

# The Granite Tablet



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A Publication of the Granite Falls History Committee

April 2023

## DINING WITH THE DEMONS *Make Reservations Today!*

Dining with the Demons will be held on Saturday, May 6, 2023 at Granite Falls Middle School beginning at 11 a.m. in the auditorium with a special welcome from GFMS Principal Chris Ackerman followed by tours of the new facilities and a catered lunch in the school's new cafeteria, which is located in the remodeled 1935 high school building. Due to limited seating, there will be two groups. One will eat lunch while the other goes on the tour. The cost of the catered meal is

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## ART IN THE PARK *Fox and Company Band*

Fox and Company Band will provide live music during the annual Art in the Park to be held Monday, May 15, 2023 on field #2 at the William B. Shuford Recreation Center located on Pinewood Road in Granite Falls. The evening begins at 6 p.m. Admission is free. Due to limited seating, attendees should bring their own lawn chairs. Those who wish to eat/drink during the event may purchase food/beverages from Anywhere's Fine food truck, which will be onsite. The rain date is Monday, June 5, 2023.

The band plays a variety of hits suitable for all ages, and people love dancing to the music. Wear suitable shoes and enjoy yourself.

The Town of Granite Falls, the Caldwell Arts Council, and the North Carolina Arts Council (an agency of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources) sponsor Art in the Park each year.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

### *Granite Falls, North Carolina is 124 Years Old*

On March 6, 1899, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation establishing the Town of Granite Falls effective the first Monday in May 1899 with the stipulation that a majority of qualified voters on that day approve the Charter. The Act of Incorporation also included the provision for the election of a mayor and three commissioners if the vote were affirmative. By a vote of 38 to 6, the Town of Granite Falls became an incorporated municipality on Monday, May 1, 1899. Voters elected Rufus E. Hefner to serve a one year term as the first Mayor of Granite Falls, and they chose James A. Houck, Henry C. Mackie, and Dr. A. D. Jones to serve one year terms as commissioners. The first official meeting of the Granite Falls Board of Commissioners was on Saturday, June 3, 1899.



The Town of Granite Falls will celebrate the beginning of its 125th year during a special meeting of the town council on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. Council members are expected to pass a resolution commemorating the upcoming quasiquicentennial anniversary. The Granite Falls History Committee urges all residents, businesses, schools, churches, civic clubs, and other organizations to participate by using the 125th anniversary as the theme for their special events and projects.

\$12.00 payable in cash as you enter the cafeteria. Fellow alumnus David "Cloudy" Williams will provide a choice of pulled pork or smoked chicken along with coleslaw, baked beans, dessert, and tea or bottled water.

Attendees should park in the lot accessed from West Highland Avenue\* and look for a sign with directions to the auditorium. Please go straight to the auditorium; do not wander around on your own. GFMS students will serve as guides and assist with the meal.

Attendees also have to follow school rules.

1. Keep the facilities clean and damage-free. We are responsible for being careful with the property and for cleaning up after ourselves.
2. Leave tobacco products, e-cigarettes, illegal drugs, alcohol, and weapons at home. These are not allowed on school property.
3. Service animals are allowed, but not pets.
4. Do not take food, drink, and/or gum into the auditorium.
5. Park in designated areas, not on the grass.

We are the guests of Granite Falls Middle School. Let us remember the promise we made when we sang our school anthem,

"To thee, O Granite High School, thy praises we'll ever sing.  
We'll hold thy standards throughout life and keep thy honor clean."

We also need to realize that we are fortunate that Caldwell County Schools chose to keep this school in Granite Falls and to preserve and renovate the two historical buildings (gymnasium and 1935 high school building). We need to do everything we can to make sure these facilities are here for future generations in accordance with the last verse of our anthem.

"O Mother of our Learning, Long may thy presence be.  
We'll pray to keep thy portals wide for all posterity."

Nancy Reece Martin, Vicky Sherrill, Carolyn Whisnant, and Jeanne Whisnant have been working to ensure an extra special event. To make reservations, make a comment on the "Dining with the Demons 2023" Facebook page or call Carolyn at (828) 381-9597.

