



NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue !

News from the Mayor

Roger Snyder

As we start preparing to enter the next fiscal year, we have some important projects that are going on. Our Land Use Plan is well under way and we are expecting the results around the first of June. The remodeling has started for the branch library. Books, shelving and computer equipment have been ordered by Henderson County and we are expecting it as soon as possible. We are hoping to have a May 2, 2005 opening. The Finance Committee and Council will be reviewing the budget in the next few weeks. The Post Office is still on the front burner and our Federal representatives are aware of our desire to have a Mills River Post Office.

The Department of Transportation has some projects that are located inside the Town, that are in various stages of study. Also, the Regional Water Authority's future is an on-going issue of which the Council is aware of and Mills River has a vested interest in the outcome. Our discussions with the Sheriff have gone extremely well and he is assisting us in every way possible to get this service in place and going. We are hoping to have a contracted deputy in place by the middle of April. Keep in mind that this will be in addition to the regular deputies that are already assigned to our area.



THE TOWN OF MILLS RIVER

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Post Office Box 189
Horse Shoe, NC 28742

OFFICE: 828-890-2901 FAX: 828-890-2903

NEW Office Hours: 9:00 am—5:00 pm

Monday-Friday

info@millsriver.org

Council Members:

Mayor: Roger Snyder

Mayor Pro Tem: Lois Pryor

Councilman: Wayne Carland

Councilman: Ed Glenn

Councilwoman: Jennie Hernandez

Staff:

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Susan L. Powell

Susan.powell@millsriver.org

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Email Free Newsletter Subscription:

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the Mills River Website at
<http://www.millsriver.org>



Mills River Volunteer Fire & Rescue

School House Road, Horse Shoe, NC 28742

**Phone emergencies for either
FIRE or MEDICAL: Call 911**

How did Mills River get the best volunteer fire department in Henderson County? There are four men who have the history and had the foresight to give Mills River the best. Ralph Moore, 84, of School House Road; Tom Souther, 78, of Warlick Road; Dr. Howard Norton, 77, of Hwy 191/280; and Guy Livingston, now deceased. They helped form the Mills River Community Development Club in 1967 with the purpose of establishing a volunteer fire department in Mills River. Many residents had spoken of the need so a petition to vote for a department was held. There was an overwhelming response—147 votes in favor and 2 against.

There were 24 charter members in the privately incorporated, non-profit venture that is governed by a board of directors who contract with Henderson County, the Town of Mills River and other localities for fire, responder, EMT, and paramedic services. Since there was no tax district to help financially, there were many fundraising activities. Here's where the Ladies Auxiliary excelled. The 12 to 15 active members held chicken dinners, bake sales, car washes, and square dances. Some funds came from donations and a loan from the State Trust Bank.

Mills River people saw a need, started with an idea and little else. The first fire building foundation was done with all volunteers—Norman Hollingsworth and many others recall building the firehouse with its four truck bays that is still part of the complex today; sitting on land donated by Ed Brown. With little money but great faith in each other, they purchased a 1965 International truck that had been a septic tank pumper. The volunteers converted it to a water pumper in David Brown's shed and there are many stories about coming home smelling like something the cat should have buried. There was no fire protective gear, called "turnout gear" until '68. Their first real training of 120 hours was given by Luke Harrison, Certified Instructor of Brevard. Their first aid class was held in the old Mills River Elementary School.

How did the volunteers get a fire or emergency call in the days before pagers? Back to the ladies again! They had four black radio receivers that were monitored 23 hours a day for the first 2-3 years by Lou Moore, Claire Livingston, Caroline Carland, and Alta Fowler. A special tone from the receivers alerted the women who in turn called all 24 firemen, by phone, to respond. The ladies carried the receivers wherever they went and never missed a call for help.

They did get notice of emergencies and support from the Hendersonville Sheriff's Department.

There were some tragic days. The Mathis house fire in 1981 on Ray Hill Road at John McLean's farm was started by a TV shorting out in the evening, filling the small frame house with smoke. One daughter, who survived, jumped out the window to get her father who was milking in the barn. Five other family members succumbed to smoke inhalation before fire volunteers could save them. There have been two fires on the VanWingerden property resulting in great financial loss to the company but were contained and put out by the volunteers.

The Mills River Fire Volunteers have an excellent safety record with no major injuries to personnel. The current Fire Chief Rick Livingston credits their training programs and the confidence the men have in their training. The old house known as the Dr. Greenwood house at the intersection of Hwy 191/280 was recently used as a training exercise burn. This property provided training in firefighting, hose stream, and smoke rescue. Always the first objective is to save lives by determining if any person is present in the building. Training is a vital part of the volunteer experience and requires many hours. Over half of the current volunteers are EMT certified. Today, half of the calls for assistance are medical requests.

