board members are unanimous on, it is that all have rarely been unanimous in action during the first year they've been in office.

However, most agreed that the division and conflicts could have been worse.

The five aldermen—Mike Begley, John Klutz, Jim Norton, A.F. Tyson, and Ruth Brandon—and Mayor Tom Sobol were asked to reflect on the first of two years for the present board. All responded except Tyson, who said he would submit only an unedited printed statement. That statement is printed as a letter to the editor on page two.

"Working relations could be better, but it hasn't been all

that difficult, either," was a sentiment among board members as expressed by Begley.

Mrs. Brandon, who often found herself at odds with the rest, or most of the board, saw the division as "both good and bad."

"It's good if the decisions are truly being made individually because it shows independence on the part of the alderman making that decision. It's bad if it leaves the public feeling that the board is divided for purely political reasons."

While Sobol said he would prefer to see an end to what he termed "nit-picking" on issues, he was philosophical on division on the board.

"It's been rough at times, but that's because we have people with strong characters. There's a lot Mrs. Brandon

and I don't agree on, but that's what democracy is all about," Sobol said.

Norton said divisiveness has held progress back.

"You get bogged down in the political end of it. If something needs to be done, you don't need to debate it all that much," he said.

All except Klutz said they have noticed a change for the better in terms of rapport with citizens. Klutz said he has only heard a handful of persons comment on board business, one way or the other.

Begley and Sobol both said that comments from citizens have been good.

"One of the things I've been most pleased with is the support we've gotten from the community," Begley said. Most of those comments, he said, came in the wake of the

firing of former Town Manager Jon Creighton, the resignation of Golf Pro Ross Taylor, and current settlement proceedings with the J.E. McMahan.

"There seems to be less disenchantment. I don't think it's apathy—it's optimism," he added.

Sobol, on the other hand, said most favorable comments he's heard stem from "putting the right person in the right job." He said a reduction in complaints to Town Manager Mack Kirkpatrick indicates that citizens are getting the town services they need without problems.

Mrs. Brandon said the change she sees is an increased activism on the part of citizens.

"They seem more concerned with their town

government than ever before. They are demanding, and rightfully so, that board members be held accountable." She added that she has been humbled by expressions of gratitude she has received during the past year.

Begley, Sobol and Klutz gave averting a water crisis as the most significant achievement of the board during the last year. Klutz noted that in spite of the worst drought in a quarter of a century, the town managed to get by with buying only a small amount of water from Asheville — primarily because of a new well drilled on short notice at the golf course.

"I was really happy about that," Klutz said.

Norton said he was happiest about gains made for recreation, including repairs

to the golf clubhouse, repairs to the pool, and obtaining a Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Grant. He also praised capital and personnel gains for the police department and fire department, although he said he was opposed to grants — such as for the PIN terminal and dispatchers — that require the town to pay an increasing share of the cost.

For all their past disagreements and controversial decisions, board members in general appeared to play down controversy and adversity in reflecting on the year. Optimism, at least for the record, seems to be the current emotion for the town board.

As expressed by Klutz, "I think it's getting better all the time. As we get a little more experience, we'll do even better."

Senior Citizen party set

The Fifth Annual Christmas Party for senior citizens will be held at Highland Farms Retirement Community on December 10 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

All Swannanoa Valley residents over 55 years old are invited to attend. This year's program features Harry Bryant and Louise Barnhill. Attendance at this affair has been over 200 persons for the

past several years, according to Elizabeth Harper, chairperson.

It is anticipated that state, regional and local officials as well as representatives of the media will be in attendance. Serving with Mrs. Harper on the committee for the Senior Citizens Christmas Party are Mark Cooper, Jim Buckner, Inez Daugherty, Louise Hamby, Irene Stephenson,

Lois Nix, Sandra Buchanan, Zelma Weeks, and John Ferguson.

At a luncheon meeting on December 1, committee members made final preparations for this year's event and elected officers for 1979. The elected officers are Louise Hamby, chairman; Lois Nix, vice-chairman; and Irene Stephenson, program coordinator.

30 years ago

Coach Carl Myers' undisputed champions in the American Legion basketball season for 1947 arranged to have the WNC finals played in Black Mountain for the 1948 season. The fact that the local post had completed remodeling of what was probably the best Legion Hall in the state helped to bring the

tournament here.

A representative of the Asheville Industrial Promotion Council told the Black Mountain Chamber of Commerce that waiting for inquiries was not the way to get industry in Black Mountain. The representative spoke at the chamber's 25th anniversary banquet. He said

he saw no reason why industry would be incompatible with tourism.

The teacher and pupils at Black Mountain's Black preschool offered thanks to "our many white friends of Black Mountain for the lovely Christmas surprise given by Santa Claus Saturday to our colored children."

Santa, besides visiting the preschool, rode a trailer down State Street, handing out free gifts and candy. An earlier plan by the Junior Chamber of Commerce to have Santa visit the stores was cancelled for safety reasons.

Boyd "Meat Ball" Owenby and Earl "Eight Ball" Gill were called back for an encore tap dance by a full house at the



Tom Sobol Mike Begley Ruth Brandon John Klutz Jim Norton A.F. Tyson

Sorry
In the article on page one of last week's News concerning settlement negotiations between the town of Black Mountain and Mr. and Mrs. McMahan, we mistakenly gave the cost of the modular home built by the McMahan as \$17,000. That home actually cost \$20,741. Installing

footers, sewer lines, porches and relandscaping, along with the cost of removing the destroyed house, made up the difference between that figure and \$28,116 total cost. We regret any misinterpretation the incorrect figure may have caused.

(cont. on page 5)