\*Please note: Extra parking is available along North Main Parallel and near the gym (accessed via Park Avenue).



## NEWS FROM THE TOWN OF GRANITE FALLS *Rec Center News*

**Parking:** The new parking lot at the rear of the William B. Shuford Recreation Center campus has been completed with 85 new parking spaces. To access the lot, turn onto Civic Club Drive from Pinewood Road. The drive heads toward the water tower, circles behind the ballfield and main building, and ends at the storage building, which used to house the Civic Club House. An obsolete picnic shelter was torn down to make room for the additional parking. In the foreground of the photo above, you can see the cover of a new picnic area in the playground next to the gymnasium.

The total cost was \$292,000 with the town paying \$112,000 and a grant from the State Capital and Infrastructure Fund providing \$180,000.

**Swimming Pool:** The pool will open to the public on Saturday, June 3 2023 and will be open daily until Sunday, August 13, 2023.

**Athletics:** Registration for summer indoor soccer (children ages 6 - 12), summer volleyball (girls ages 9 - 15), and fall soccer (children 4 - 12) will accepted May 20 through June 5, 2023. The cost for residents is \$40.00, and the cost for non-residents is \$65.00. The fee includes a uniform.

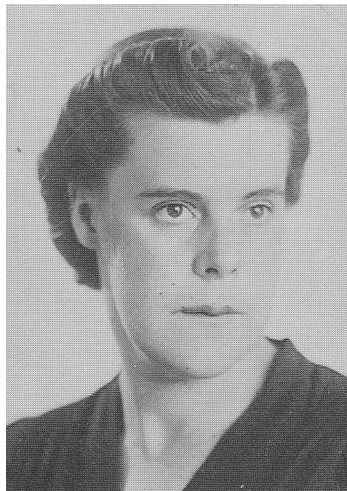
**Veterans Monument:** The Town of Granite Falls accepts applications for names to be inscribed on the veterans monument through July 31st of each year. The deadline allows time for the work to be completed before the Veterans Ceremony, which will take place this year on Thursday, November 9. Applications are available at the town office and on the town's website ([www.granitefallsnc.com](http://www.granitefallsnc.com)). The Veterans Monument is located between the tennis courts and Philadelphia Lutheran Church along Pinewood Road.



## Dateline: Granite Falls, N. C. 1946 - 1961

From *Etched in Granite, The History of Granite Falls, North Carolina* by Maxine McCall

- In September 1946, the town appointed C. D. Mackie, R. L. Wilson, and R. C. Icenhour the task of assigning street and house numbers to enable city-wide delivery of mail.
- In August 1957, the town purchased a "truck and refuse-getter" (aka garbage truck).
- In May 1949, the town divided the Public Works Department into three units - Water and Lights, Streets and Sewer, and Office and Garage.
- In February 1950, the town council listened to a public outcry when they decided not to install parking meters.
- In March 1951, the State of North Carolina passed the Powell Bill which allocated federal funds so that Granite Falls and other municipalities could pave and improve streets.
- In 1952, Evelyn Kent became the Mayor of Granite Falls with 77% of the vote. She was the first woman to hold the position and the only female mayor in North Carolina at the time.
- In 1953, the Town of Granite Falls purchased land for Sunset Hills Cemetery.
- In 1954, Evelyn Kent opted to run for town council instead of seeking another term as mayor. She became the first female council member in Granite Falls. Mrs. Kent served until 1962, when she chose not to seek re-election.
- In 1955, the town installed twenty-four modern street lights in the downtown business district.
- In 1956, seventeen local men established Lovelady Rescue Squad.
- In 1957, the town purchased an Oxford Turbo Fogging Machine to spray for mosquitoes. The cost was \$635.00.
- In 1957, the town purchased two Scott Mask Respirators (self-contained breathing apparatus) for the fire department.
- In 1961, the town prepared for orderly growth by adopting a Zoning Ordinance and establishing a Planning and Zoning Board to review requests for building permits.



