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Franklin County investigators make arrest in dump trailer theft

Staff Reports

The dump trailer that was reported stolen in Rocky Mount on November 3, 2023 has been recovered, and an arrest has been made, according to the Franklin County Sheriff's Office.

Officials with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office released that George Willie Price, Jr., age 38, of Martinsville, has been charged with felony Grand Larceny and felony Obtaining Money by False Pretenses in connection to the November 3, 2023

theft of a \$12,000 dump trailer from NexHaul Trailers in Rocky Mount, Va.
The trailer has been recovered and returned to NexHaul.



Children wave from the Polar Express float from Mt. Olivet Southern Baptist Church in Bedford. Credit: Jeff Reid

Annual Christmas Parade turns Bedford into 'Winter Wonderland'

Jeff Reid
Smith Mountain Eagle contributor

Children dashed out onto the empty street to gather candy canes and other hard candies in between the steady stream of emergency vehicles, marching bands and holiday floats that paraded through historic Centertown Bedford on December 2nd for the annual Bedford Christmas Parade. Hobos popped wheelies on three-wheelers while an attendant pushing a wheelbarrow shoveled horse manure from the dozen or so draft horses that trotted regally down North Bridge St. to the oohs and aahs of spectators, their hooves adorned in gold glitter. Artificial snow lingered in the air.

The magic of Christmas has arrived in Bedford.

Hundreds wrapped in blankets and sipping hot cocoa started lining the streets of downtown Bedford early to find

a good seat to watch the holiday event. The theme for this year's parade, which had more than 100 parade entries this year, was "Winter Wonderland."



Marshall Cofer leads a team of draft horses adorned with gold glitter hooves through historic Centertown Bedford during the Bedford Christmas Parade. Credit: Jeff Reid



Members of the Staunton River cheerleading team march in the annual Bedford Christmas Parade held December 2nd. Credit: Jeff Reid

Parade organizers made available a quiet zone again this year for families with adults and children who have sensory issues, or those with pets that may not like the loud noises, so that all could enjoy the festivities.

The 2023 Bedford Christmas Parade was presented by Central Virginia Business Coalition and sponsored by Nadine Blakely/ReMax, Hill City Electrical Services, Boone Tractor, Centra Bedford Memorial Hospital, Witt Mechanical, Boots the Cow, Oakwood Health & Rehab, Lynchburg Garage Door, Cintas, Destination Bedford and the Town of Bedford.

see - 'Christmas Parade' - page 4

Smith Mountain Lake Wine Festival set to return to Bernard's Landing in 2024

Steve McClintic, Jr.
Editor

The Smith Mountain Lake Wine Festival will return to Bernard's Landing in 2024, according to Hook Lines and Singers, Inc. Hook, Lines and Singers is in its second year of organizing the wine festival, which began in 1989. The 2024 Smith Mountain Lake Wine Festival will be held at Bernard's Landing September 28-29.

"We're thrilled to be bringing the Wine Festival back to Bernard's Landing in 2024," said Tim Reith, executive director of Hook Lines and Singers. "In addition to on-site accommodations, a restaurant, docks and ample parking, Bernard's Landing offers an absolutely spectacular view of the lake and Smith Mountain."

The 2023 Smith Mountain Lake Wine Festival was held at Crazy Horse Marina. The two-day event helps raise money for local charities. In 2023, Hook, Line and Singers donated approximately \$20,000 to six regional charities.

"We'd really like to get that number up to \$6,000 to \$10,000 per charity," Reith said. "We're passionate about helping local nonprofits fulfill their critical missions in the SML community, and the Wine Festival is such a great way to make that happen."

For more information, visit smlwinefestival.com.

Booker T. Washington National Monument holds 'Old Virginia Christmas Days'

Steve McClintic, Jr.
Editor

In a 1907 article that was published in Suburban Life and Tuskegee Student magazines, Booker T. Washington described his childhood memories of "Christmas Days in Old Virginia" as "There is in the Virginia Christmas atmosphere a fragrance and influence which is not to be found elsewhere."

On Saturday, December 2nd, rangers and interpreters provided an interesting and joyous account of what a mid-19th century Christmas was like for Washington and his family with guided light tours of the sights, sounds and smells of Christmas as Washington described it. Before the tours began on dusk, attendees were invited into the museum at the visitors center to enjoy hot cocoa, cider, gingerbread cake with lemon frosting and molasses cookies - Washington's favorite.



