

# Black MOUNTAIN NEWS

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Last Wednesday morning's snow created a winter wonderland of beauty along Montreat Road. (Photo by Dennis Harris)

## Proposed road sparks controversy

by Cynthia Reimer

Will a road to Mt. Mitchell from Black Mountain be a boon to business or a blight to wilderness? Will a new road really provide winter access for skiers and campers?

Those were some of the questions asked of Black Mountain Chamber of Commerce officials Monday morning when they met to discuss a proposed road to Mt. Mitchell.

A surprise article in the Asheville Sunday newspaper turned what was to be a briefing of new Chamber Board of Directors members into a public forum at the 8:30 a.m. meeting.

Chamber member Wendell Begley outlined the history of the proposal and described three possible routes the road might take. Detailed maps of those routes are available at Black Mountain Savings and Loan for public examination.

Chamber members agreed that a road to Mt. Mitchell to provide access when the Blue Ridge Parkway is closed will be built. They believe building it here will help the economy of Black Mountain and give Black Mountain control over restrictions on the roadway.

"If the road is inevitable," board member Andy Andrews told the group, "we want to call the shots on it." Andrews also said the road could provide an economic alternative to "dirty industry."

Wendell Begley said the proposed road would be "a totally controlled

route, like the Parkway." He pointed out that the unique beauty of the remote area was inaccessible to most people now.

Some residents of Buncombe and McDowell County who attended the meeting believe that the inaccessibility of the area is valuable and should be maintained for those who favor privacy and are able and willing to make the effort to get to it.

Others expressed concern that the road would cause Black Mountain to "look like Cherokee or Maggie Valley."

One woman said she did not understand why this road would be open when the Blue Ridge Parkway was forced to close for the same weather conditions.

There will be plenty of time and opportunities for all to discuss the proposed road, pros and cons, because the committee has been informed that the state has no money even to undertake a study at this time.

"It's a very long-range plan," Ed Weber, Chamber secretary, told the group of 30 Monday, "five or 10 years minimum."

Tuesday morning, Black Mountain to Mt. Mitchell Road Committee members attempted to take Ted Waters of the N.C. Department of Transportation Planning Board in Raleigh, and Earl McIntyre, DOT division engineer, to show them one of the routes the road could follow, the Old Toll Road. The four-wheel drive vehicles soon reached thick ice on the Curtis Creek Road and

turned back, however.

During the trip, an idea to rebuild a narrow gauge railroad was suggested. Begley said the committee will look at this idea to see if it could be publicly funded, as a road would be. "We don't want it to be privately funded," Begley stressed, "because we would lose control."

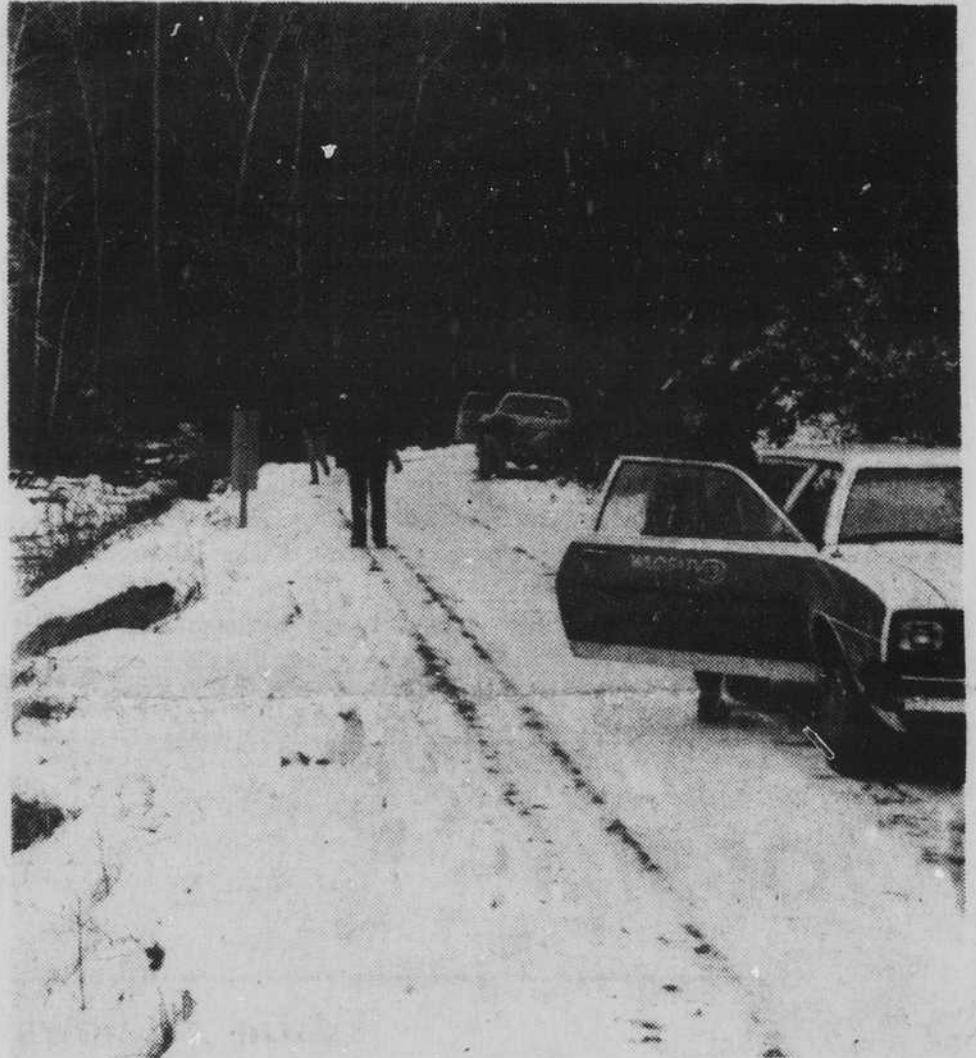
In an interview at Curtis Creek, McIntyre told committee members, "We don't want to sound negative. We admire your efforts. Our efforts now are

