

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Monday-Friday

12-1 p.m., Brown Bagging the Arts, Cleveland County Arts Center, 111 S. Washington St., Shelby. Free one-hour art demonstrations and lectures. Take bag lunch. Drink and dessert furnished. For more information or to reserve a seat call 484-2787.

Mondays

6-8 p.m., every Monday, East Gaston YMCA, Belmont, karate for adults and children ages 6-over. Youth class 6-7:30; adults 6-8. \$20 per month for YMCA members, \$30 for non-members. Call 825-9104 for more information.

7 p.m. - Second Monday of each month, Kings Mountain Board of Education, Central School, 105 East Ridge St.

10 a.m. - Beginning line dance, every Monday, Shelby Senior Center.

10-11 a.m. - Sitting for Fitness, every Monday, Shelby Senior Center.

12 noon - Boiling Springs Rotary Club, Ritch Banquet Hall, Gardner-Webb University.

4:15-5:15 p.m. - Cardio tone class, every Monday, Shelby City Park.

5:30-6:30 p.m. - Overeaters Anonymous, every Monday, Central United Methodist Church, Kings Mountain.

5:30-6:30 p.m. - Early Evening Aerobics, every Monday, Shelby City Park.

7-8 p.m. - Evening Aerobics, every Monday, Shelby City Park.

7 p.m. - Parents Without Partners, every Monday, Shelby Presbyterian Church. For more information call Alan Smith at 481-2986.

7 p.m. - Hurting Families Support Group, every Monday, Christopher Road Baptist Church, Shelby. For information call 538-0410.

8 p.m. - AA Big Book Study, every Monday, Serenity Club, Highway 74 at Bethlehem Road, Kings Mountain.

Tuesdays

6 p.m. - Cleveland County Board of Commissioners, first and third Tuesdays, County Administration Building, Shelby.

7 p.m. - Kings Mountain City Council, last Tuesday of the month, City Hall, East Gold St.

Thursdays

10-11 a.m., every Thursday, Sitting For Fitness, Shelby Senior Center.

11 a.m. - every Thursday, Self Care Program, Bliss Center in Lawndale, Kings Mountain Senior Center, Boiling Springs United Methodist Church, and Charles Place, Shelby. Call Amanda Helms at 482-3488 for information.

12 noon - Kings Mountain Rotary Club, Ramada Ltd.

1 p.m. - Every Thursday, Aerobics, Shelby Senior Center.

6 p.m. - Kings Mountain Kiwanis Club, Central United Methodist Church.

7 p.m. - Broad River Genealogical Society, fourth Thursday, Senior Center in Shelby.

Saturdays

Planetarium Programs at Schiele Museum, Gastonia:

1 p.m. - Planet Quest. Explore planets and discover special nature of Earth. \$2.50 adults, \$1 seniors and students. Children under 3 free.

Saturdays and Sundays

Planetarium Programs, Schiele Museum, Gastonia.

2 p.m. - The Voice of Night: American Indian Star Legends of the Southeast. Discover the night sky through the eyes of American Indians and learn about their history, legend and lore. \$2.50 adults, \$1 seniors and students. Children under 3 free.

3 p.m. - Sky Over Gastonia. Find out what's in the night sky, planets and other sights. \$2.50 adults, \$1 seniors and students. Children 3 free

Thursday, April 20

3:30 p.m. - Story Time Naturals, Schiele Museum, Gastonia, designed for pre-schoolers. Stories and hands-on activities. Call 866-6909.

6-9 p.m. - Easy papermaking by Jean Silver, Cleveland County Arts Center. Make paper from junk mail, flowers, and objects from nature. \$20. Call 484-2787 for information.

Friday, April 21

7:30-9 p.m. - Night Hike, Crowders Mountain State Park. Meet a visitor center for a walk in the dark to see owls, flying bats, frogs, toads, etc. Call 853-5375 to reserve a place.

Saturday, April 22

1-1:45 p.m. - Birds of a Feather, Crowders Mountain State Park. From feathers to bones, get to know a bird up-close. Meet at visitor center classroom and stay for a short bird walk.

10 a.m.-1 p.m. - Easter egg hunt, downtown gazebo, corner of Gold St. and Railroad Ave., Kings Mountain. Games, prizes, sidewalk art, visit from the Easter bunny. For more information call Tripp Hord at 730-2101.

3-4 p.m. - Build Your Own Blue Bird Box, Crowders Mountain State Park. Build a bird house for your yard. Meet in the visitor center classroom.

6:30 p.m. - JMX Motocross, grandstand, Cleveland County Fairgrounds. For more information call Joe Williams at 460-0408.

Sunday, April 23

2-4 p.m. - Cleveland Mineral Ruins, Crowders Mountain State Park. Crowders Mountain State Park was almost a strip mine, but citizens fought to save the mountain and created the park. The battle was close; in fact, a processing plant was built and ready for operation. Join a Ranger to this seldom-visited area of the park and explore the ruins of the processing plant and how nature reclaimed the spot. Most of the hike is easy, but there are a few moderate slopes and it is two-miles long. Meet at the lake parking lot.

