



## NEWSLETTER

A quarterly publication of the government of the Town of Mills River

Fall 2014  
Volume 11 Issue 3

### News from the Mayor

Larry Freeman

As Town Manager Jaime Laughter moves on to the next level in her career, we are very pleased to have on board the professional interim management of Lee Galloway, a native Western North Carolinian and a resident of Waynesville with some four decades experience in municipal management. Lee will be providing part-time oversight until a permanent manager is hired.

The search for a new manager began the day Jaime told us she was leaving, and a widely respected firm that specializes in the successful acquisition of municipal management has been hired by the Council to bring us the best possible candidates. The Council expects to be screening and interviewing dozens of well qualified candidates through the fall, and by the time the holidays are over, a new manager will likely be selected.

As were other jurisdictions in Henderson County, we were unable to secure a grant this year from the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund to expand Mills River Park with three ball fields and additional parking. The Town's Park and Recreation Committee has suggested revising and re-submitting our application in the new grant cycle starting early in 2015, including a partnership for funding with the Mills River Recreation Foundation. The Council has agreed, revisions are underway, and the application will soon be on its way.

Public input sessions were held this summer on affordable housing and possible code changes. The Planning Board has carefully considered and crafted some multi-family and mobile home park code revisions. They were approved by the Plan-

### THE TOWN OF MILLS RIVER

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**Monday-Friday**

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Councilman: Billy Johnston  
Councilman: Roger Snyder

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### Newsletter Editors

Articles: Patty Brown

Layout: Kathie Doole

ning Board this month and have now been passed along to the Council for consideration.

Sierra Nevada officially opened its state-of-the-art and environmentally friendly brewery. Other new and exciting economic development opportunities were announced in Mills River this summer, including an international plant grafting enterprise, Tri-Hishtil that is predicted to bring more growth and over 100 very good new job opportunities into our community. Mills River has indeed been blessed!

The Town Council continues to take careful steps toward eventual bike lanes within existing DOT rights-of-ways on Highway 280, but always with the rights of property owners and costs to the taxpayers in mind. This is a long term process with many moving parts, but it is moving forward with the planning components although no funding has yet been assigned to design and construction.

Enjoy the fall in this wonderful community and in our beautiful Town and park!

Respectfully,  
Larry Freeman  
Mayor of Mills River



## HISTORY CORNER

by Jim Brittain

One of my fond memories of the Christmas season was the gathering of greenery to decorate our living room at our house in upper Mills River.

The center piece, of course, was a tree, usually a red cedar harvested from our mountain pasture. This was long before the option of an artificial tree or a tree found in a lot from a tree farm. We would notice young cedar trees and wait until they grew to a suitable size and shape before cutting a few days before Christmas. I still remember one cedar from near the mountain top which contained a small bird nest from the previous summer. I was quite surprised to observe a red squirrel or “boomer” nearby as I cut the tree. Boomers were not commonly seen at our place. Our Christmas trees were always decorated with vintage glass ornaments and tin foil icicles.

We often embellished the top of our old Clayton sideboard with small limbs of holly with red berries or other greenery such as club moss. Holly trees grew on our property, and, at least on one occasion, we used one as a Christmas tree. One fairly common type of club moss was called “turkey brush” due to the shape of its leaves. Another type was often called “trailing pine” or “Christmas green”. The club mosses constitute virtual living fossils and date from the Paleozoic age. Their spores were once used as calibration standards for microscopic measurements and for photographic flashes.

One other plant often associated with the holiday season is the “mistletoe”, a parasitic plant which grows on deciduous trees. It was easy to locate when the host tree’s leaves were off. I recall finding a few sprigs on a tree on the bank of south Mills River. I managed to collect a specimen by shooting it down with my small caliber rifle. Galax leaves also sometimes served us as a holiday decoration. It is still collected by “Galax pickers” to sell. Christmas fern, which remains green at Christmastime, is sometimes used for decoration. Although, I don’t recall that we ever used it.

We seldom experienced a white Christmas, but the diversity of plants on our Mills River mountain farm insured that we could always count on a green Christmas.

## TOWN MANAGER LEAVING

Eight years ago I had an amazing opportunity that required I take a big risk when I was offered to be the second town manager for Mills River. I was never a big risk taker and could be characterized as always having a long range plan in mind. When I made the decision to leave the world of planning and start my career in management, there was at least part of me that thought I had lost my mind. This was not in the plan! It was, however, a chance to realize a dream of moving back home.

