The Town of Mills River wants to thank the following rotating off Council members for their many years of service and dedication to the Town of Mills River and its residents:

Mayor: Larry Freeman
Mayor Pro Tem: Shanon Gonce
Councilman: Billy Johnston

NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS
As of December 14, 2017
Mayor: Chae Davis
Mayor Pro Tem: Roger Snyder
Councilman: Wayne Carland
Councilman: Brian Caskey
Councilman: Richmond Meadows

THE TOWN OF MILLS RIVER
124 Town Center Drive
Mills River, NC 28759
OFFICE: 828-890-2901 FAX: 828-890-2903
Office Hours: 9:00 am—5:00 pm
Monday-Friday
info@millsriver.org
www.millsriver.org

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
MILLS RIVER LIBRARY
January to March 2018

Monday -
10:00am: Storytime for all ages. Join us every Monday for songs, stories, crafts and more!

Tuesday -
9:00am: Yoga with Lynn Edgar
1:00pm: Knit and Crochet Group – all levels welcome, opportunities to learn for beginners
January 2, February 6, March 6 - 4:00pm: LEGO Club – all LEGOS will be provided, all ages welcome

Thursday -
9:00am: Yoga with Lynn Edgar
January 11, February 8, March 8 - 10:30am: Book Club

Specials – We are adding programs all the time. For the latest information please call or visit our website.

Wednesday, January 3rd - 4:00pm: Geology Rocks! Hands on Museum will present this program for Grades K-2. How do rocks make soil and shape the surface of our planet? What mineral treasures lie beneath the surface in North Carolina? Explore the world beneath our feet. Space is limited, registration required.

Wednesday, January 10th - 4:00 pm: Once Upon a Time…. presented by Bright Star Touring Theatre! Literature comes to life in this hysterical production that brings Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk to the stage! This program is free and open to all ages. Don’t miss it!

Wednesday, January 17th - 4:00pm: It’s Electric! Hands on Museum will present this program for grades 3- 6. We depend on electricity every day, but how does it work? Can everyday materials conduct electricity? Learn about circuits, lightning, batteries, and conductors as you explore the electric world. Space is limited, registration required.

More Hands on Programs continuing throughout the year on the first and third Wednesdays of the month.
Call or check our website for more information: www.henderson.lib.nc.us

NOTE: The library will be closed on the following dates: January 1, January 15, March 30

HISTORY CORNER
by
Jim Brittain

The Whitakers were one of several families of Scottish ancestry who settled in upper Mills River during the 19th century. William R. (Riley) Whitaker (1823-1900), the patriarch of one branch of the family, established his home on Seniard Creek, a tributary of North Mills River. Riley had lived in Rowan County, N.C. He was affiliated with the same church as the Rickmans, who also came to Mills River. Riley constructed a log cabin that featured a chimney of soapstone mined from a deposit near Soapstone Gap at the head of Seniard Creek. Riley married Ruth Owenbey (1831-1918), and they became the parents of several children born between 1855 and 1875.

One of their children was B.L. (Logan) Whitaker (1860-1911), who spent his life on the Whitaker homestead on Seniard Creek. Logan’s first wife was Alice Banning (1866-1892). After her death, Logan married Rachel Brittain (1865-1945). She was a daughter of Leander Brittain (1820-1900), a farmer who owned considerable land in Mills River. Logan and Rachel were the parents of six children. One son, Lloyd R. Whitaker (1897-1943), served in the American Army in France during the first World War. He married Viva Parker and they made their home on lower Mills River near the site of the old Carland grain mill.

Another of Logan’s sons was Joseph D. Whitaker (1903-1936). He died from a gunshot during a night encounter with spot lighters while serving as a game warden. His brother, Seamon S. Whitaker and his wife and children lived in the house on North Mills River Road where Joseph had lived before his untimely death. Seamon farmed and also served as a game protector. He was the father of Dewey R. Whitaker and Shirley Whitaker (Massey).

Another son of Logan, David B. Whitaker (1898-1987), owned a farm on Seniard Creek. He married Mary Sitton (1902-1964), a daughter of Silas C. Sitton of South Mills River. They became the parents of four children whom I got to know quite well when I was growing up a short distance down North Mills River. I shared several adventures with the oldest son Raymond (1933-1997). There also were close connections between our families. Rachel was a first cousin of my paternal grandfather, William A. Brittain (1857-1930). David’s wife, Mary Sitton (Whitaker) was a double first cousin of my mother. They were close friends from the time they were students at the Mountain View School in upper Mills River. David and my father were about the same age and became lifelong friends.
At the beginning of any new year it’s good to reflect back on the previous year while looking forward to the possibilities a new year brings. Here is an end of the year recap and updates on projects that are upcoming.

