

# Black MOUNTAIN NEWS

Serving the Swannanoa Valley

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## Employees vote out union

Drexel Heritage Furnishings Plant No. 10 employees in Black Mountain voted Thursday to decertify their union. The plant was unionized over 40 years ago by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.

The plant's 170 employees voted against the union by a 3:1 margin. The election, called for by the employees of the plant, affects only the Black Mountain plant. Drexel operates other furniture plants in Whittier, Marion, Shelby, Morganton, Hickory, High Point and Mocksville.

## Band director resigns

Owen High School band director Edith Slattery resigned from her position on Aug. 23. In a statement issued to band members that afternoon, Owen Principal Charles A. Lytle said assistant band director Dale Whittington will act as director until a replacement can be found.

Lytle told the students, "I will personally guarantee you that we will have a competent, capable director here to get our band program rebuilt to its rightful place of being the best in Buncombe County."

## Litter on increase

Litter control is backsliding in Buncombe County according to a recent study.

In the most recent photometric index done by Quality Forward Director Jean Webb there was only a 20 percent reduction in litter since the beginning of the study in March, 1978.

Last February the reduction was 36 percent. In May, 1981 there was a 69 percent reduction. This means there is more litter shown now than there was in the other two studies done over this past year, Mrs. Webb said.

The worst offenders this time were industrial loading docks where there was a very high increase in litter.

Improvement was shown since May, however, in vacant lots. Mrs. Webb attributes this reduction in litter count to an increase in weeds on the lots this summer instead of a cleaner area.

Parking lots were another high increase site.

Other categories having increases were commercial dumpsters and roadsides. Interstate ramp litter accounts for the high count in this area.

This increase in litter is very discouraging news to Clean Community Chairman Larry Holt. "His committee will have to take a hard look at the figures and make plans to reach industry, business and the public in more effective ways," said Mrs. Webb.

County Environmental Control Officer Don Roberts and the City Inspections Department personnel will be contacted to work on more effective law enforcement. The City and County ordinances state that the property owner or individual managing the property is responsible for keeping it clean and sanitary.

"The Clean Community must convince the public that the litter problem is one that can be solved. This will only happen if individuals, business, industry and government accept responsibility for the refuse each generates," said Mrs. Webb.

The Photometric Index of litter is done by Quality Forward approximately three times a year.



About 80 youngsters signed up for the Youth Soccer program last Saturday. The eight to 11 year olds practice drills for evaluation on the field.

## Plight of migrants eased by generous of Valley

by Cynthia Reimer

Life on the road is brand new to Esther; this is her first year as a migrant worker. Typical of many of the pickers coming to North Carolina this summer, she is trained and held a job as a day care worker before government programs were cut back in Florida.

Nearing retirement age, desperate for work, she joined a Florida crew traveling to North Carolina to pick apples.

The last of their funds depleted by the trip, they arrived in Henderson County where the final blow awaited them: the apple crop was ruined by a late spring freeze.

While some have found work in tobacco, Esther's crew is picking a scanty bean crop. Some can earn \$10-25 a day, but Esther can't. She's not an experienced picker, and she is not young. Some days she aches too much to work at all bent down in a hot bean row.

Esther (not her real name) lives in a camp provided by a farmer. For \$20 a week she gets a 12-foot square concrete block room with a cement floor. On the floor is a mattress, a styrofoam ice chest and a hot plate where she cooks meals when she can get them.

She shares a community bathroom, another cement room with three toilets, stained with filth, and three open showers. Water runs across the floor of the undivided room from a broken pipe. The camp, like all others occupied by more than 10 people, has passed inspection by the state.

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Veronica is a proud young Haitian woman, a first-rate picker. She works for Brown Hat, the crew leader. She didn't work Thursday because Brown Hat was negotiating with the farmer for a raise of 15 cents to 25 cents a stick for picking tobacco. The raise would allow most workers to make minimum wage for their labor.

Veronica shares her meager lodgings with a 15-year old who has run away from home and her two-year old child. Afraid the girl would be abused, Veronica took her and the baby in.

There are three cots in the tiny bedroom and a double bed inside another room. The kitchen has a dirt floor and the stove doesn't work. Screens are taped haphazardly to holes in the stucco wall that serve as windows.

There are no locks for the doors. "I reckon we ain't got nothin' to steal," Veronica says.

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Hazel is Brown Hat's wife. She is young, pretty, black. She has teenage children whom she hopes and prays will get enough schooling to leave the hard life of the road.

"This state is all right," she says, out in the dusty yard where dogs nap in the dirt and children play in it. "We came up for the apples but we're doing tobacco. You get real tired with the sun burnin' down on you."

For their one-room lodgings, she said, they pay \$20 a week "or move out. If you have five kids you have to get another room for them to sleep in."

In Florida, her home state, Hazel can earn \$60-70 a day in the orange groves, and for the same \$20 a month, have a four-bedroom home in a government housing project.

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Last Thursday, B.H. Roberts took a second truckload from ABCCM-E to the migrant workers of Henderson County. He carried clothing from the Kiwanis Thrift Shop, health kits made by individuals of the community—consisting of toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and washcloth tied in a bath towel with a bow, crockpots, hot plates, toaster ovens and \$900 in cash, earmarked by donors, to the office of the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Association in Hendersonville.

There are 45 camps of people like Esther, Hazel, Veronica and their families in Henderson County, the most concentrated number in Western North Carolina.

A lack of migrant employment because of the bad weather this spring and a wet summer that hurt the tomato crop made the Black Mountain donation to some migrants literally life-saving.

