



The Granite Tablet



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HISTORY IN THE MAKING COVID-19

COVID-19 continued to spread more than a year after it was officially diagnosed in the United States on January 21, 2020. Cases rapidly increased in the fall and winter as more people stayed inside and as they celebrated the holidays with the numbers peaking in December and January. N. C. Governor Roy Cooper kept in place the 10 p.m. - 5 a.m. curfew set by Executive Order beginning on December 8, 2020 by extending it twice, first on January 8th to last until January 29th and then again on January 27th to last until February 28th.

On February 2, 2021, Governor Cooper issued a press release urging Boards of Education across the state to begin in person classes. In a letter to the Boards, he noted not only was it safe to return under COVID-19 protocols, but it was necessary for the health of children.

On February 9th, the governor issued Executive Order #193 extending the authority of the N. C. Department of Health and Human Services so it could facilitate efforts to get people vaccinated. On February 10th, the governor's office issued a news release noting that vaccine was being distributed to Group 1 (health care workers, long term care workers, and long term residents) and Group 2 (persons 65 and older). He announced plans to allow Group 3 to start receiving vaccine on February 24th beginning with anyone who works with children (child care and pre-K through 12th Grade). This includes bus drivers, aides, teachers, custodians, principals, etc. Additional frontline workers should be able to start

(COVID-19 continued on page 2)



During the pandemic, no touch infrared thermometers allowed quick screening to make sure visitors did not have a fever, a major symptom of COVID-19.



OPENING THE PORTALS *For All Posterity*

Photo by Karen Isbell

After almost two years of construction at Granite Falls Middle School, students and staff should be able to move into new facilities in the spring of 2021. The new building has two wings, more than thirty spacious classrooms, workrooms, offices, and a new entrance that faces the back of the property. After the historic 1935 building is vacated, it will be renovated to contain the media center, a commons area, and classrooms dedicated to technology, career education, and technical training. There will also be upgrades to the auditorium. The gymnasium (built in 1948) and the music building (built in 1969) are already undergoing renovations. The historic gym will have new locker rooms, restrooms, bleachers, windows, and a resurfaced gym floor by September 2021. The whole project, which includes tearing down the 1950 "junior high" building and adding a soccer field on the corner of North Main Street and Park Avenue, should be finished by Spring 2022.

MURAL, MURAL ON THE WALL *Whose Design is the Best Overall?*

The Caldwell County Public Library has announced a contest to find a design for a mural to be created in the children's section of the new Southern Library Branch in Granite Falls. School age children and art classes can create and submit ideas by email using "jpg" or "png" extensions to libraryartcontest@caldwellcountync.org or they can hand deliver or mail paper entries size 8 1/2 X 11 to the main library located at 120 Hospital Avenue, Lenoir, NC 28645. Entries must be received by Monday, March 8, 2021. The library is also seeking a volunteer to recreate the chosen design on a wall in the new facilities, which are currently being renovated. The mural will bear the names of both the designer and the painter. The winner will be selected by the library staff and the Library Board of Trustees.

receiving vaccinations on March 10th.

Medical: The Samaritan's Purse field hospital which opened at Caldwell Memorial Hospital on Thursday, January 7, 2021 treated almost 80 patients in its 30 bed unit over the course of a month. The field hospital moved here just in time for a peak in new cases that occurred during the first week of January. Hospitals had been reaching capacity in December when they called in Samaritan's Purse. When the caseload lessened, local hospitals no longer needed the extra beds.

Caldwell Memorial and Samaritan's Purse held a closing ceremony on Wednesday, February 3rd to celebrate the contributions made by the Boone based charity. The program featured hospital leaders, Lenoir Mayor Joe Gibbons, and Edward Graham, an Assistant to the Vice President of Programs and Government at Samaritan's Purse. (source: *News-Topic*, 2/4/21, pages 1,4)

School Meals: The school system announced that funds from the USDA would enable the Child Nutrition Department to add dinner meals and snacks to the meal distribution program. Beginning Wednesday, February 17, there will be curbside pick up at the three high schools (Hibriten, South Caldwell, and West Caldwell) between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. 3-Square Meals Food Boxes with five breakfasts, five lunches, seven dinners, snacks, and a gallon of milk will be offered to middle and high school students and to K-5 students who do not attend school in person. K-5 students who eat at school are eligible to take home seven dinners, snacks, and a gallon of milk each week.