The Park recently hosted the Lion’s Club Annual Trunk or Treat on Halloween and the Sgt. Matthew Baynard Foundation Veterans’ Memorial 5K run held Veterans Day weekend. We estimate close to 200 people participated in the 5K event.

We also hosted the first annual Thomas A. Bryson Memorial Deer Dash 5K on the first Saturday of December. This event was well received and we estimate over 400 participants in the run, walk, and fun run with another 300 in attendance. The money raised by this event is to be donated towards construction of basketball courts here at Mills River Park.

We have moved the fence in the large dog park to provide additional open space. We continue to leave a section of the park fenced off as it is in need of restoration. We hope to reopen fully in the spring.

This fall, we planted 30 Nellie Stevens Hollies along the western side of the tennis courts to provide a natural screen from the wind and dust that affects the courts.

When the town conducted the Recreational Needs Survey in 2016, we looked at the top five “write in” facility requests and have worked to implement three of them in this fiscal year. The projects we are working on include shade, swings at the playground and a basketball court. We began with the shade project for the playground and plan for installation in the beginning of 2018. Once that is completed, we will move forward on placing swings in an area south of the playground. We are also hopeful that the basketball court will come to fruition in 2018.

The Henderson County America in Bloom Committee is proud to announce that Henderson County received a five-bloom rating out of a possible five and was recognized for its environmental efforts. As you know, Mills River is one of the participating members. The committee held its annual fundraising project over the Christmas holiday by sponsoring the iceless (polymer) ice rink at the Hendersonville Visitor Center parking lot. The committee hopes to offer grant monies in the future that will enhance the beauty of our County.

Please note: The water fountains at the restroom building have been shut down for the winter. Fountains are available in the Town Hall building during business hours.

Don’t forget that the Picnic Shelter may be reserved up to six months in advance. A calendar may be viewed at the Town's website to confirm availability. Please go to www.millsriver.org and click on the Park button or call Town Hall at 828-890-2901 for information.

We also want to remind everyone that there is an opening on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. This is a volunteer opportunity that is appointed by Town Council. We meet once a month on the fourth Tuesday at 7:00 pm at Town Hall. If you are interested, please go to our website, print and fill out a volunteer application, and bring it by Town Hall.

We look forward to the continued growth of the park and thank you for your ongoing support.

Happy New Year!
RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH BUDGET PREPARATIONS

by

Jeffrey D. Wells, Town Manager

It is truly amazing how fast the years go by and here we are past another holiday season in the dead of winter. For years my wife and I spent Christmas down in South Florida where my dad resides. As you might imagine it never really felt like Christmas, but any loss of Christmas spirit was made up for by hanging out on the beach on a 75-degree day in late December. Nowadays, things are different with school aged children and Christmas has turned into one of my favorite times of year to stay at home and be with family. It’s a great time to rejuvenate and get ready for my busiest time of year, budget season.

The passing of the holidays signals the beginning of preparations for your town budget. We kick off that process with a Town Council visioning session. Visioning is a retreat style meeting where Council discusses a broad range of issues involving finances, facilities, and policy. From that meeting, the goals and directives of Council for the upcoming fiscal year are incorporated into the budget. After the visioning session, I generally spend the months of February and March working on the expenditure side of the draft budget. By April I usually have a good idea of what our expected revenues will be after receiving estimates from the county and state and am able to put together a first draft for Council review.

Just like all Town Council meetings, the visioning session as well as budget workshops are open to the public. We need guidance from our residents. The visioning session is scheduled for January 25th and budget workshops will be held in April/May. We welcome your input and insight on various issues that the town is facing.

THE LIONS CLUB OF MILLS RIVER

The Lions Club of Mills River is a civic organization whose main purpose is meeting the needs of the visually impaired. The Lions Club offers eye examination and glasses to children and adults who cannot afford them. Glasses are collected and recycled and white canes are supplied to the blind. One of the goals is the support of Camp Dogwood, a camp for the blind of all ages, which offers a variety of activities. Club funds support the McCune Center, a retirement home for the blind. Each year the Lions contribute to a VIP fishing tournament for the visually impaired.

In addition, needs of the community are addressed. In the past, the Lions have contributed to the backpack program for children, supplied Thanksgiving food baskets for families and bought Christmas gifts for children of families needing assistance. Contributions have also been made to schools for needed supplies. Special projects have included planting flowers at the Mills River Community Center, sponsoring a Trick or Trunk event for Halloween and Easter egg hunt.

To meet the goals of service, the Lions Club has many fundraisers during the year.

