

Black MOUNTAIN NEWS

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Black Mountain youngsters entertained their parents at a P.T.A. meeting Dec. 9 at the Primary School with holiday songs. Tara Garland (left) played Mary, John Gardner is Joseph and Nancy Sutton (right) is an angel.

Zoning ordinance passes on final reading

by Cynthia Reimer

The Town of Black Mountain has a new zoning ordinance, passed on the second and third readings Monday night at the regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen. The vote by the board was unanimous for both readings, with Alderman Doug Stafford absent.

According to aldermen, the new ordinance is already being used as a model by the Town of Brevard.

Mayor Tom Sobol thanked the members of the Planning Board for their many hours of work in preparing the ordinance.

The ordinance replaces one drafted in 1970.

In other action, the board approved the nomination of Bob McMurray to the Planning Board and "regretfully" accepted the resignation of Chairman Travis Childs.

Aldermen set dates for two public hearings in January. A public hearing will be held Monday, Jan. 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall concerning proposed changes in the zoning map. A

map showing the changes is available for study at Town Hall.

A public hearing is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 3 at 3:30 p.m. concerning changes in the town employees' policy manual. The January agenda meeting of the aldermen will follow the hearing.

The board voted to purchase two more Community of Excellence signs for north and south entrances to the town at \$86.25 each. The two signs already up were free.

Standard operating procedures for department heads concerning hiring, firing and insurance qualifications were approved unanimously.

Town employees were granted an added vacation day at Christmas. The extra day will be Monday, Dec. 27.

The board granted permission to Town Clerk Al Richardson to make expenditures up to \$5,000 without the approval of the board. The maximum previously was \$2,500.

The board instructed Richardson to have the town garage appraised for possible sale. A report by Gus Manis said the building has "serious deficien-

cies," according to Mayor Sobol, citing safety as a factor. The aldermen discussed building a new garage behind Town Hall with funds generated by the sale of the old building.

Aldermen instructed Richardson to proceed with the purchase of a \$8668.75 seven-gang Toro mower for the golf course.

Mayor Sobol reported that two 10-foot strips of property outside the town limits on Green Drive and Richard Drive were given to the town.

Alderman Gay Fox asked about the progress of leaf pick-up and was told that the delay was due to the "archaic and obsolete equipment" which continues to break down. All leaves are expected to be picked up by Jan. 1--weather permitting.

The mayor concluded his remarks with, "On behalf of the board members, I wish everyone not only a very merry Christmas, but a blessed one as well."

More letters to the 'little fat man'

"Santa is a little fat man with a little red suit and two black boots and he comes around on a special night and brings girls and boys toys for Christmas if they're good." That is Melissa Gilliam's description of St. Nick.

Melissa and her classmates at Black Mountain Primary School got their letters to the North Pole off this week. Here's what some of their letters said.

Dear Santa, it is getting cold down here. Is it getting warm up there, how are your reindeer. I want a pool table, a remote-control airplane. Sincerely, Richard Burgin.

Dear Santa, How was last Christmas? Did you go to the foster home. Did you watch everyone sing you better watch out and a jolly man? or Did you see the parade. Sincerely, Monica Clark.

Dear Santa, All I want for Christmas is An electric train and a videocassette and that is all Sincerely Michael. Cantrell.

Dear Santa, I love your toys that you make. Because you make them where

they wont brack. And thats good. I (hope I) get a bed room suit. I really do. Millie Ann Pressley. Thanks. I love you.

Dear Santa, please bring me a Monkey See and a pack of size A batteries. How about a play big piano and a stuffed white dog radio. And remember my brother's and sister. Rebecca Ann Vess.

Dear Santa, I am 8 years old. I live in Blk. Mtn. I have been a good girl. And I would lik for you to bring me these things I would like some books. And would (like) a baby that has rash. From Sheila Hensley to Santa.