Churches: First United Methodist Church of Granite Falls held an Ash Wednesday service via Facebook on February 17th from 7 until 7:30 p.m. In preparation, members wrote down their worries, problems, and sins on strips of paper and gathered together a fire-proof container, a lighter (or match), and cooking oil. During the service, the Rev. Howard Fleming led participants to burn the slips of paper containing their statements and to anoint their foreheads with the ashes in the shape of a cross. (photo/info provided by Barbara Ross)

Sports: Granite Falls Parks and Recreation Department began accepting registration for children's baseball, softball, and coach pitch/tee ball on February 1st and will continue through March 8th. The fee for residents is \$40 while non-residents pay \$60. Parents/guardians have to fill out paper work and pay the fee at the William B. Shuford Recreation Center on Pinewood Road. For more information. check out the town's website - www.granitefallsnc.com/athletics.

Players are divided into the following teams:

4-6 coed - coach pitch/tee-ball
7-8 boys - coach pitch baseball
7-8 girls - coach pitch softball
9-10 & 11-12 girls - kid pitch softball
9-10 & 11-12 boys -kid pitch baseball



Photo by Kendra Smith Winebarger

In the meantime, soccer games continued at the rec center. Cold, wet weather on February 13th extended the season to March 13th for children ages 4-9 and added Tuesday, March 9th to the schedule for children ages 10-12. Soggy fields on February 20th led to make up games being scheduled for Thursday, February 25th. To see the updated schedules, go to the town's website: www.granitefallsnc.com/soccer.

COVID-19: At the end of January 2021, the Town of Granite Falls listed steps taken to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus since its arrival a year ago. These include purchasing/using personal protective equipment, sanitizing sprayers, plexiglass partitions, and other supplies; providing portable ADA compliant toilets at outdoor recreation facilities; paying sick leave mandated by the Families First Coronavirus Recovery Act; installing thermal imaging equipment to screen employees/visitors at the police department and rec center; implementing technology to enable staff and elected officials to work and to meet remotely; and setting up a video intercom at the police department to reduce personal contact with visitors. While some of these steps are short term expenses due to COVID-19, the investment in new technology will allow the town to conduct business in the event of future natural disasters/pandemics. There is some good news for the town's budget. Some of these expenses will be reimbursed from funds available under the CARES Act of 2020.

Family Treasures

MEET A VETERAN AND HIS WIFE

Bill and Betty Spahr



Bill Spahr chose to live the last of his years in Granite Falls. He lived and died in our town, leaving this world in October, 2020 – during the Covid-19 pandemic. His family chose to have a virtual service – on his birthday, and a meaningful celebration it was.

He was born in Indiana, but lived in many places, mainly due to his military service. He enlisted in 1942 and fought in both World War II and the Korean War, in the Navy and the Air Force. His favorite military jobs involved planes, like flying the OS2U "Kingfisher," then fixing and maintaining helicopters -- a relatively new technology at the time. He retired from the military in 1963 and joined the United States Postal Service (USPS), where he worked for 17 years.

Bill was always generous with his time off, volunteering with the Japanese American Citizens League (having married a Japanese woman), as well with the Masons, the Rainbow Girls, and the Eastern Star. Bill was mostly proud of his service as Worthy Grand Patron. Bill was an avid fisherman and gardener, he also enjoyed hunting, wood carving, and writing "Cowboy" poetry.

Having grown up during the Great Depression (which he liked to joke "was not all that great"), he learned how to be a good neighbor, and how to fix just about anything. Bill loved to read and often visited the Granite Falls branch of the library to check out books and talk with his good friend, librarian Guy Franzen.

Speaking of Bill learning new things, it was my pleasure to teach him about the Internet – when he was in his 90s! His family had sent him an iPad. Though he learned how to use email, his favorite application was calling people using FaceTime. He would just chuckle when he talked to family members like his daughter, Mieko, and son, John, on his "picture phone" as he called it.



Bill met his wife, Betty Sue, during his travels, and they chose to move to Granite Falls. She had worked in the air line industry and was also a member of the Easter Star. Until their health declined, the Spahrs volunteered at the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum.

When they could no longer stay at home, they moved to Hickory Falls Health & Rehabilitation Center in Granite Falls. She still lives there, but I have only been

able to visit her once due to COVID-19. I miss being with this wonderful couple. I am glad they made Granite Falls their home and that I got to know them.