New members are always welcome. The Mills River Lions Club meets at Mills River Restaurant on the 1st and 3rd Fridays at 7:45 am. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the Lions, please join.
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TAX COLLECTOR
by Aurelie Taylor

The period of time for which taxes are levied, or the period taxes for a particular year are said to "cover" is a matter that has occasionally caused confusion. Units of local government operate on a fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30; property is listed for taxation each year in January. This lien attaches automatically, by operation of law, without an effort on the Collector's part for real property (land and houses). Because the lien attaches to real property as of January 1, obviously it does so not only before the tax becomes due but also before the exact amount of the tax can be known. The Town Council doesn’t set the tax rate until June of the current year, after a budget for the next fiscal year is set. Bills are mailed to the owner of record on January 1 in August or September, depending on how quickly I can process the assessment information sent to the Town by Henderson County.

While it is the responsibility of the Tax Collector to be sure a tax is assessed on the current value of real property, it is the property owners’ responsibility to list personal and business personal property. Personal and Business Personal property listing forms are generally sent by Henderson County in December; if you don’t receive one, they are also available from the County. They can be printed out from their website. Listing forms should be returned to Henderson County during the month of January. If not filed by the due date, a 10% penalty is assessed for a “late listing”.

If you think you may have problems paying your tax before the due date, please let me know as soon as possible, even before the bill comes out. Some taxpayers find that it is easier to pay monthly; I’m happy to accept payments this way – payments made between January and August simply lower the balance on the bill I send in the Fall.

There are also programs available to the disabled veterans and elderly that lower their tax bills. Please contact Henderson County to apply for tax relief; they send the information to me and not only may your County tax bill be lowered, but the Town’s will be, too. Applications are taken until June 1, 2018.

As always, if I can answer any questions, please feel free to contact me by phone at 890-2901 or by email at aurelie.taylor@millsriver.org.

MILLS RIVER FIRE AND RESCUE
by: Jeannie Moore, Fire & Life Safety Educator

Although winter comes as no surprise, many of us are not ready for its arrival. If you are prepared for the hazards of winter, you will be more likely to stay safe and healthy when temperatures start to fall. Take these steps to keep safe during the winter months.

Home
* Install weather stripping, insulation, and storm windows
* Insulate water lines that run along exterior walls
* Have your heating system serviced professionally to make sure that it is clean, working properly, and ventilated to the outside
* Inspect and clean fireplaces and chimneys
* Install a smoke detector. Test batteries monthly and replace them twice a year
* Have a safe alternate heating source and alternate fuels available
* Install a CO detector to alert you of the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas
* Stock food that needs no cooking or refrigeration and water stored in clean containers
* Ensure that your cell phone is fully charged

Car
* Service the radiator and maintain antifreeze level; check tire tread or, if necessary, replace tires with all-weather or snow tires
* Keep gas tank full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines

Outdoor Activities
* Wear appropriate outdoor clothing
* Sprinkle cat litter or sand on icy patches
* Work slowly when doing outside chores
* Carry a cell phone

Travel
* Be aware of current and forecast weather conditions
* Avoid traveling when the weather service has issued advisories
* If you must travel, inform a friend or relative of your proposed route and expected time of arrival

Above all, be ready to check on family and neighbors who are especially at risk from cold weather hazards: young children, older adults, and the chronically ill. If you have pets, bring them inside. If you cannot bring them inside, provide adequate, warm shelter and unfrozen water to drink.

No one can stop the onset of winter. However, if you follow these suggestions, you will be ready for it when it comes.
INFORMATION FROM THE SHERIFF’S OFFICE

Sheriff Charles McDonald

Our Mills River deputies, as well as all of us at the Henderson County Sheriff’s Office, would like to help reduce the chances of residents becoming the victim of identity theft. We have provided a few tips below to help prevent fraud when using credit cards or gift cards this winter.

Credit Card Fraud:
• Keep a close watch on your credit card every time you use it, and make sure you get it back as quickly as possible.
• Never write your PIN number on your credit card.
• Never leave your credit cards or receipts lying around.
• Shield your credit card number so that others around you can't copy it or capture it on a cell phone camera.
• Only carry credit cards that you absolutely need.
• Shred anything with your credit card number written on it.
• If you're planning to purchase online, make sure the web page where you enter your credit card information is secure through SSL (Secure Socket Layer). You can tell if the web page is secure by looking for the gold lock or key icon at the bottom corner of your browser window.
• If you're not comfortable with submitting your information through the Internet, call the seller and give them your information over the telephone. Never send your credit card information via email.
• Beware of "bargains" from companies with whom you are unfamiliar. Check the company out. Only do business with companies that provide a physical address and telephone number.
• Keep good records. Always print out a copy of any online products or services you purchase.

