



Town of Mars Hill
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MARS HILL LETTER

A Publication of the Town of Mars Hill, N.C.

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COVID-19 UPDATE

The Town of Mars Hill continues to operate under local and statewide state of emergency proclamations issued in March 2020. All Town facilities are operating following guidelines from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Residents are encouraged to continue utilizing our drop boxes, telephone, and mail to make payments. COVID-19 information from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Resources can be viewed online at <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/>.

SEE PAGE 2 for important COVID-19 vaccine information from the Madison County Health Department.

POLICE CHIEF MICHAEL GARRISON RETIRES

The Town of Mars Hill places the highest priority on the safety of the people of Mars Hill. Whether you are a lifelong resident, new to the community, a student at the university, visiting for the weekend, or just passing through, the Town wants you to always be safe and secure. The person primarily responsible for the day-to-day public safety mission of the Town of Mars Hill is our Chief of Police.



Since 2015, Michael Garrison has served as the Mars Hill Chief of Police. Chief Garrison has served the Town as an outstanding leader and skillfully managed the dedicated officers of the police department. With over 20 years of service dedicated to his career in law enforcement, Chief Garrison retired from town service on January 31, 2021.

Recognizing his achievements while serving the Town, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen approved a proclamation thanking Chief Garrison for “the exceptional service, distinguished career, and commitment to public safety in protection and service to the Citizens of Mars Hill...” and set January 31, 2021 as “**Chief Michael Garrison Day**” in honor of his retirement.

All of us with the Town of Mars Hill wish Chief Michael Garrison the very best in his much-deserved retirement. Thanks Chief!

IN MEMORIAM W.G. GRIFFIN

The Town of Mars Hill was sad to learn of the unexpected passing of our friend and co-worker W.G. Griffin on December 26th. W.G. worked over 10 years in the public works department. He was a hard worker, had a sharp wit, and was a friend to anyone who had the opportunity to know him. W.G. will missed by all of us.

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen approved a proclamation recognizing his service to the Town and set March 24, 2021 as “**W.G. Griffin Day**” as a posthumous honor. Please join us on that day to remember W.G. for his service the Town of Mars Hill and his friendship to all of us.



Obituary

W.G. Griffin, 60, of Marshall, passed away Saturday, December 26, 2020. WG is the son of the late Woodrow “Chuck” and Mable Chandler Griffin. He is a native of Madison County and has been employed by the Town of Mars Hill for the past several years. In addition to his parents, he is preceded in death by sisters, Edna Mae Griffin, Anna Mae Howell, and Rosa Lee Ramsey.

W.G. is survived by his sisters, Faye Chandler (John L) and Violet Randall (Carroll); brother, Buddy Griffin (Terry); and several nieces and nephews.

TOWN OF MARS HILL CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH



The Town of Mars Hill proclaimed the month of February as Black History Month coinciding with the national observance. The resolution approved by the Mayor and Board

of Aldermen recognizes the town's history and how African American's played a vital role in building the town and Mars Hill University. The resolution was written and presented to town administration by Mars Hill University Bonner Scholars, with the support and assistance of faculty members, as well as members of the Madison County Racial Justice Coalition. (Pictured L-R: Jonathan McCoy, JL Fleming, Samuel Thomas, Amber Vernon, and Paula Dempsey.) The full resolution is available on our website at www.townofmarshill.org.

-CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1- COVID-19 UPDATE

FROM THE MADISON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT:

We can finally see the beginning of the end to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, we are not there yet. The COVID-19 vaccines were developed faster than any previously approved vaccine in the U.S. This was possible by prioritizing resources including billions of dollars and taking advantage of recent scientific advances. Safety was not compromised, and we did not accept a second-rate vaccine. In normal vaccine development, each step in the process occurs in sequence, which takes years to complete. For this vaccine, many steps were done simultaneously. This greatly reduced the amount of time necessary. Vaccines were developed, tested, and manufactured in record time.

Most vaccines being developed in the U.S. target a protein on the outside of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, called the "spike" protein. Researchers discovered the exact configuration of this protein; this provided vaccine developers the information they needed to create a very effective vaccine. SARS-CoV-2 will mutate over time; however, the virus cannot enter cells and cause damage without this spike protein; therefore, the vaccines are expected to provide continued protection. We are currently seeing several variants of the virus and all appear to be more contagious than the original COVID-19 virus.

COVID-19 has devastated lives and livelihoods throughout the world. Vaccinations are a significant milestone to help battle this devastating virus. At the Madison County Health Department, we are currently receiving small allotments of the Moderna vaccine. We have vaccinated our EMS and first responders, many healthcare staff and adults 65 or older. We are following the tier system provided to us. The tier model was established by the CDC and the Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and is based on mortality from the COVID-19 virus.

We will make the vaccines available to everyone just as soon as possible. Go ahead and start learning about the vaccine so when it is your turn you will be informed and ready. In the meantime, it is very important that you continue to wear masks, social distance, wash your hands frequently and stay home if you are sick. **To be added to the Madison County waitlist, call 828-649-0755.**

DATES OF INTEREST

April 2...Good Friday Holiday
Town Offices Closed

May 31...Memorial Day Holiday
Town Offices Closed

Trash Pickup on Tuesday, June 1st

From Our Friends at SART

"We are hopeful that we will be able to bring back in-person programming in 2021! We have announced our hopeful 2021 Season beginning in June. Until then we have three exciting Virtual Productions coming to you this spring.

The safety of our staff and patrons are at the forefront of our mind and we will operate under the guidance of the CDC and healthcare professionals. During these uncertain times, we ask that our patrons remain flexible as Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre works diligently to bring quality theatre to WNC. We are planning on releasing season tickets later in the spring so stay tuned."

For more information visit: www.SARTPLAYS.com



Enjoy this preview of *Love, SART* which has been extended through 2/22!

Snuggle up with your loved ones and enjoy this wonderful production.

To purchase tickets for a suggested donation of \$20 please go to www.sartplays.com

SART Annual Fundraising Golf Tournament

WHEN: Friday, June 11 at 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: Reems Creek Golf Course

MORE INFO: Shotgun start. Four person teams can sign up using posters, the SART website, or contacting Dorothy Rapp at drapp@mhu.edu, 380-0029 or Dan Lunsford at dlunsford@mhu.edu.

From the Friends of the Mars Hill Library

We have a Winner! Mildred Arrington, of Marshall, is the winner of the Friends of the Mars Hill Library Quilt Raffle. The winning ticket was pulled Friday, February 12 at the Mars Hill Library. The quilt was created and donated to the Friends by local Mars Hill quilters Michele Ehlert and Kathleen Gerace.

The Friends of the Mars Hill Library is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote and support the Mars Hill Library. During this pandemic, the library has created many online programs for children, teens, and adults. Check out their website today! www.madisoncountylibrary.net