Mills River was taking a risk, too. I met the minimum requirements for the job and even brought some government experience to the table, but I had never actually managed a public budget and certainly not a staff. Education is a great thing and having relevant experience is too, but nothing can replace having proven oneself as being able to handle the responsibility of being the manager. It didn't help my case that I was also 26 and interviewed with braces on my teeth.

I learned that sometimes the risk holds the most precious reward. The last eight years I have learned from the people of Mills River what it means to be a community. I have learned how individuals that see the world very differently can sometimes share the ultimate goal of a better, safer and happier place to call home. I have been blessed by learning about people's history here, their families, and their work and in seeing how there's always a lending hand here when someone is in need. I have been challenged to do things I never expected and could have never fully prepared to do. Build a town hall and park? Sure! Apply for grants? Why not? Write zoning code or a policy? Here we go! Each challenge or project expanded my horizons and gave me some of my scariest and most proud memories along with the satisfaction of feeling like I contributed in some way to make someone's life better. I got the privilege to see projects like Ingle's, Sierra Nevada, The Lodge, Empire Distribution, Tri-Hischtli and a host of others choose this community bringing jobs and tax base. It is not to say that being a town manager is easy because working in the public sector has the stresses of politics, funding issues and harrowing experiences navigating legal requirements, but stopping a moment to notice a family enjoying the park together laughing, relaxing and being active is enough to rest my mind that any hard day was worth that moment.

October 1<sup>st</sup> I am leaving Mills River to take a job in Transylvania County. I have been very happy working for the Town and the decision was not easy for me or my family. The staff is incredible and highly capable, the Council deeply cares about the community and its future and there's a whole network of businesses and individuals that make this place a lovely one to live and work within. Yet, I suppose I am feeling the call to a new opportunity and I am seeing that as a leader, sometimes you have to appreciate that an organization could use some fresh ideas and leadership. Mills River has a bright future. I fully expect the next manager to serve this community well moving in that direction. I know they will see how special the Town of Mills River is right up front and want to serve you to both maintain what makes Mills River unique while looking to the future as a vibrant community. Thank you, for taking a risk on me. It was a precious gift that changed my life and I carry that with me when I look to take a risk on others so that they can have the opportunity to achieve. Thank you, for nurturing and challenging me. Thank you, as your native daughter, for blessing me and my family here for the last eight years. We have been touched and changed by you and will forever be grateful.

Sincerely,  
Jaime Laughter



## PARK UPDATE FALL 2014

Fall is officially here and it's time to think about leaves changing color and outside activities in the cool crisp air. We hope everyone had a great summer!

Over the summer, shade structures were constructed over one bench in the small dog park as well as over two benches at the playground. These were built as Eagle Scout projects, and we thank Collin Miller for the structure in the dog park and Issac Ray for the structures at the playground. Shade is always at a premium here and these projects are very much appreciated by our park patrons.

You may have seen poles and concrete pads placed strategically around the front trail. These are part of the United Way Born Learning Trail project. The Born Learning Trail will consist of age appropriate signage that will promote learning opportunities in a fun and active environment and will be the first trail of this type in Henderson County. The trail was originally supposed to be completed as part of the United Way Day of Caring event in September but due to some timing issues, it could not be completed on that day. In the meantime, signage will be attached to the poles and the completion of the trail is set for October 25th from 9 am-11 am. We hope everyone will join us on the 25th.

As mentioned in the Mayor's article, the Town's application for a PARTF (Parks and Recreation Trust Fund) grant was not recommended for funding this past cycle. The Town Council has instructed the staff to revise and resubmit another application at the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.

To review, the proposed project will include the construction of the three 200' ball fields in the grassy area next to the current Restroom/Concession building. This size field should accommodate both softball and little league baseball when completed. It will also include the construction of another parking area as parking is already at a premium at the Town Hall lot. We have posted the plan on our website and in the bulletin boards in the park showing the proposed Phase II. The facilities we are seeking funding for are colored in green.

An important part of the grant application process is soliciting public input to show support for the grant proposal. There will be three drop in sessions held this month in both the Commons Room at the Town Hall and down at the picnic shelter weather permitting. They will be held on October 18<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am-1:00pm, October 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:00am-7:00pm and October 25<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am-1:00pm. Please find time to come to one of these sessions and show your support for Phase II of your park.

On November 2nd, when Daylight Savings Time ends, the park restroom hours will be 9-5 Monday through Friday and 10-6 on the weekends.

