

What's Up

School open house

The Mooresville Graded School District invites the public to an open house and tour of the Mooresville High School addition and renovation project on Sunday, Sept. 16 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. The open house will follow the building's formal dedication.

Rabies clinics

There will be several rabies vaccination clinics in South Iredell in the coming weeks. Shepherd Elementary School in Troutman will host a clinic on Tuesday, Sept. 11 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. A clinic will also be held at the Iredell County Fairgrounds in Troutman on Tuesday, Sept. 18 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. In Mooresville, clinics will be held from Monday, Sept. 17 through Saturday, Sept. 22 at the Village Animal Hospital during normal business hours, as well as Monday, Sept. 24 through Saturday, Sept. 29 at the Randall Veterinary Hospital during normal business hours. Cost of the vaccine is \$6.

Cope with disaster

Are you prepared to deal with a disaster? The American Red Cross will provide a free program on Saturday, Sept. 15, in Mooresville, offering people a behind-the-scenes look at the impact of disasters on people and communities. Also, the program will describe the services and roles provided during disasters by the Red Cross. The program is from 1-3 p.m. in Shinn Hall next to St. James Episcopal Church, 851 Shinnville Road north of Mooresville. For reservations, or more information, call Linda Simowitz at 704-664-2127.

Road resurfacing

A section of Church Street between Institute Street and Iredell Avenue will be resurfaced on Thursday, Sept. 13. Some delays may occur.

Williams bike ride

Williams Company, which owns the natural gas pipeline that runs through Mooresville, will embark on its Third Annual Riding the Line for United Way from Sept. 10 to Sept. 18. A team of riders will pass through Mooresville at 11:45 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 13. Williams Company will match any money raised during the ride, up to \$200,000.

Masonic breakfast

An all-you-can-eat breakfast will be held on Saturday, Sept. 7 at 10 a.m. at the Masonic Lodge, 123 Institute Street. Cost is \$5. The public is invited.

Consignment sale

The South Iredell Lion's Club will hold a children's fall/winter consignment sale on Wednesday, Sept. 19 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 20 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday, Sept. 21 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday, Sept. 22 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. About 140 families will be selling children's clothes, baby equipment, toys, and more. Proceeds will benefit the Lion's Club Services and Iredell County Foster Parent Association. For more information, call (704) 662-8870.

Block party

The Broad Street United Methodist Church will sponsor a block party for all of Mooresville on Saturday, Sept. 15 from 1 to 4 p.m. in the open field next to the church.

Senators' tax-hike opinions differ

By MICHAEL ROESSLER

One of Iredell County's state senators says he will undoubtedly vote against a tax increase this year, while the other says he wants to avoid raising taxes but may still vote for a tax hike.

Sens. Jim Forrester (R) and Cal Cunningham (D) had the opportunity to talk taxes — as well as other political questions — at a Mooresville "Town Hall" meeting hosted last week by Mayor Al Jones.

Cunningham, who is serving his first term in the senate and said he ran as an anti-tax Democrat, said the state's current financial crisis stems from several causes. "The state just doesn't have the money to meet the promises it said it would meet," he said. Among those promises, he said, were raises in teachers' salaries and a large tax cut in the 1990s.

He also said that clean-up from hurricanes Fran and Floyd, which hit the eastern part of the state, has cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars. The downturn in the economy has also had a hand in the state's budget troubles, he said.

These circumstances, he said, have caused a hole in the budget, but he still hesitates to vote to raise taxes. "I do believe it is not the right thing to do while our economy is in a downturn," he said.

Forrester, while agreeing with Cunningham that teachers' salaries, hurricane clean-up, tax cuts, and the sinking economy have contributed to the state's budget woes, also said that former Gov. Jim Hunt bears some responsibility. "The Hunt administration passed it along to the current administration," he said.

He also pledged that he would vote

against any budget that includes a tax hike. "I promise you I will not vote for a tax increase," he said. "I think it's the wrong time to add a tax."