Search and rescue is provided to state maintained forest areas. Mills River is fortunate to have several members who know those wooded areas very well. Many times distress callers cannot give their location—they're just lost!

It speaks well of those volunteers that many of them are third generation firefighters. The ladies are still working by providing coffee and food that they take to a fire location to feed the firefighters. They also do a community appreciation supper for the firefighters and families. Likewise, the Happy Valley Homemakers furnish refreshments for the business meetings and the Mills River Methodist Church provides a "thank you" supper as well.

This success story is not just pure luck. Through careful and thoughtful stewardship, those who have been guiding and planning ahead have given the Town of Mills River a shining example of what people can accomplish when they work together.

MEETING DATES

Mar	15	Planning Board	7:00 PM
	21	Agricultural Advisory Committee	7:00 PM
	24	Town Council	7:00 PM
	25	Good Friday	Town Hall Closed
Apr	5	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	6	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
	12	Board of Adjustments	7:00 PM
	14	Town Council	7:00 PM
	18	Agricultural Advisory Committee	7:00 PM
	19	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	28	Town Council	7:00 PM
May	3	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	4	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
	12	Town Council	7:00 PM
	16	Agricultural Advisory Committee	7:00 PM
	17	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	26	Town Council	7:00 PM
30	Memorial Day	Town Hall Closed	



History Corner

By Jim Brittain

A good starting point for residents and visitors interested in learning about the history and heritage of the Mills River community would be a visit to one or more of the several church and family cemeteries located in the Mills River watershed. They constitute the final resting places for some of the pioneers who first settled in the Mills River Valley in the late 18th and early 19th centuries as well as many generations of their descendants. Among them are veterans of the American Revolution and later wars. There are grave markers for farmers, teachers, family doctors, preachers, iron and gun producers, millers, store owners, and legislators.

Although the grave markers represent the end of life stories, they provide an entry point for the resourceful who wish to learn more details of stories which often prove fascinating and surprising. Some of the stories turn out to pose challenging mysteries which defy easy resolution, and one might imagine them as stimuli for seminar papers for a course in local cemetery studies. Oral interviews of surviving family members or friends of the deceased, family bibles, and records of estate settlements or land transfers are some of the sources to be used in research. The book, *Henderson County, North Carolina, Cemeteries (1995)*, compiled and published for the Henderson County Historical and Genealogical Society, is an invaluable aid to research on county cemeteries, including those in Mills River. The public policy issue involving preservation and access to cemeteries has been addressed recently by the Henderson County Board of Commissioners. It may at some future time become an issue for the Town Council of Mills River.

An Annotated List of Cemeteries in the Mills River Watershed

Mills River United Methodist Church Cemetery

The cemetery is located adjacent to the historic church on Old Turnpike Road between South Mills River Road and Highway 280. It contains the graves of Civil War veterans and many community leaders. There are marked graves from the early 1840s and it continues to be used for burials. A trust fund for perpetual care of the cemetery was created in 1964.

Mills River Presbyterian Church Cemetery

The cemetery is located adjacent to the historic church on School House Road between Highway 280 and Banner Farm Road. Although there is a marker for James Brittain, a Revolutionary War veteran on the church grounds, he is not buried there. The cemetery does include the graves of several veterans of the Civil

War and subsequent wars. There are marked graves dating from the early 1850s and the cemetery continues to be used for burials. A brief history of the church by J. Bruce Frye was published in 1959 for the centennial of its founding.

The Brittain Family Cemetery

Unfortunately, this cemetery was destroyed several years ago during preparation for residential housing sites. It was located on Clement Hill between Highway 280 and Banner Farm Road. Among those who were buried there were the Revolutionary War soldier, James Brittain, and his son Phillip (1787-1844), who was an army officer during the War of 1812. At least three grave stones from this cemetery were rescued by a family member. Two of them were from the graves of two young sons of Leander Brittain (a grandson of James) and were placed at the nearby Presbyterian Church Cemetery. The third stone was from the grave of James H. Brittain (1829-1848), a son of Phillip Brittain, and is currently being repaired and will also be placed at the Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

The Rickman Family Cemetery

This cemetery is located near the intersection of South Mills River Road and Whitaker Lane with access via an unpaved road. Jesse Rickman, who served as a soldier in the latter stages of the Revolutionary War, is among those buried there. Several of his grandsons served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War and the cemetery has markers for four of them who died during the War and are buried elsewhere. The earliest marked grave is dated 1832 and the most recent burial appears to have been in 1943. (The author recalls attending the grave-side service in 1943 for J.W. Smathers who had been married a Rickman. This cemetery is enclosed by a fence and is in relatively good condition.