going to maintain what we've got."

He also said, "The state has been interested in economic development. We go to great effort to do what we can."

A figure of \$2 million per mile was given the Chamber in 1965 when the road was first proposed.

"Who knows what might happen in a few years," Andy Andrews said. "It (the money) may be available. Black Mountain is a gateway to these mountains."



A tour of one proposed route to Mt. Mitchell was cut short Tuesday morning because of the heavy layer of ice on Curtis Creek Road. One vehicle in the caravan spun around on a corner and slid into a small ditch.

## Foreign policy subject of meetings

by Richardson Rice

For 27 consecutive years American foreign policy issues have been discussed nationally by thousands of interested and concerned participants using the Great Decisions Program book as a guide and background source. The Black Mountain group will introduce the lecture and discussion series for 1982 on January 26 in the Education Room of the Black Mountain Library at 7:30 p.m. An introduction to the Great Decisions program for 1982 and information regarding the Foreign Policy Association will be given by Dr. Bahram Farzanegan, director of Community Service Programs at UNC-Asheville and a member of the faculty in the Political Science Department.

The eight topics prepared by the Foreign Policy Association will be presented each Tuesday evening in February and March at 7:30 p.m. in the Education Room of the Black Mountain Library. Each will be under the leadership of a professor from one of the several nearby universities.

An opportunity for discussion and review of the lecture of the evening before will be provided at a discussion group meeting. This group will gather in the Reading Room of the library each Wednesday at 10 a.m. under the leadership of Herman Allen who for several years has been the coordinator of the Great Decisions series. He has passed on this responsibility to Richardson Rice, also of Black Mountain.

The series is open to all members of the community and the surrounding area. All who have a desire to know more about world affairs in the context of today's happenings are welcome to participate whether or not they have a background of special experience. This is a chance to hear opinions on these important matters and to share in a discussion of them. Each member of the group is offered a chance to register an opinion about which of several courses our government should take in dealing with these national and international issues.

The first of the series is to be presented on Tuesday evening, Feb. 2 at 7:30 p.m. The subject will be

"America's Defense: What price security?" The speaker and discussion leader will be William Sabo, UNC-A, Department of Political Science. This meeting and all others will be held in the Education Room of the Black Mountain Library. Time will be reserved for questions and discussions following

## New sign ordinance still up in the air

by Bill Anthony

Black Mountain is still some distance from having a new, restrictive sign ordinance, but Planning Board members and most of the audience at Monday night's Board meeting were optimistic there will be one.

The Board requested Tony Caudle, Land of Sky regional planner, to bring a draft ordinance to its next scheduled meeting, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m.

The Planning Board eventually will recommend a sign ordinance as part of a new zoning ordinance to the Town's Board of Aldermen. Public hearings normally will follow. Presently there is a moratorium on new sign permits, largely because of community reaction against height of the McDonald's sign.

During the two-hour open discussion Monday night, Planning Board and audience members exchanged views that to Caudle boiled down to an ordinance containing the following restrictions:

--Free-standing signs would be permitted except in the immediate downtown business district where signs must be part of the buildings.

--Restrictions on the free-standing signs include height and other dimensions, but these are yet to be determined.

--Restrictions would also apply to signs on Interstate 40 in the Town's jurisdiction, but how these would correspond to those in the downtown is still undecided.

--The signs are to be "neat," meaning that, while they should serve

each presentation.