Tressa Moore provided a living history presentation as Jane, Washington's mother, in the decorated reconstructed kitchen cabin on the property where Washington lived. Credit: SME Staff

see - 'Old Virginia Christmas Days' - page 4

Mabel Dalton reflects on the 'difference' in her 100 years

Steve McClintic, Jr.
Editor

1923. It's a year with more milestone moments than you might think. For baseball fans, the first game was played at the Original Yankee Stadium. For movie fans, Warner Bros. was founded. For news enthusiasts, Time Magazine debuted.

And for the communities of Franklin and Pittsylvania Counties, Mabel Dalton (maiden name Horsley) was born.

The significance of Yankee Stadium, Warner Bros. and Time Magazine is undeniably important. They all started small and grew through the years, having more and more of an impact on people along the way. The Original Yankee Stadium is no longer here. But Warner Bros., Time Magazine and Mrs. Dalton are. What these three centurions have in common is interesting. They have each grown with the changing times. They have adapted to new advancements in society. They have entertained and informed others. They have each had an influence on people, both those who are long gone and those who are still among us. Today, they are still serving others in a way that is valued and treasured by those to whom they matter most to, and who matter most to them.

With that, we turn our attention to the local level. On November 29, 2023, Mrs. Dalton turned 100 years old. Throughout her day, a steady flow of people took the time to stop by her Frank-

lin County home and wish her a happy birthday. Subtle decorations - a festive tablecloth decorating her kitchen table, matching napkins, plates and cups, and a gold helium balloon making the number "100" tied to a chair - were all that signaled the special occasion. You can't count the feast of foods covering her countertops - homemade sandwiches, side dishes, sweet pies, and cakes - and plenty enough to fill the bellies of her guests. That's the norm in Mrs. Dalton's home. It's what you can expect from a woman who has made serving family and others the standard she lives by. It's one her family carries on too, the best of what they have been taught by Mrs. Dalton, and they do it well.

A reflection of what Mrs. Dalton's has taught her family was brought to light by her daughter Marie. In this instance, it was heard the moment you walked through the porch door the evening of Mrs. Dalton's birthday. "Would you like a sandwich?", Marie asked. Now, there's a lot of meaning to that question. Serving sandwiches was how the Dalton's family business - Carl's Place - got its start many decades ago. Mrs. Dalton made sandwiches in her kitchen to feed workers building the highway. A sign of good things to come, you might say.

Before we go any further, let's take a step back in time a bit and start this story where Mrs. Dalton wanted, by recalling

her first memories being in school. "I walked a mile and half to Ziggler School [in Franklin County]," said Mrs. Dalton. In the background,, her son-in-law shouted, "both ways!", creating a burst of laughter from the small gathering. "It was one room with 1st - 6th grades. There was a wood stove in the middle. My friends, Perkins, David... I can't remember all of their first names, but a lot of last names. Isn't that funny?" She paused and reflected for a moment, and everyone waited. "I packed my lunch every day and carried it in a lunch box," Mrs. Dalton pointed out. Hmmm, another sign of good things to come, you might say.


After a long day at school, Mrs. Dalton walked the mile and a half trek along the dirt road toward home. "I had to do my homework first, then chores. When I was really little, my job was to bring in wood. I would get water from the spring. When I was older, I got to milk the cows and help churn it into butter. We had pigs and chickens. I would get the eggs and bring them in the house."

Mrs. Dalton had an older sister, Doris. "She didn't do anything to help. I don't remember her going to school," she remarked.

see - 'Mabel Dalton turns 100' - page 4

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News & Community

'Mabel Dalton turns 100' - from page 1

That brought out the laughter with everyone looking at each other and nodding their heads up and down as to say, "...siblings, right?" Mrs. Dalton added that her sister, Doris Tuck, lived to be 96 years old. Clearly, sibling rivalry never dies. Sometimes, all you can do is chuckle about it, in good humor.

School and work was the theme of Mrs. Dalton's early years. "We lived through the depression. We had to work together, all of us." Marie added to what her mother's said. "It built good work ethic."

