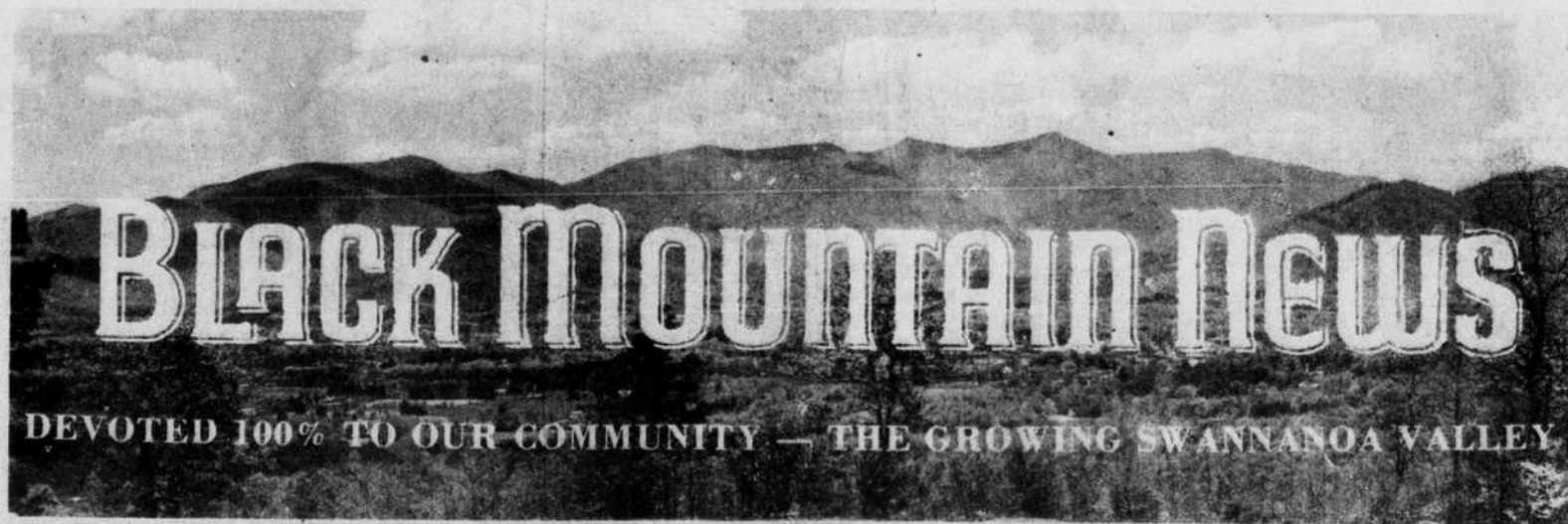


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McMahans settle for town offer

Black Mountain Town Attorney William Eubanks said that Mr. and Mrs. J.E. McMahan, whose home was destroyed by a Black Mountain Fire truck August 1, have finally accepted an offer for damages proposed by the Town Board.

Eubanks said John McMahan, son of the couple, called his office Monday and said that the couple will accept an offer for \$22,500 made by the board. A release is

expected to be signed this week or early next week.

The board had rejected a compromise figure of \$25,000 from the McMahans last week, and set a 10-day limit for acceptance of the \$22,500 figure.

The town will actually pay \$12,500 while the town's insurance company, Maryland Casualty, will pay \$10,000.

Mayor Tom Sobol said that the town's share will be paid out of incoming tax revenues —

due by the end of the month. He said he expects enough cash flow to come in during the next two weeks to cover the amount the town will pay.

The McMahans had originally asked almost \$30,000 an amount they said was spent to replace the house, valued at \$16,870. A majority of the board has maintained that it is not legally obligated to any amount above the \$10,000 insurance coverage.

Rescue team cuts woman from car

A Black Mountain woman suffered only minor injuries after being trapped for 20 minutes in her crushed Volkswagen bus December 15.