The Sitton-Gillespie Cemetery

This is located on top of a ridge and affords an excellent view of the nearby Forge Mountain and South Mills River Valley. Access is via a steep unpaved road from the intersection of South Mills River Road and Silas Sitton Drive. Among those buried there are the pioneer iron maker, Philip Sitton (1770-1843), the gun maker Mathew Gillespie (1788-1871), and several generations of their descendants. The oldest dated grave is 1841, and the cemetery continues to be used for burials.

(Continued from Page 3)

The Whitaker-Moore Cemetery

This is located on Hall Road near the intersection of Whitaker Lane and L.L. Moore Road. Among those buried there are Solomon Whitaker (1822-1895) and Riley Whitaker (1823-1900) along with many of their descendants. Veterans of the Civil War and later years are buried in this cemetery. A memorial fund for L.L. and Laura Crawford Moore was established some years ago by their son Ralph L. Moore for the maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery. This oldest grave markers date from the early 1860s and the cemetery continues to be used for burials, frequently for members of the nearby Mills River Baptist Church.

The Bryson Family Cemetery

This is an abandoned cemetery located on a ridge between North Mills River Road and River Loop Road. The only access is through private property and the cemetery contains large trees and is unfenced. The earliest dated burial is 1811 and the most recent was 1859 although several graves have uninscribed fieldstone markers. William Bryson (1758-1817) and Susannah Bogle Bryson (ca 1760-1811) and several of their descendants are buried there. The author included an essay on this cemetery in a book, *Gun Fights, Dam Sites, and Water Rights*, published in 2001 but now out-of-print.

The Owenby-Moore Family Cemetery

This abandoned cemetery is on a ridge just north of North Mills River Road and east of the intersection with Whitaker Lane. It is surrounded by private property and has not been maintained. Legible grave markers date from 1868 to 1875. Madison Owenby (1810-1868) is buried there and other graves included A.R. Moore and two infant children of Mark and A.R. Moore. Mark Moore (1884-1921) and several of his children by a later marriage are buried at the nearby Whitaker-Moore Cemetery. One of Mark's sons, M.A. Moore (1884-1970) owned and operated a small country store and grain mill on Whitaker Lane for many years.

The Stuart Family Cemetery

This is located on a ridge above Seniard Creek with access from Dave Whitaker Road through posted private property. The earliest dated burial was 1863 although there are a number of fieldstone markers without inscriptions. The most recent burial appears to have been in 1976. The cemetery contains a grave marker for Jackson L. Reeves, a Civil War soldier. Melvin M. Stuart (1846-1921) who operated a saw mill and grain mill in the vicinity is buried in the cemetery and reportedly left a bequest to be used for the maintenance of the cemetery. Bill Rose, known as "Yankee Rose" was buried there in 1866 and his life seems something of a mystery.

The R.W. Duckett Grave

This is listed as the Fletcher Field Cemetery in the Henderson County Cemeteries book. It has a single grave stone marking the burial site of R.W. Duckett (1817-1869) and is located on a ridge above the confluence of Spencer Branch and Fletcher Creek in the Pisgah National Forest. The author first visited the site during a hike with George Mullinax in the late 1940s, and I have stopped there occasionally since. Additional information about Duckett and his family is contained in a family bible which he and Mary A. Duckett (1822-1899) acquired at the time of their marriage in December 1836. It indicates that they were the parents of 15 children born between 1838 and 1865, some of whom died as infants. R.W. Duckett is recorded as having died of cancer on April 26, 1869. It seems probable that his widow and children moved elsewhere since none of them were buried at this location. (Possibly three who died as infants prior to 1860 were buried without inscribed markers.) Henderson County Land Records mention Duckett's Creek as being near Spencer Branch although it is not shown as a named stream on current maps.



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**North and South Mills River
Community Club**

The North and South Mills River Community Club is small but very active. Recently we made and sold calendars featuring the older homes and churches of the valley. We made about \$6,000 on this project and plan to update the wiring in the building and start on renovations of the kitchen.

On April 16, 2005 we will have a roadside cleanup. We would like to have the participation of as many residents as possible. The scouts and other groups who use our building will be participating in this project as well.

We always welcome new members to our club located on South Mills River Road.