Tuesday, April 25

11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. - Mosaic Mirror Frames with Mini Strang. Learn ancient craft techniques. Cleveland County Arts Center. \$42. Call 484-2787 for more information.

7 p.m. - Crohn's Support Group, 7 p.m., Gaston Medical Arts Bldg., 2711 X-Ray Drive, Gastonia.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Growing by leaps & bounds

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

Back many years ago when bicycles had simulated fuel tanks, headlights, and full fenders like the one Pee Wee Herman rides, it wasn't unusual for a kid to eventually strip those goodies off and take to the woods. These days, the cycles come already pared to the bare essentials and are known as mountain bikes.

Mountain biking is a sport that has grown by leaps and bounds over the past several years. Combining a chance to enjoy the outdoors with some excellent aerobic exercise, mountain biking is something anyone in reasonably good physical condition can enjoy.

Schanewolf's Cycle Sport in Shelby is a good place to check out what you need to get and where you can go locally to begin your mountain biking adventures.

There are many places for mountain biking in and near Cleveland County," said shop owner John Schanewolf. "The Broad River Greenway offers several miles of trails right along the river and is very scenic. Another area is called Lost Arrow and is located off Old Orchard Road near Polkville. Lost Arrow has 2200 acres available for riding."

Another place nearby that Schanewolf recommends is Pee Wee's Riding Trails off Highway 150 near Crouse. Pee Wee's charges \$2 for riding and has some good trails for beginners. For more experienced mountain bikers, Schanewolf says that a place called Riverfront at Exit 29 off I-85 has seven miles of challenging trails. Yet another place near Cleveland County for mountain bike riding is Cowpens Battleground. Crowders Mountain State Park, Kings Mountain National Military Park and Kings Mountain State Park also have mountain biking.

Ranging a bit away from Cleveland County will open up even more trails for mountain biking fun. To the east, Latta Plantation Park off upper Beatties Ford Road near Charlotte has some excellent mountain bike trails. Heading to the hills, South Mountain State Park on the Cleveland County, Burke County line



Photo courtesy of NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development.

also has places for folks to pedal in the woods.

For really challenging mountain biking, why not head to the mountains themselves? For starters, the "North Carolina Outdoor Guide" lists seven major areas in our Tar Heel hills to try out your cycling skills.

First on the list is Boone's Greenway Trail near Boone. Jumping off place for this six-mile trail is the Watauga County Recreation Complex. Next try the Watauga River Road Ride near Valle Crucis. A good ride for beginners, this loop is off N.C.105 at the community of Valle Crucis.

For the seasoned mountain biker, there's the 49-mile Linville Gorge Loop. Total elevation gain on this jaunt is over 4,000 feet. Access to the Linville Gorge Loop is via N.C.183 in the town of Linville Falls.

A little easier on the legs and lungs is the Claw Hammer Trail near the town of Black Mountain, 20 miles east of

Asheville. The mountain bike trail at Black Mountain is about 7 miles long and has a 2,000 foot elevation gain. While in Black Mountain, enjoy some of the mountain crafts and other artwork produced by local artisans.

In the Pisgah National Forest, mountain bikers have the North and South Mills River Trails to cycle. The 12 mile South Mills River Trail is a nice ride through dense foliage. The North Mills Trail is a good choice for beginners. Information on both trails is available at the Pisgah Forest Ranger Station near the intersection of U.S. 64 and U.S. 276 near Brevard.

One of the most popular series of mountain biking trails in the state is near Bryson City in the Nantahala National Park. Called "Tsali" after the Indian chief, the trails are also near campgrounds. Stop by the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City for more details. Fontana Village on Lake

Fontana offers not only fishing and horseback riding, but several good mountain bike trails as well. One of the paths, Fax Falls Trail, leads to a 70-foot waterfall. Other rides at Fontana Village also have spectacular mountain scenery.

Now that you know where to go mountain biking, how much will it cost to get started?

"A beginning mountain bike will cost from \$250-\$400," Schanewolf says. "Good brands are Gary Fisher, Haro, and GT. At the other end of the price scale, there are serious bikes made of exotic materials that can cost up to \$3,000."

Along with the bike, you will need a helmet and gloves. These go for from \$20 on up to \$50. Footwear can be as simple as some well-worn sneakers. Other accessories that will make your mountain bike adventure more enjoyable are a water bottle and rack for as little as \$4, a seat bag for tools for around \$16, and \$12 for a tire pump. Be sure to put some an extra inner tube and tire levers in the seat bag.

Perhaps the most important factor in the whole mountain bike equation isn't the clothes or machinery, but the physical condition of the person that will be pushing the pedals.

Mountain biking can be strenuous exercise. Desk jockeys need to keep this fact in mind before they tackle a steep set of trails.

"Beginners need to take several weeks of short rides to build up their stamina," Schanewolf says. "It's also important to eat carbohydrate-rich foods before you begin a mountain bike trek."

With balmy days upon us, mountain biking will let you enjoy some of nature's grandeur and at the same time keep fit. Now, keep those pedals turning and your wheels between the ditches.



Photo courtesy of NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development.