Black Mountain Fire and Rescue personnel had to cut Kendra Wolfe from the bus with an air chisel after her vehicle was involved in an accident with a truck belonging to Lowe's Lumber Company on Sunset Drive. She was pinned in by the dash and steering wheel of the bus.

Four vehicles and 20 men were involved in the rescue.

The Black Mountain Fire Department was involved in seven other runs.

One engine and four men were called for assistance at Northwestern Bank on Montreat Road December 13. Also, that day, two engines and 15 men responded to a report of a house fire at 1005 Montreat Road, but found only a controlled

burning in the back yard. Also that day, two engines and 19 men responded to a brush fire on Greenbriar Road at I-40 that was apparently started by a discarded cigarette.

A cutting torch apparently started a fire at the American Parborard Plant on US 70 West on December 14. Two engines and 20 men responded. Minor damage was

reported. Also that day, two engines and 15 men assisted the U.S. Forest Service on a brush fire east of Ridgecrest on Old US 70.

On December 15, one engine and 26 men responded to a false alarm at 708 Ninth Street caused by a smoke alarm that had been accidentally activated.

No damage was reported from a chimney fire at a home on Laurel Lane December 17. One engine and 17 men responded.

The Buncombe County Ambulance Service made nine routine, one emergency and three unneeded runs last week.



The Spirit of Christmas
A sketch by Black Mountain artist William Wilhelm captures the simplicity and majesty that is Christmas. Mr. Wilhelm's thoughts on Christmas appear on page 2.

Gunman robs Hardees, takes \$600 cash

Black Mountain Police continue to search for a man who stole approximately \$600 at gunpoint from two employees of Hardee's in Black Mountain early December 17.

According to Assistant Chief Jim Wiseman, a man took the night deposit from the restaurant manager and an employee when they left through the back door an hour after closing Saturday night.

The thief reportedly told the two to leave the money and drive away, pointing a handgun at them in the meantime. Neither person recognized the robber, Wiseman said.

Bloodhounds were used Sunday morning to follow the trail of the robber, who apparently got in a car near the Grammar School.

Two other robberies were reported last week.

On December 12, stereo equipment valued at \$987 was taken from the Terry Griffin residence on Azalea Avenue, police reported.

On December 16, \$400 in cash was taken from a drawer at Mack's Store in Black Mountain. Both incidents are under investigation.

Police responded to three accidents, gave three citations, arrested two for DUI and received 289 calls last week.

On December 16, four vehicles were vandalized outside the Cellar on NC 9, including a Jeep that suffered a slashed top, seats and tires.

Wiseman said there is a suspect in that incident.

Fire district talks slowed, but still on

One of the attorneys involved in negotiations between fire departments from Swannanoa and Black Mountain over district boundaries characterized talks as slowed, but expected to revive sometime by the end of January.

Martin Nesbitt, representing the Swannanoa Volunteer Fire Department, said that representatives of the departments have not met since two months ago, when it was agreed that figures would be compiled on cost and response for fire protection from each district.

Nesbitt said talks have not been stalled, but that some of the urgency of the negotiations has diminished. The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners had earlier given the two departments

until November to reach an agreement over who should serve an area reaching generally from the western boundary of Black Mountain to the Juvenile Evaluation Center, and points north and south of there. Nesbitt said the board is not expected to revive the issue on its own.

Richard Stone, who is representing the Black Mountain Fire Department, could not be reached Tuesday for comment.

The two departments are expected to reach a compromise on which department should serve the area, most of which is now covered without contract by Black Mountain's fire department, well before the June budgeting sessions by the commissioners, Nesbitt said.

Trailblazer still protects nature at 81

by Dan Ward
Kenneth Durant is one of those many persons in the Swannanoa Valley who looks at retirement as something other than an excuse to lay around.

At least once each month he hikes a few miles on the trails in Christmount to check on the

watershed and to keep the trails maintained for summer campers.