Local Small Business Ads

The Mills River Town Newsletter is printed quarterly: March, June, September, and December. At sometime in the future we hope to increase the frequency of circulation. In order to defray the cost of publishing, the newsletter will be taking small business ads. These ads will be business card size and black and white. The business must be located within the town limits. There is a \$50 fee for each quarterly advertisement and since there is a limited amount of space, ads will be taken on a first come, first serve basis. The ad must accompany payment and checks should be labeled for the newsletter. The fee collected goes directly for newsletter costs. Site selection within the newsletter is to be determined by the newsletter committee and the committee reserves the right to refuse an ad. Both ad and (Continued from Page 1) this occurs.

Town Committees

We encourage our residents to be an active part of Town Government. One of the most effective ways is to participate as a committee member. We have several committees that you might find interesting. Applications are available by email or fax it to you or you may stop by and pick up an application.

Town Council

A Council member is available to attend your organization's meeting. If you are having a Homeowner's Association meeting or anything that is similar, let our Town Clerk, Sue Powell know and she will schedule it.

Library

As we move forward with the Library, we are hoping to have a section that just deals with the history of Mills River. If you have anything that pertains to the history of Mills River and you would like to donate it to the Library, such as old photographs or books, you may contact Roger Snyder (rsnyder@ioa.com) or simply contact Town Hall. We also would like to find some old pictures that are in frames that we could hang on the Library wall.

Committee Spotlight

This issue the spotlight is on the Planning Board. This Board consists of 9 members of which Carolyn Johnson is the Chairman and Jeff Young is the Vice-Chairman. Normally they meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday evenings at Town Hall at 7:00 PM. This Board is an important function of government. This Board reviews and makes recommendations, pertaining to land use planning and zoning, to the Town Council.

Mills River license plates—\$5 each
Valley Agri-Supply

Mills River Sewer Project

This project was started before Mills River became a Town. The main purpose of this project was to eliminate the sewer system(s) at Mills River Elementary School, package plant in the Food Lion area and to run a line in behind the Texaco and the Mills River Restaurant. This consists of one main trunk line and three smaller individual lines. Just to give you an update on the status of the project. The construction started around 3rd quarter of 2004 and should be completely finished by 4th Quarter of 2006

Financial Corner

In this issue we would like to explain where the Town's revenue sources come from. These figures are for the FY 2004-2005 and are rounded off.

Property Tax	\$ 60,000
Collected Yearly	
Franchise Tax	\$ 240,000
Collected Quarterly	
Sales Tax	<u>\$ 1,200,000</u>
Collected Monthly	
Total	\$ 1,500,000

The Property Tax is the 1 cent / \$ 100 valuation. Town Council sets the rate. This is based on the County's assessed value on real and personal property.

The Franchise Tax is based on certain types of utilities that are located within the Town boundaries. An example is Duke Powers and Southern Bell lines.

The Sales Tax is based on actual sales tax that is generated by the sale of goods in Henderson County. It is then distributed back to Henderson County and the municipalities based on their population.

If you would like to see more information concerning the Town's finances, stop by Town Hall.

Stocks ■ Bonds ■ CDs
Mutual Funds ■ IRAs

Jollene Austin

5046 Boylston Hwy Suite 500
Mills River, NC 28742

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Mills River Development

How is Mills River preparing for the inevitable development it will see? How do we even know how to begin the process of effective development? How can we, the residents of Mills River, help to make a positive contribution to the history of this wondrous place we call home?

Mills River has hired Land Design, an urban design and land planning company from Charlotte. What they have been hired to do is analyze, synthesize, facilitate, prepare and gather information in order to develop a Plan for Mills River, a working plan. Formally it was called a Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The whole process should take approximately 6 months; we're about half way into it. In the end, we will have recommendations from Land Design to help guide us through the development process given the input they've received from us. These recommendations will include implementation strategies on how to follow through once their job is complete.

This Plan will affect not only us, but more so our children and grandchildren. We, the people of Mills River, have a great opportunity at our hands—an opportunity to help shape our community for the future. Land Design depends on public input for our ideas, our desires and our information in order to help direct them in the formulation of the Plan. How can you help?? Become an active participant in the planning process. Attend the public meetings and become more familiar with the process.

For more information, please contact Sue Powell at the Town Hall at 890-2901.

**Mills River Community Building
Schoolhouse Road
May 21, 2005
4:30 pm—7:00 pm**

**Supper to raise funds for the operation
of the community building
*Come one—Come all!***

**The Town of Mills River
PO Box 189
Boylston Highway
Horse Shoe NC 28742**