Participants will be asked to contribute \$6 for the series or \$1 for each lecture attended toward the travel expenses of the speakers and as a part of the honorarium which they will receive through the Director of the Community Service Programs. The

needs of local businessmen, they should maintain the Town's beauty. A fundamental ideological difference developed between Planning Board members when Bud Belt said, "Let's get into the height restriction. We're trying to get these businesses to build here. How can we tell them not to put up a sign to attract customers off of 40?" To this Wendell Begley replied, "Based on the reaction to the McDonald's sign, it's obvious the community doesn't want to look like Maggie Valley or Cherokee. As for I-40, a good bit of that income goes right out of Black Mountain. Do we want that type of chain store growth here?"

Board member Richard Capps recalled Black Mountain historically "discouraged" industry. "Basically, we're a bedroom community, a middle-class, religious resort area. People come here for the crafts and to look at the hills. If we're going to have industry we need a new look at ourselves," he said.

Most Board members lamented lack of enforcement of the present ordinance and pledged to recommend to the Town Board of Aldermen strict enforcement of the ordinance to be proposed.

The matter of enforcement prompted a motion to stay with the present ordinance and recommend to the Aldermen stricter compliance. It lost 2-4 with Naomi Brigman and Belt in the minority.

The Planning Board urged citizen participation in the new ordinance's final drafting. A number spoke up at Monday night's meeting which Kay

Great Decisions Program book containing an authoritative article on each of the topics will be for sale at \$6 at the introductory meeting on Jan. 26 or at the desk of the Black Mountain Library. The Black Mountain coordinator, Richardson Rice, will also have copies for sale. Call him at 669-5992.

Cole, from the audience, described as making her "optimistic in looking at the Town's future."

Travis Childs, chairman of the Planning Board, described the sign ordinance as a "very volatile issue." He felt the community was "interested in having a very restrictive" ordinance. Both he and Board member Begley early in the meeting expressed opposition to free-standing signs. Begley also said he was "totally against billboard advertising." Both favored only those signs identifying businesses.

Bob Fischer, chairman of the Town's Board of Adjustments, speaking from the audience also urged "strictness" in a sign ordinance. "The certain character of the Town shouldn't be monkeyed with," he said.

However, Board Member George Venturella suggested businesses need more than simple identification, such as promotion of special products offered for the day only.

Also from the audience, Dr. and Mrs. Al Wagner, among others, noted that a number of businesses off the main thoroughfares, such as Black Mountain Stove and Chimney and the Red Rocker Inn, need directional signs.

In another action the Board voted 4-2 to recommend to the Board of Aldermen that Bill Ricketts be allowed to put up signs on newly opening stores on Cherry Street, the signs to come down if they don't conform with the eventual ordinance. On this vote Childs and Begley were in the minority.

## Nominations sought for Russell Cook Award

The WNC Chapter of the United Nations Association is seeking nominees for the Russell Cook Memorial Award. The second annual award will be given to a Western North Carolinian who has made a significant contribution to peace and understanding.

The first award was given in 1981 to Joan Marshall of Black Mountain, who helped to establish a chapter of Amnesty International here.

The award is given in memory of the late Russell Cook of Black Mountain, who gave three decades of service to the United Nations.

Nominees must be residents of Western North Carolina. Their service can have occurred anywhere. Like Russell Cook, their service should exemplify what Cook called "responsible caring" for the human family.

Deadlines for nominations is Feb. 27. Send nominations to Joan Marshall, All Souls Church, P.O. Box 5353, Asheville, N.C. 28813, or to Rick Gunther, The

Asheville Citizen Times, Asheville, N.C. 28802.

The winner will receive a certificate and a cash contribution will be made in the winner's name to an organization helping to improve international understanding.

## Pros to hold baseball clinic

Three Baltimore Oriole stars will be on hand Saturday and Sunday to pass on their secrets of success to area budding baseball players. Sammy Stewart, Oriole pitcher from Swannanoa, and his teammates, Eddie Murray and Brooks Robinson, will conduct the third annual baseball clinic at Montreat-Anderson gym from 1-5 p.m. both days. Also instructing will be Montreat-Anderson's head coach, Mark Weidemaier.

Baseball players ages 8-16 are invited to participate. Registration will be \$15 per person, and participants must furnish their own tennis shoes and baseball gloves.

Sammy Stewart tied for the ERA (earned run average) championship for the American League in 1981. Eddie Murray, first baseman, was voted most valuable player for Baltimore. Brooks Robinson, is now a TV broadcaster for the Orioles. Coach Weidemaier described him as "The greatest defensive third baseman in baseball history," and "a future Hall of Famer." Robinson will instruct on Sunday only.

The clinic is sponsored by Ace Appliance.

## CPR course at college

A course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) will be taught on the campus of Montreat-Anderson College Jan. 25, 28, Feb. 1 and 4 under the sponsorship of the American Red Cross. Classes will be held from 7 to 9:30 p.m. on those evenings in the gymnasium.

This 10-hour course provides valuable training in artificial respiration, artificial circulation and choking. The public is encouraged to take advantage of this special training. Sign up for this free course by calling 669-8011.