What makes him all the more remarkable, though, is that most of those trails were planned, cleared, and marked by him after his retirement from a position as chemist for the rubber industry.

"There was one short trail when I came down here in 1960 from Ohio," he said. "I was curious about the back country, and the people who were here didn't even know what the boundaries of the property were. I finally figured it out from three

people who have since died." Since then, Durant has created eight of the nine trails on the 640 acres of Christmount. At least once each month, now at age 81, he hikes to the top of the continental divide to check for any pollution that may be getting into the assembly's watershed.

His trails are carefully planned to pass points of natural interest and preserve the beauty of the forest.

"I go around the bigger trees. There were a lot of old logging roads here and I tried to make use of them. By going around the bigger trees, you get a sort of binding, meandering effect that is really better than if you just slash through the woods. I didn't take down any trees bigger than an inch in diameter," he said.

Some of the points the trails lead to are near rocky cliffs, rhododendron thickets, streams and valleys of wild flowers.

"There is one valley just full of trillium, and they all come out at the same time — near the beginning of April. It's a sight to see," Durant said.

Although Christmount is "pretty well covered with trails now," Durant said he keeps busy replacing markers along the trails. Youngsters

who visit the assembly in the summer often took the wooden markers he has used in the past. He's experimenting with sheet metal markers that are harder to remove and less attractive as room decorations.

His conservationism expands beyond the Christmount grounds, also. He is president of Carolinians for Safe Energy — a group that became best known for its stand against construction of the Sandy Mush nuclear generating

plant. He and his wife, Mary, are also active in Common Cause and the yearly Great Decisions workshops, as well as the League of Women Voters.

That one person is active in so many things is rare. That he does them all at 81 is remarkable.

"I had a heart attack last year while I was up on a trail. I got within 50 feet (of the continental divide) and felt this pressure in my chest. I walked back down, but I spent

the next 10 days in the hospital," he said.

In spite of that experience, he continues to make his regular hikes, but follows his doctor's orders to use moderation in his exercise.

Outside his house last week lay a pile of wood he planned to split himself — albeit slowly.

"I've always loved the outdoors," he concluded, light and shadow from the forest falling across his face through a huge window in his living room.

SVFD appointments postponed a month

Action to appoint two interim directors to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors for the Swannanoa Volunteer Fire Department was postponed at least a month because a quorum was not present at the regular meeting December 14.

According to the Chairman of that board, Ken Davidson, no special meeting has been called, making the next regular meeting on January 11.

The board had been expected to fill vacancies created by the resignations of Ralph Coffey and Ken Crawford from the board last month.

Christmas wishes packed the Black Mountain News 30 years ago this week.

In the news, Mr. and Mrs. Crosby Adams, who had been active in the Music Department of Montreat College, were honored in a surprise service at Gaither Hall. They had been with the college since its beginning in 1916.

Bobby Ritchie and Reba led their respective Black Mountain High School teams to upset against a tough pair of Fairview teams.

A special Christmas service featuring the children's choir was set for Swannanoa Presbyterian Church.

30 years ago

Funeral services were held in Black Mountain for Sgt. Woodrow Lindsey, who was killed in action in Burma four years earlier.

Police gave stern warnings that anyone shooting off fireworks would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Parents were to be held responsible if their children were caught with firecrackers.

Employment in Buncombe County had increased by 31.12 per cent since 1940, and wages had gone up by a whopping 96.80 percent from an average of \$20.29 weekly to \$39.93 in 1947.

Jack Greenwood, in his column, noted that Swannanoa was listed as one of North Carolina's 21 best vacation spots in Duncan Hine's Vacation Guide.

The News, itself, got prime advertising space with a Christmas card ad on the front page. A number of valley businesses sent Christmas greetings through ads inside.

The Roxy Theatre had the Return of Rin Tin Tin. Nora and Bill's Cafe was offering a Christmas Eve Turkey Dinner for \$1.50. Those who preferred steak could get the dinner for 85 cents.

And that's the way it was.