Cunningham said although he does not want to vote for a budget that includes a tax increase, he may do it nonetheless. "I wish I could tell you today that I was going to vote against any tax increase," he said. As a member of the party that controls the Senate, he said word will likely come down from party leaders that all Democrats are to vote for the budget.

Even Forrester acknowledged that Cunningham, as a Democrat, would likely be pressured to vote for whatever budget party leaders support and that failure to vote for that budget could have consequences, such as Cunningham being deined the chairmanship of a committee in future sessions.

Schools

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"We need to put this to rest. We need to get an answer (to the system's financial troubles)," said Staley. "This will get the situation over and completed."

But just as the board began to take steps toward rectifying the system's financial woes, one board member said he was not satisfied with the legal representation the system was receiving and that he thought decisions had been made by the board attorney without authorization from the school board.

"We haven't been represented as well as we should have been," board member Jim Head said Monday during the board's pre-agenda meeting. "There were some things we should have known about and discussed before a decision was made."

Contacted later to elaborate, Head declined, saying he was hesitant to specify his concerns because the board unanimously agreed Monday to extend the contract of its attorney, Bedford Cannon, for six months. The contract covers the period from July to December.

Head did say after the meeting that his dissatisfaction with Cannon involves both the school system's ongoing financial troubles and other concerns.

Cannon declined to comment Tuesday morning, saying he would have to speak to Head and other school board members to understand what Head was referring to.

School board chairman Vaughn Sprinkle said after the meeting that he didn't think the board's attorney has made any decisions without the board's knowledge. "I don't think there's anything there," he said.

Cannon's contract extension pays him by the hour, but Head estimated he makes roughly \$50,000 a year as the board's attorney.

In other business, the school board approved an interim contract for Dr. Julia Williams, who is serving as acting superintendent. The contract awards her an additional \$2,000 per month while she is performing the duties of superintendent. Her yearly salary will increase from approximately \$100,000 to \$120,000 under the new contract, Cannon said.

Williams has been acting superintendent since Aug. 8, when the school board suspended Supt. Howard Coleman for possible "misdeed" or "incompetence" relating to the system's current financial problems.

The board also tabled a decision to approve redrawn districts for the school board.

Rally

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Parking is \$2. Gates open at 3 p.m. Friday and 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. No pets are allowed.

Balloon mass ascensions are Friday and Saturday at 5:30 p.m. There will be tethered rides for spectators on Friday from 6:30-7:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 2-4 p.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Mooreville Supt. Bruce Boyles chalks the students' actions up to "young folks just being young folks."

Streb says he just wishes the students would find more constructive ways to spend their time. Unfortunately for school officials, some of the toilet paper at the tops of trees will likely still remain during Sunday's 3:30 p.m. open house for the school's new addition.

MOORESVILLE TRIBUNE
(USPS 382-330)
Published every
Wednesday and Friday
at 147 E. Center Avenue
MOORESVILLE, NC 28115-0300
Periodicals Postage Paid
at Mooresville, NC
MAIL SUBSCRIPTION RATES
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Iredell County
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One Year.....\$2.00
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Call goes out for helping hands

Volunteers needed to tackle trashy roads and waterways

Last fall, more than 130 volunteers collected 57,625 pounds of litter from the shores of Iredell's lakes, rivers and streams during the N.C. Big Sweep waterway litter pickup. Covering 27 miles of stream and lake shoreline, volunteers hauled out 220 bags of trash, 241 tires, and tons of illegally dumped items.

But many of the county's waterways remain polluted with litter — and keep Iredell Clean/Keep America Beautiful, Inc. (KIC/KAB) has put out a call for help.

Volunteers will gather Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at several sites for the 2001 N.C. Big Sweep, and more help are needed. Bags, gloves, and other collection materials will be provided.

Some volunteers are needed to record the types and amount of litter collected. Litter data provides evidence to analyze anti-littering laws for needed improvements. For additional information or to register for the N.C. Big Sweep, call the KIC/KAB office at 704-924-9800.