Dear Santa, I want a BMX bike I want a Castle Grayskull with three men. Love, Your Friend Shane Reynolds. P.S. I have been good.

Dear Santa, I know you have more than 2000 houses to go to but I care about my toy and other peoples toys. So be good to us. I will leave you some milk and cookies. Love, Nathaniel Lee Jr.

Benji Keith. A Santa story. Santa is a good man. boys and girls like Him. I

Like Him and Love Him. Santa is reel good for giving the toys that boys and girls want for Christmas.

Dear Santa, I would like to be a evergreen tree. I would like for people To cut me down and I would like to be the christmas tree of the white house. Sincerely, Ryan White.

To Santa from Janelle and Glenna. Please may I have a Barbie Bus. Glenna would like a Pac Man game. Please may I have a new doll that wets her pants. Glenna would like a house that is big and that has people in it. Some more new books to read. Please can you give me a new sewing set. Glenna would like a Tippy Toes doll. Glenna would like a new set of tapes. I would like a new set of cards. Mommy would like a Hershey kiss. Daddy would like a new pair of shoes. Thank you. Love, Janelle and Glenna Aycock.

Dear Santa, I like toys, but I like Jesus better. Jesus is very nice. He is Gods son. God started Christmas. Christmas is my favorite holiday. I like Santa claus. Love, Heather Rogers.

Daer Santa, I want a bicycle for Christmas. I wish and I wish for a bicycle. I like bicycle a whole lot. I wish I can have a bicycle. Sincerely, Frances (no last name.)

The little engine could, says TVA Railroad to Mt. Mitchell

by Cynthia Reimer

"The bottom line is, we say it's engineeringly feasible. In extreme weather conditions, it's going to be rough." That report on a Black Mountain to Mt. Mitchell (elevation 6,684 feet) passenger railroad was delivered Thursday to members of the Economic Development Committee of the Chamber of Commerce by Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) engineer Linda Barnett.

Barnett stressed to the group that the report was only a preliminary feasibility study of cost and engineering, and that the next step should be market research.

The TVA studied three train routes and three train systems for the project.

Two possible base sites for a depot, maintenance area and parking are named, one beyond Lookout Mountain in Montreat, the other at Horse Ridge behind Ridgecrest.

From the base site, the train would follow the old lumber railroad to Buck Gap south of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Barnett listed three options from there: to end the railroad at Buck Gap; to cross under the Parkway with a tunnel at Black Mountain Gap and continue to Camp Alice with some new route construction; or to continue to Camp Alice with a tunnel at Hemphill Spring on the old railroad bed.

Of the three train systems studied, Barnett said a cog system, imported from Switzerland, would be too costly.

Barnett said a steam train would have the most historic and romantic appeal and that an old Shay engine would make the grades, up to 11 percent on the existing bed.

Winter operation would be "difficult, but not impossible," she said. Plowing and sanding equipment would be necessary, and it would take up to four hours to bring the steam up on the coldest winter days. The steam train could run on oil or coal.

Narrow-gage track is available in Cuba and South America, she said, where it was used in the sugar cane fields.

The steam trains, rare and old, would require the most maintenance, Barnett said, with broken parts having to be handmade in many cases. In winter a maintenance person would have to stay with the engines at night to prevent them from freezing up.

A Shay engine would cost about \$150,000 with restoration cost set at \$200,000. Coaches and cabooses are listed at \$20-30,000.

Diesel trains are capable of pulling passenger cars up seven percent grades, so the route would have to be upgraded. A diesel engine, however, requires much less maintenance, and is 25 percent fuel efficient compared to four percent for a steam train.

A diesel engine is listed at \$300-500,000 with coaches the same price as for steam trains.

The total cost analysis by the TVA for engineering and trains is about \$12 million. Cost of land, buildings, advertising, etc., would bring the figure up to about \$23 million, the TVA predicted.

Similar trains operate at Mt. Washington, Pike's Peak, and in the East, the Cass Scenic Railroad in West Virginia is state-run.