Evelyn Kent



### DOWN MEMORY LANE with Linda Richards Crowder

Recently, I found a copy of *The Granite Falls Press* dated April 18, 1963 with a front page article about my winning the spelling bee at Granite Falls Elementary School. While I was interested in the article, I found the rest of the paper to be more intriguing from a historical point of view.

1. The newspaper was addressed to "Mrs. Helen Lutz, Shuford Mills Clinic Office, Local." Back then, postal employees knew almost everyone in town. They didn't need street numbers, names of streets, and zip codes to deliver mail in Granite Falls. I assume Mrs. Lutz gave the paper to my father, who worked at Shuford Mills.
2. At the same time, the town was growing. Postmaster Thad Russell announced that a third rural route would be added on April 27th (my birthday).
3. Central Telephone Company (one of the predecessors to CenturyLink) ran an ad announcing that Direct Distance Dial for long distance calls would begin on April 21, 1963. While the ad states, "It's FAST...It's EASY...It's FUN...", the directions sound complicated and unfamiliar to me. They call for dialing an access code (12 for Station-to-Station and 10 for Person-to-Person) plus the station code shown on your phone plus the area code (704), if dialing outside your area, plus the telephone number you wish to reach. Although I am known for remembering a lot of trivia, I cannot recall dialing station codes and access codes. I do, however, remember calling

(DOWN MEMORY LANE continued on page 4)



the operator to make long distance calls, and I remember having a four digit phone number (6855) and being on a partly line with our neighbors. At some point, (I don't remember the date), the phone company told us our number was EXport 6-6855, so callers dialed 396-6855. Eventually, the phone company dropped the letters and went with just numbers.

4. According to the same Central Telephone ad, the cost for a station to station call from Hickory to New York was \$1.30 plus federal excise tax. The cost for person-to-person was \$1.90 plus tax. Charges were lower after 9:00 p.m. A station-to-station call was \$.65. I had to look up the meaning of "station-to-station" and "person-to-person." Back then, it cost more if you wanted to speak with a particular person.
5. Bank of Granite had three locations - Granite Falls, Hudson, and Lenoir. As an incentive for depositors to save money, the first 100 customers who put \$50 into a savings account would receive a giant 4 X 3 1/2 foot map of Caldwell County (a \$25 value).
6. The Town of Granite Falls acquired a new garbage truck featuring a "garwood" packer that was mounted on a Chevrolet chassis. It had a capacity of 16 cubic yards. According to Wikipedia, the Garwood Load Packer was the first garbage truck to compact garbage. There was front page photo of the new truck and an ad on page 3 offering the old truck for sale to the highest bidder.

If you enjoy going down memory lane, you will enjoy visiting the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. We are open on Sundays (except holiday weekends) from 2 until 4 p.m. We are currently featuring photos, news clippings, and other historical documents collected by Eddie Sipes.



Left: On April 21, 2023, the Granite Falls Garden Club planted a garden on the square with 216 trailing vinca in all colors to raise awareness of autism. Each member attending received a Earth Ball along with a Autism Awareness bracelet. (photo courtesy of the Garden Club)



Above right: The North Carolina Department of Transportation began repairing the storm drainage along North Highland Avenue on Monday, April 17, 2023. On Wednesday, April 19, workers struck a gas line and had to call in emergency personnel to keep watch until Piedmont Natural Gas could fix the leak.



*The Granite Tablet* is a publication of the Granite Falls History Committee, which manages the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. The museum is located in the historic home of Andrew Baird, an early settler. The building is the second oldest residence in Caldwell County. The Baird House was built around 1795 with additions made over the next hundred years. The house remained a residence until 2001 when the owner sought permission to have it burned down due to the high cost of maintenance. Recognizing the historical significance of the building, the Town of Granite Falls purchased the home with the intentions of turning it into a museum. With the help of a grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation and hours of hard work by dedicated people, the vision became a reality. The Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum held its grand opening and ribbon cutting on February 18, 2007. Visit us on Facebook under "Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum." Our website is [www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org](http://www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org).

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