After completing sixth grade at Zigler School, Mrs. Dalton moved onto Glade Hill - the school for 7th - 12th grades. She finished the 7th grade but didn't go further. It was more common back then, especially for families trying to make ends meet following the depression.

As for socializing, it seems a lot of that took place at Mrs. Dalton's grandparents. She recalled meeting friends there. "Mutual friends," she said. At 16, that's where she met Carl Dalton. As it turned out, Carl would be her future husband. "We got married when I was 17," said Mrs. Dalton. The year was 1940. That too was more common in those days.

"Carl worked as a tobacco farmer, then he went to work for the forestry department," recalled Mrs. Dalton. "Marie was born in 1942. Carl Douglas [their son] was born in 1944." Important dates in history, no doubt about that.

Earlier in their marriage, the Daltons lived and ran a restaurant out of a small house in Sandy Level for about a year. In 1961, they built the restaurant and store that currently stands on Route 40 in Franklin County. They also built their family home next door.

The name of the restaurant? You guessed it - Carl's Place. "It's named Carl's Place, but he didn't run it," Mrs. Dalton clarified. He was busy working for the forestry department. "Back then, you named a business after the man."

Mr. Dalton wanted the restaurant and store too. His father had ran a store in Gretna. Mrs. Dalton wanted a restaurant. Sometimes, carrying on good family traditions just works out. It did for the Daltons.

"Mom and Dad's store was a hangout for young people, for friends of my brother's and mine," said Marie. "The store had a juke box and pinball. We danced a lot. Later, they added a snack bar. But my daddy kept them all in line."

In 1988, the store caught fire and had to close for repairs. "Mom moved the grocery part of the store to our front porch. She sold bread and other goods there until the store re-opened," Marie said.

Running a family business takes a lot out of a family. But Mrs. Dalton made sure it didn't take time away from doing what she felt was important for her family. "Mom made us three meals a day, every day. Hot meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner," said Marie. "It's the way it was done back in those days."

There's a sense of pride that you can feel when you are among company who support one another. It's not just family members. It's friends too. If you listen and watch, the read on the room says it all. On a special day like Mrs. Dalton's 100th birthday, it's nice to hear it out loud though, especially in honor of her. Marie did just that. "There could never be a mother who is as good to me as mine," she said. "All my life, she has been so supportive. Daddy was strict. He taught us good work ethic, both did. My mom is the best."

What a nice birthday gift. A simple summary of what Mrs. Dalton means to her daughter. The smile on her face said all that needed to be said. It was priceless.

What's the secret to reaching the milestone age of 100? Mrs. Dalton's answer wasn't much of a surprise. "I never smoked or drank," she said. "Hard work. My faith." Pretty simple ingredients, even for an accomplished cook like Mrs. Dalton. It's just one of her many hats, but it's worn with a simplicity that could not be finer.

These days, Mrs. Dalton's days are filled doing what makes her happy. Spending time with family. Enjoying lots of fruit, especially oranges and Golden Delicious apples. "She loves



Mabel Dalton (left) and her daughter, Marie. Mrs. Dalton celebrated her 100th birthday on November 29, 2023. Credit: SME Staff

gravy biscuits," said Marie. There's no shortage of those next door at Carl's Place, that's for sure. She watches Wheel of Fortune, The Price is Right, her religious programs and the news. And she still works. "She keeps up with the books and watches the money," said Marie. "She makes sure the lights are out in the store after everyone leaves. We've gotten a call from her to come back and turn them off," Marie said with a chuckle. But she knows her mom means business. She obviously hasn't forgotten the meaning of respect at any age - hers or her mother's.

These days, Mrs. Dalton doesn't drive anymore. She made that decision herself a year ago. "I didn't think I needed to drive," she said. "My daughter takes me anywhere I need to go." Marie rested her hand on her mother's shoulder, reassuring her that she always will.

"I've seen a lot of difference," Mrs. Dalton said about her life. Most of us can only imagine. The great challenges - her husband dying from cancer 20 years ago. Her son passing away. Losing her sister, her parents, family and friends near and far - the hard parts of life that are never easy to go through. Thankfully, she hasn't gone through the tough times alone. She has her family - her daughter, her two grandchildren and three great grandchildren. She has a son-in-law who she says is "the best son-in-law she could ask for." And she has friends - many friends who she is thankful for, and who are thankful for her in return. The difference she has seen is what others in her presence can see too. Mrs. Dalton seems quite content. Making a positive difference provides that. It's not a tone she has set. It's a standard, and it's felt all the way around.