The Black Mountain to Mt. Mitchell train has been proposed to provide transportation for cross-country skiers to Mt. Mitchell State Park, which has snow from December to March, during the winter and for scenic tours the rest of the year.

Basketball shootout for benefit of Easter Seals

Black Mountain Middle School will participate for the fourth year in the Burger King Basketball Shoot Out for Easter Seals. For the past three years Black Mountain Middle School has been the top regional money-raising school and will defend that title again this year.

Last year Kelce Lytle won the individual regional title by raising over \$400 for Easter Seals. The Western Carolina University Catamounts are providing again this year the regional prize for most money raised by allowing the winner and two guests to attend one of their season games.

Students will secure sponsors during

the first two weeks in January for every basket they can make in a three-minute shooting period and will be "shooting" during the middle of January.

Coach Rick Miller, assistant coach of the WCU Catamounts, visited Black Mountain Middle School Dec. 13 and talked to students about Easter Seals and Basketball Shoot Outs.

Keith White of Black Mountain School will coordinate the event.

Funds raised from Burger King Basketball Shoot Outs will be used by Easter Seals to help physically handicapped children in Western North Carolina.



'Best wishes' Christmas needs named in wish book

Each year the Volunteer Service Bureau of Buncombe County publishes a holiday "wish book" of the Christmas needs of agencies throughout the county. Without the generous spirit of people in the community, there are many of our neighbors who would have no Christmas.

Several agencies in the Valley are listed in the wish book. Some of their needs are:

Asheville-Buncombe Community Christian Ministry-East -- Provides emergency help to people in the Swannanoa Valley including food, clothing, financial and counseling. Holiday needs include small gifts for Meals-on-Wheels clients, Christmas gifts or food for needy families.

Black Mountain Center -- Provides comprehensive care for mentally and physically handicapped. Needs include volunteers to decorate Christmas trees, wrap gifts, provide friendship, small gifts, personal hygiene items and all types of garments.

Highland Farms Health Care Center -- Provides long-term nursing care. Needs include volunteers for musical programs, slide programs and other entertainment.

Juvenile Evaluation Center -- A training school for boys and girls in trouble with the law. Needs include personal gifts for boys and girls ages 10-17, Christmas cards and stamps, Christmas parties and refreshments, decorations, Christmas music and plays and volunteers to take students out to Christmas activities.

Children's cantata

Dec. 22

"Sing A Song Of Christmas" by Don Phillips, a children's Christmas cantata, will be sung by the Young Musician Choir at Swannanoa First Baptist Church, 503 Park St., on Wednesday, December 22, at 7:15 p.m.

Soloists will be Deana Lunsford, Clay Martin, Christy Robinson, Amy Metcalf, Jenny McIntosh, Darlene Thompson and Tanya Gaddy. The choir is under the direction of Dan E. Snyder. Narrator will be Amy Snyder. The community is invited to attend.

Chamber launches \$100,000 drive

Following several months of discussion and analysis of Chamber needs, the Board of Directors of the Black Mountain-Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce voted to purchase the old ABC store building, formerly a doctor's office and before that the McGraw Coffee House from 1918-1940. The building is located on State Street.

Legal procedures require that the building be advertised for 30 days for sealed bids, and this is now in process.

The Chamber board looked at six different sites, settling on the West State Street location for visibility, parking, reception lobby, office work space and space for restroom enlargement.

The Chamber has printed a brochure detailing plans for the building which includes a photograph of it when it was a coffee house.

Visitation teams under the leadership of Finance Chairman Carl Bartlett are now calling on Chamber members and friends to raise the necessary funds.



Coach Rick Miller of Western Carolina University talked Monday to Black Mountain Middle School's Kelce Lytle (center), last year's top money raiser in the Shoot Out for Easter Seals, and Brad Johnson, who got the highest number of baskets last year.