At Lake Norman State Park, volunteers will meet at the park's boat launch area by 8:45 a.m. to cleanup the lake shoreline. Call Josh Henric at 704-528-6350 to register your-

self, your group and/or to volunteer with your boat. Students at Statesville Middle School plan to clean up Sharp Street Branch, located behind their school. First Citizens Bank employees will meet at Mac Anderson Park in Statesville, to clean up Free Nancy Branch.

North Carolina Big Sweep is annually held on the third Saturday in September in all 100 counties. It's the largest such waterway cleanup in the nation, organizers say. Big Sweep is also part of the International Coastal Cleanup, with more than 90 countries participating.

During North Carolina Big Sweep 2000, over 16,000 volunteers picked up more than 238 tons of debris from the shores of the state's rivers, lakes and ocean. Pollution in the water destroys wildlife habitat and food sources, and it ruins many opportunities for recreation, organizers say.

While participating in N.C. Big Sweep, kids learn hands-on about the effects of aquatic

litter. Supervised school groups, scout troops, church groups, 4-H Clubs, and sports teams may participate. Adults have the opportunity to practice and teach environmental stewardship. Bring along your civic organization, garden club, church group, company colleagues neighborhood organization, or trade association.

North Carolina Big Sweep includes a year-round education program. Free curriculum guides are available for teachers, and free brochures and litter prevention promotional materials are available for distribution by marinas, stores, and restaurants. Call KIC/KAB at 704-924-9800 for details.

Big Sweep participants must come prepared and think about safety issues. Following the safety tips below should ensure a safe, positive experience:

Wear closed-toe shoes that can get wet and muddy. Do not go barefoot.

Wear hats or visors for sun protection. Bring sunscreen

and insect repellent. Wear comfortable old clothes. Lightweight long pants provide protection from briars and poison ivy.

Take along a snack and a drink. Bring a pair of garden, work, or rubber gloves, if you have them.

Stay with a partner or group, and be sure that children are supervised by an adult.

Wear a life jacket when you're in a boat.

Watch for snakes and spiders. Be careful of poison oak and poison ivy.

Do not touch medical waste, chemical containers, barrels, pesticides, or other dangerous items. Note their location and tell your site coordinator.

Do not touch an animal, dead or alive. Animals can carry diseases, and trapped or injured animals may bite. Alert your site coordinator.

Sponsors of the Iredell cleanup are EnergyUnited, Pepsi-Cola and the Iredell County Solid Waste Facility.

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I-S Schools review safety

By JONATHAN WEAVER

Fake explosive devices found at Monticello Elementary and a student's threat of violence at West Iredell High last week have Iredell-Statesville school officials on guard.

Shortly after 8 a.m. Tuesday a teacher's assistant found a suspicious credit card-sized device stuck to the outside door knob of a building adjacent to Monticello. Iredell sheriff's deputies were called to the scene and located a similar device on a pipe leading into an air-conditioning unit, said Sgt. Allen Spies.

School officials also contacted the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's bomb squad. Students were taken to the school's science room while authorities secured the scene. Both devices were non-explosive, Spies said.

Investigators have no suspects. "The way they were placed, anyone could have put them there over the weekend," Spies said.

School officials sent no one home to Monticello parents urging them to talk with their children about the seriousness of such pranks.

At West Iredell High, 17-year-old Joel Johnson

reportedly came to campus early Tuesday to reenroll after being suspended last week for having alcohol on school grounds.

During his suspension, his mother unenrolled Johnson, said Iredell-Statesville schools spokeswoman Cathy Davidson.

While trying to reenroll, Johnson started using abusive language toward administrators, said school resource officer Deputy Paula Lunsford. The assistant principal then sent Johnson home.

On his way out, Johnson stopped by his first-period class and told the teacher he was going home to get his 9 mm pistol and come back and shoot them, referring to administrators, Lunsford said. The teacher notified administrators, who then told Lunsford.

Lunsford arrested Johnson and charged him with communicating threats and disorderly conduct. He was placed in Iredell County Jail under a \$5,000 secured bond.

Anyone with information on the fake explosive devices at Monticello Elementary should contact the Iredell County Sheriff's Office at 704-678-3180.

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