You're not supposed to ask people what they wished for on their birthday. But Mrs. Dalton didn't seem to shy away from sharing her hopes for the future. Just before leaving, I wished her a happy birthday, and many more to come. She responded by saying, "I'm hoping for one more," with a beautiful smile. Then she added a touch of her wisdom. "We never know what the future holds," concluded Mrs. Dalton. Her words were a gift. That is common for a woman like Mrs. Dalton. When given a gift by a woman who has turned 100 years old, it means so much. It says so much. Work hard. Enjoy who and what you have. Live simply. Love completely. Take life one day at a time. And serve everyone with the best of intentions. It adds up. It's a recipe that's worked for Mrs. Dalton, all the way to the golden age of 100. And it's worth celebrating. She's worth celebrating, every single day.

Smith Mountain Eagle's 2023 Ugly Holiday Sweater Photo Contest

Steve McClintic, Jr.
Editor

What's it take for it to begin to look a lot like Christmas? Trees, lights, holiday music, and of course holiday parties, to name a few. Nowadays, no holiday party is complete without the cheesy, feel good and festive look of ugly holiday sweaters to add joy to the season.

For 2023, Smith Mountain Eagle is giving ugly holiday sweater wearers a chance to show-off their best ugly holiday sweater look with its first ever "Ugly Holiday Sweater Photo Contest", sponsored by Jo & Co. Jewelers Smith Mountain Lake. There's even a present - um, we mean prize - for winners selected as having the ugliest holiday sweater - a \$25 gift card to Kroger!

To participate in the 2023 Smith Mountain Eagle Ugly Holiday Sweater Photo Contest sponsored by Jo & Co. Jewelers of Smith Mountain Lake, submit your photos online at smithmountaineagle.com/site/forms/ugly_sweater_contest/ugly_holiday_sweater_contest/.

If you're looking for a way to really bring out the beauty in your ugly holiday sweater, Jo & Co. Jewelers Smith Mountain Lake's owner Joanna Gruver and her staff are ready to help spruce up your look for the holidays, whether it be a necklace, earrings, bracelet or a new watch. If you do find the perfect accessory to your ugly holiday sweater at Jo & Co. Jewelers, be sure to wear it in the photo you submit for the contest.

Jo & Co. Jewelers Smith Mountain Lake is located at 13020 Booker T. Washington Hwy, Suite 100B, in Hardy. Hours are Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. They are closed Sundays. To find some jewelry ideas to complement your ugly holiday sweater, or for holiday gifts for others, visit Jo & Co. Jewelers online at joandcojewelers.com, call 540.721.2210, or stop in to see Joanne and her staff.

A reminder: all photos must be submitted by December 27, 2023. Winners will be announced in the January 3, 2024 edition of Smith Mountain Eagle in print and online.

Smith Mountain Weekly Bridge Report: Dec. 6th

David Shea
Smith Mountain Eagle contributor

The Smith Mountain Bridge Club meets at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays at the Community Center, located north of downtown Moneta at 4860 Rucker Road, behind and below the Moneta Pharmacy and Family Dentistry. Duplicate bridge is played and a partner is required. All bridge players are welcome. Please arrive with your partner no later than 12:10 p.m.

On November 28, thirteen pairs participated. North/South leaders were Greg Brooks and Bob Cramer with 57.91%, and Kathy Cameron and Carol Brewer with 54.16%. East/West leaders were Ken and Linda Bishop with 61.43%, and Coy Bennett and Ellie Mascitelli with 51.43%.

On December 1, sixteen pairs participated. North/South leaders were Ken and Linda Bishop with 65.48%, and Dan Becker and Sam Bready with 52.38%. East/West leaders were Alan Detrick and Pete Kauffman with 55.65%, and Ellie Mascitelli and David Shea with 54.76%.

A website is available for additional information. Visit bridgewebs.com/smithmountainlake - no password is required. For more information about the duplicate bridge club, contact David at 804.380.3718 or via email at david Shea55@gmail.com.

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