Money sent last month by ABCCM-E made it possible for a teenage boy to be returned to his home. A woman with cancer was provided with transportation back to her home and medical facilities. And it made it possible for a man to return to the bedside of his dying wife.

In addition, it was used to provide food, rent, clothing and medical aid to people who qualify for no government help.

"They are people who have entered the migrant stream because of a lack of general employment. They don't have skills in farm work. They leave their families behind to try to find work," a field representative for the Migrant Association explained. They are ineligible for aid because they have not been farm workers in the past.

"How do you turn somebody away who says, 'I haven't eaten in five days except what I could eat out of a trash

can'?" she asked.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Association, funded by the Department of Labor, takes clothing and food to the camps and distributes them. They also work to help those who are capable out of the migrant stream and train them for jobs.

Funding from the Department of Labor looks bleak for next year and the office which provides the only aid for seasonal workers may be closed. Field representatives for the office urge citizens to write to their Congressmen in support of the program.

"Farm workers are truly the backbone of our country," said a representative who asked not to be identified. "Without them there would be no food on our table."

## Have safe holiday

Heman R. Clark, secretary of the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, issued an appeal asking all citizens to think "safety" during the Labor Day holiday weekend.

"This is the final long weekend of summer and the roads will be heavily traveled with many people getting in the last trip of the season to the beach or the mountains," Clark said.

"This is always a dangerous situation as traffic accidents and deaths often increase with the increase of holiday traffic," Clark said. "I appeal to every motorist to be extra careful during this holiday weekend."

According to State Highway Patrol Commander John T. Jenkins, motorists can expect to see more troopers on heavily traveled roads during the holiday period. "We will again be participating in Operation CARE (Combined Accident Reduction Effort)," he said.

CARE increases trooper visibility on highways across the state in an effort to encourage voluntary compliance with the speed limit, detect and apprehend drunk drivers, and prevent traffic flow conflicts.

The Labor Day holiday period begins at 6 p.m., Friday, Sept. 3, and ends at midnight, Monday, Sept. 6. According to Jenkins, 16 people died on the state's highways during this holiday period last year.

## Workman burned by power line

A workman in Swannanoa was injured Monday afternoon while he was repairing a sign at the Fast Fare store on U.S. 70. He suffered electrical burns on his arm and leg when a severed electrical wire fell on him.

Steve Cooper, an employee of the Petroleum Pump and Tank Company of Asheville, was checking the lights in the sign when the accident occurred at 2:26 p.m. According to a Swannanoa fireman, Cooper was putting the sign back together when a screw he was putting in hit a wire in the sign. A short caused a

bolt to shoot up to a power line which was a main service line between Asheville and Black Mountain.

The workers had not disconnected the power to the sign because they were checking for burnt out lights.

Cooper was seated in a bucket suspended from a boom when the accident occurred. He was listed in satisfactory condition at Memorial Mission Hospital Tuesday afternoon.

Sparks from the downed power line burned part of the lawn at an adult bookstore next to the Fast Fare store.

## Chamber receives state grant

North Carolina Commerce Secretary D.M. Faircloth announced \$104,000 in matching grants to 32 North Carolina communities for promoting travel into the state.

Faircloth said, "These grants will help initiate or expand tourism promotion programs across the state. Many more communities are realizing the economic benefits that can be derived from travel promotion." He added, "Tourism is one of the fastest growing sections of our economy, and could become a \$3 billion industry this year."

The Black Mountain Chamber of Commerce will receive \$500 for publication of a brochure promoting the area.

Faircloth told Chamber manager Ed Weber that 55 applications were received requesting over \$310,000 making competition this year intense. "I commend you for the initiative and imagination which you have already shown," he said.

This is the sixth consecutive year Weber has sought and received grants from the state for publication of brochures.



Owen students receive their order sheets for the annual magazine sale. (Photo by Amber Mason)

## Owen begins magazine sale

The annual Owen High School magazine sale began Aug. 31 and will continue through Sept. 17. The sale is sponsored by the Owen Student Council.

Money from the sale goes into the Student Activity Fund and the student council decides how to spend it. For the past two years students have sold about \$10,000 worth of magazines, of which the school keeps 40 percent.

The money has been used to support the Junior-Senior Prom, Homecoming and other school dances. A water

fountain and an information bulletin board were purchases for the gym lobby area. The funds have also provided assistance to clubs and organizations at the school.

Students will take orders from parents, relatives, friends and the community for subscriptions for magazines, records and tapes.

The company supplying these items is QSP, a division of Reader's Digest. They hold the largest selection of magazines on the market and are a distributor for RCA records and tapes.

## Erwin downs Warhorses, 35-14

The Owen Warhorses were defeated by Erwin in their opening game of the 1982-83 season Friday, Aug. 27. The Warhorses were hosts to the Warriors.

Erwin kept the Warhorses defensive line working continuously. The Warriors tailback, William Humes, kept Owen's defense on its toes. Humes scored four of five touchdowns for Erwin. Ronnie Ball also scored once for the visitors.

Owen scored only twice in the ball game, both times during the first half. The first touchdown came from Alan Roberts. Roberts ran 40 yards for the

score and was followed by a successful PAT from David Duncan. Quarterback Jamie Rumbough passed 25 yards to Shannon Boling for a second touchdown.

The Warhorses had another chance to score during the first half, but lost the ball to Erwin's Chris Jones at the one yard line.

Erwin defeated Owen with a final score of 35-14.

The Warhorses next game is Friday, Sept. 3, against the McDowell Titans on Shuford Field.