Don't forget that the Picnic Shelter is available for rent and a calendar may be viewed to confirm availability. Please go to [www.millsriver.org](http://www.millsriver.org) and click on the Park button or call Town Hall at 828-890-2901 for information.



**Mills River Fire Reminds Our Residents:  
Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives!**

Working smoke alarms can make a life-saving difference in a fire. That's the message behind this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives: Test Yours Every Month!"

Along with firefighters and safety advocates nationwide, Mills River Fire Department is joining forces with the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) during Fire Prevention Week, October 5-11, to remind local residents about the importance of **having working smoke alarms in the home and testing them monthly.**

According to the latest NFPA research, working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire in half. Meanwhile, almost two-thirds of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

"In a fire, seconds count," said Jeannie Moore-Payne, Public FLSE. "Roughly half of home fire deaths result from fires reported at night between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most people are asleep. Home smoke alarms can alert people to a fire before it spreads, giving everyone enough time to get out."

This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign includes the following smoke alarm messages:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. This way, when one sounds, they all do.
- Test alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they don't respond properly.
- Make sure everyone in the home knows the sound of the smoke alarm and understands what to do when they hear it.

The Mills River Fire Department will be hosting activities like: Fire Safety Carnival at the local elementary schools and Fire Safety house demonstrations at Farm City Day, during Fire Prevention Week to promote "Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives!" Through these educational, family-oriented activities, residents can learn more about the importance of working smoke alarms and testing them monthly.

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week programs and activities in Henderson County please contact your local Fire Department. To schedule Mills River Fire Safety House or Sparky for your event, contact: Jeannie Moore-Payne, NC Fire & Life Safety Educator III, **Mills River Fire & Rescue Station: 828-891-7959 Email: [millsriverfireprevention@hotmail.com](mailto:millsriverfireprevention@hotmail.com)**

To learn more about smoke alarms and "Working Smoke Alarms Saves Lives", visit NFPA's Web site at [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org).

## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TAX COLLECTOR

by Aurelie Taylor

The Town of Mills River tax notices were mailed the middle of September. Homeowners whose property taxes are paid from their escrow account will not receive a notice – they're sent directly to the mortgage holder. This is done in order to avoid double payments and the ensuing staff time, postage, etc., in dealing with an overpayment. If you haven't received a notice and believe your taxes are not escrowed and paid by your mortgage company, please give us a call and we'll look them up for you. We try as best we can to make sure that notices get to the proper person at the proper address, but this doesn't always happen. Either way, it is the property owner's responsibility to make sure their property taxes are paid whether they receive a notice or not.

If you feel you need assistance in meeting your tax obligation, please contact me as early as possible after receiving the notice. If I can, I will work with taxpayers who show true hardship and a willingness to work with the Town in getting the obligation paid. Partial payments are always accepted. Accounts must be paid in full before January 6, 2015 in order to avoid interest on the balance. Interest is 2% for January and  $\frac{3}{4}\%$  per month for each month thereafter the tax remains unpaid.

Enforced collections (garnishment of wages or rents, attachment of bank accounts, levy of personal property or foreclosure of real property) can legally begin as early as the day after the last day to pay without penalty (January 5, 2015), without any prior notice to the property owner.



Mills River Laundry  
Alterations  
Wash-Dry-Fold  
Mending - Replace Buttons  
Jeans Hemmed \$5.00  
4176 Haywood Rd., Suite A  
828-273-1310  
Oct. 6, 2014  
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35 Years Experience



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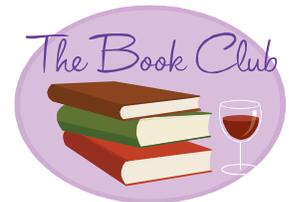
## MILLS RIVER BRANCH – HENDERSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Starting October 6,  
the Mills River Branch will have new hours as follows:

Monday	9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Tuesday	9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Wednesday	9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Thursday	9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Friday	9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Saturday	9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Sunday	Closed

### Our scheduled events for the fall include:

- October 4 Yoga with Lynn Edgar (registration required – call 890-1850)
- October 8 Wildlife of WNC – Chimney Rock State Park
- October 9 Book Club – “The Fault in Our Stars” by John Green (10am)
- October 11 Yoga with Lynn Edgar
- October 27 Holms State Education Forest (school’s out!)
- October 29 Halloween Hootenanny with Kindred Spirits (3pm)



- November 1 Yoga with Lynn Edgar (registration required – call 890-1850)
- November 5 Wonderful World of Reptiles – Chimney Rock State Park
- November 8 Yoga with Lynn Edgar
- November 11 – Library Closed
- November 13 Book Club (10am)
- November 18 “Snow White and Rose Red” – Mother Goose Troup (4pm)

The library will close early on Wed the 26th at 5 pm and will be closed Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving. We will reopen at 9 am on Saturday Nov 29.