Gift Card Fraud:
• Never buy gift cards from online auction sites. This is a large source of gift card fraud. Many of the gift cards are stolen, counterfeit or used.
• Only buy gift cards directly from the store issuing the gift card or from a secure retailer’s website.
• Don't buy gift cards off publicly displayed racks in retail stores. Only purchase gift cards at the sale terminal from the cashier.
• Always carefully examine both the front and back of a gift card before you buy it. If you see a PIN number, ask for a different card. If the card looks like it has been tampered with in any way, put it back.
• Always ask the store cashier to scan the gift card in front of you. This will guarantee that your card is valid when you buy it and that it reflects the balance you just charged it with.
• Always keep your receipt as a proof of purchase as long as there is money stored on the gift card.
• Always ask for a receipt. If possible, register your gift card at the store’s website.
• Never give your Social Security number, date of birth or any other unnecessary private information when purchasing a gift card. No reputable company will ask for this information.

"Paying close attention and taking precautions can help diminish your chances of being victimized," said Sheriff McDonald. "If you do find yourself falling victim to a crime, your attention to the details surrounding the event will assist our deputies and detectives as they seek out the criminals responsible."
RECIPE CORNER

Sweet Potatoes with Warm Black Bean Salad

Ingredients:
- 4 medium sweet potatoes
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup reduced-fat sour cream
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Directions:
1) Prick sweet potatoes with a fork in several places. Microwave on High until tender all the way to the center, 12 to 15 minutes. (Alternatively, place in a baking dish and bake at 425°F until tender all the way to the center, about 1 hour.)
2) Meanwhile, in a medium microwaveable bowl, combine beans, tomatoes, oil, cumin, coriander and salt; microwave on High until just heated through, 2 to 3 minutes. (Alternatively, heat in a small saucepan over medium heat.)
3) When just cool enough to handle, slice each sweet potato lengthwise, press open to make a well in the center and spoon the bean mixture into the well. Top each with a dollop of sour cream and a sprinkle of cilantro.

ENJOY!

MEETINGS & OTHER DATES

Jan 1 New Year’s Observance Closed
Jan 2 Planning Board 7:00 PM
Jan 11 Town Council 7:00 PM
Jan 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Closed
Jan 19 Agricultural Advisory 9:00 AM
Jan 23 Parks and Recreation Advisory 7:00 PM
Jan 25 Town Council 7:00 PM

Feb 6 Planning Board 7:00 PM
Feb 8 Town Council 7:00 PM
Feb 13 Board of Adjustment 7:00 PM
Feb 15 Finance Committee 7:00 PM
Feb 16 Agricultural Advisory 9:00 AM
Feb 22 Town Council 7:00 PM
Feb 27 Parks and Recreation Advisory 7:00 PM

Mar 6 Planning Board 7:00 PM
Mar 8 Town Council 7:00 PM
Mar 16 Agricultural Advisory 9:00 AM
Mar 22 Town Council 7:00 PM
Mar 27 Parks and Recreation Advisory 7:00 PM
Mar 30 Good Friday Closed

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS ADS

The Mills River Town Newsletter is printed quarterly: at the end of March, June, September, and December. In order to defray the cost of publishing, the newsletter accepts small business ads. These ads should be business card size (preferably the card itself) and black and white. There is no guarantee of ad or print quality. The company must do business within the town limits, but not necessarily have its location in the town. 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 served basis. The payment must accompany the ad and 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 editors. The editors reserve the right to refuse an ad. Both ad and payment will be returned if this occurs. All ads must be emailed in JPEG format and MUST be business card size.

Thank you for your support.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

The Town of Mills River newsletter is published and distributed quarterly by US mail and e-mail link. A copy can also be found at www.millsriver.org. Articles submitted may be edited for brevity, content, and appropriateness. Inclusion of an article is at the editor’s discretion. Deadline for submission of articles is the 20th of each of the following months: March, June, September and December. Submit articles in writing to:

Patty Brown
Town of Mills River
124 Town Center Drive
Mills River, NC 28759

or by email to patty.brown@millsriver.org. Articles can also be dropped off at the Mills River Town Hall. If you need assistance, have questions or need more information, feel free to call Patty at (828) 890-2901 or e-mail her at the above address.
Do not hesitate to call 911 in emergency situations or call our non-emergency number to report suspicious vehicles, or non-emergent requests to meet with a deputy and other law enforcement related requests.

Please continue to look out for your neighbors and one another as we partner to reduce crime and enhance our community’s quality of life.

God bless,
Sheriff Charles McDonald

For Emergencies: 911     Non-emergencies: 828-697-4911
NC Highway Patrol: 828-693-4141