- December 6 Yoga with Lynn Edgar (registration required – call 890-1850)
- December 8 “Let It Snow” with Dr. Beaker and Dr. Bunsen from the Hands on Museum (registration required)
- December 11 Book Club
- December 19 “Holidays Around the World” – Bright Star Touring Theater (11am); Camerata Antiqua holiday concert (3:30pm)

The library will close at 5pm on Tuesday, December 23 and be closed on the 24<sup>th</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup>.

### Ongoing events:

- Story Time – every Monday at 10am
- Purls of Wisdom knitting group – every Tuesday at 1:30pm



For more information on any of these programs,  
please call 890-1850 or check the library website at  
[www.henderson.lib.nc.us](http://www.henderson.lib.nc.us)





## RECIPE CORNER

### Baked Pumpkin French Toast



Cook Time: 45-55 minutes

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 loaf French Bread
- 6 large eggs
- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 1 cup pumpkin puree (not pie filling)
- 3/4 cups granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

#### **Streusel Topping:**

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup cold butter, cut into pieces

#### **Directions:**

1. Spray a 9 x 13-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Tear French bread into chunks or cut into cubes and evenly place in the pan.
2. In a large bowl, mix together eggs, milk, pumpkin puree, sugar, vanilla extract, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Pour evenly over bread. Cover pan with Saran Wrap and store in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight.
3. In a separate bowl, mix together flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Add butter pieces and cut into the dry mixture using a fork or your hands. Combine until the mixture resembles sand with a few pea sized chunks. Cover and store mixture in the refrigerator.
4. When you're ready to bake the French toast, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove French toast from refrigerator and sprinkle crumb mixture over the top. Bake for 45-55 minutes or until the French toast is set and golden brown.
5. Serve warm with syrup, if desired.

**Yield: Serves 16**

## MEETING & OTHER DATES

Oct 14	Board of Adjustment	7:00 PM
Oct 16	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
Oct 17	Agricultural Advisory	7:00 PM
Oct 22	Town Council-Rescheduled	7:00 PM
Oct 28	Parks and Recreation	7:00 PM

Nov 2	Daylight Savings Time Ends	
Nov 4	Election Day	
	Polls Open	6:30 AM-7:30 PM
Nov 4	Planning Board	7:00 PM
Nov 6	Town Council-Special	5:30 PM
Nov 11	Veterans Day	
Nov 13	Town Council	7:00 PM
Nov 21	Agricultural Advisory	9:00 AM
Nov 21	Town Council-Special	12:00 PM
Nov 25	Parks and Recreation	7:00 PM
Nov 27-28	Thanksgiving Holiday	

Dec 2	Planning Board	7:00 PM
Dec 9	Board of Adjustment	7:00 PM
Dec 11	Town Council	7:00 PM
Dec 19	Agricultural Advisor	9:00 AM
Dec 23	Parks and Recreation	7:00 PM
Dec 24-26	Christmas Holiday	

Jan 6	Planning Board	7:00 PM
Jan 8	Town Council	7:00 PM

**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](http://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](mailto: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.

**SHERIFF**



**HENDERSON COUNTY  
NC**

**HENDERSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
MILLS RIVER DIVISION**

Please check the Henderson County Sheriff's Office website at [www.henderson.lib.nc.us/county/sheriff](http://www.henderson.lib.nc.us/county/sheriff) for links and information regarding identity theft, Community Watch programs, and crime prevention.

The school year has begun and some people have questions about when it is safe to pass a stopped school bus. Here is a website that has diagrams to show when it is safe and legal to pass or not pass a stopped school bus:

<http://www.ncbussafety.org/SchoolBusSafety/SBSWlaw.html>

- Remember to watch for children waiting beside the road for the bus in the morning and for children exiting the bus in the afternoon.
- Obey posted speed limit signs in school zones.
- Watch for traffic congestion around schools before and after school.
- As a reminder, it is always unlawful to pass a school bus when red lights are flashing.

**Be Patient   Stay Alert   Save A Life!**

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

**The Town of Mills River  
124 Town Center Drive  
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