By Metaleen Thomas



Survey stake on North Highland Avenue stands out in the snow left by Diego on December 10, 2018

BACK IN BUSINESS Road Work Resumes

On October 4, 2018, the North Carolina Department of Transportation held a public hearing in the Granite Falls Town Council Chambers to distribute information about proposed changes to North Highland Avenue and Pinewood Road. Residents learned of plans to make a left and right turn lane at the intersection of the two streets and to build a roundabout where Bert Huffman Road intersects with Pinewood Road. The plans were designed to alleviate heavy school traffic. The original timeline called for the state to acquire rights of way in the fall of 2019 and begin construction in the fall of 2020.

By December 2018, utility workers had marked the underground water/gas/sewer lines. Over the next few months, representatives spoke with each property owner to explain the process. Next, appraisers visually inspected the affected property. Then there was silence.

Property owners heard nothing more until they received letters from NCDOT in January 2021 letting them know that surveyors would be placing stakes to designate proposed road centerlines, easements, and rights of ways. The markers, placed during the last week in January and first week in February, would be used as reference points in the negotiating stage.



Surveyors working on North Highland Avenue on January 28, 2021

OH MOTHER OF OUR LEARNING

Long May Thy Presence Be - We'll Pray to Keep Thy Portals Wide for All Posterity

Work continues at Granite Falls Middle School. These photos were made on Tuesday, February 9, 2021.



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 January 18, 2007. Visit us on Facebook under "Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum." Our website is www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org.

Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum - 107 Falls Avenue, Granite Falls, North Carolina 28630 - Phone: 828-396-2792

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HOMEMADE IN GRANITE FALLS

FROM THE KITCHEN OF Linda Richards Crowder
No-Dairy, No-Egg Muffins

2 cups self rising flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon vinegar
1/3 cup oil
1 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/2 cup cold water

Mix together. Pour into baking cup liners placed in muffin/cupcake pan. Bake 350° until done.
Makes 12.

No-Dairy, No-Egg Cookies

1 3/4 cup self-rising flour
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vinegar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup + 1 tablespoon cold water

Mix together. Spoon unto parchment or wax paper. Do not flatten. The dough will spread into a cookie. Bake at 350° until done.

Chocolate Wacky Cake (no-dairy, no-egg)

1 1/2 cup plain flour
1 cup sugar
3 tablespoons cocoa
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon vinegar
6 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 cup water

Grease a 9" square pan with oil (or Pam® for Baking). Sift flour, sugar, cocoa, salt, and soda into pan. Make three depressions in the mixture. In one, put vanilla. In the second, put vinegar. In the third, put oil. Pour water over everything. Mix well with a fork. Bake thirty minutes at 350°.

Texas Caviar

Drain and rinse 1 can white shoe peg corn, 1 can pinto beans, 1 can black eyed peas, and 1 can black beans. Add 1 cup sliced green onion, 1 cup chopped red sweet pepper, and 1 cup chopped celery. Toss together.

In a bowl, whisk together 1 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, 1 tablespoon water, 3/4 cup cider vinegar, and 3/4 cup sugar. Bring to a boil. Let cool.

Pour the marinade over the bean mixture. Let marinate overnight. Stir occasionally. Serve with large corn chips.

FROM THE KITCHEN OF Metaleen Thomas Vegan "Egg Salad"

INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup golden raisins or craisins (dried cranberries)
1 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds
1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
1 lb. extra-firm tofu
2 tablespoons roasted seeds (pumpkin, pine nuts, etc.)
1 scallion, chopped (can substitute regular onions)
1 tablespoon dried parsley (or 1/4 cup fresh)
1/2 cup vegan mayonnaise
1-2 tablespoons curry powder (I use 1 tbs.)
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1-2 Tbs. capers (opt)



INSTRUCTIONS: Place the raisins and mustard seeds in a small heat proof bowl. Bring the apple cider vinegar to a boil (on stone or microwave) and pour it over the raisins and mustard seeds. Let them soak for at least 10 minutes (longer is even better).

Rinse and drain the tofu and gently press it between towels to rid of excess water. Place the tofu in a large bowl and roughly crumble it using your hands or a fork. Add the raisins and mustard seeds (along with any excess vinegar), pumpkin seeds, scallions, and parsley.

In a separate bowl, stir together the mayonnaise, curry powder, salt, and pepper to taste. Add this to the tofu mixture and stir until thoroughly combined. Taste and adjust seasonings if desired.

Serve as a sandwich spread or on a bed of salad greens or as a dip with crackers or toasted bread. To store, refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days (or longer). (WW points = 3 for 1/2 cup)

Tuscan Bean Soup

1-2 cans Great Northern Beans (or 1 1/2 cups dried white beans)
2 cloves garlic, diced or crushed
2 stalks celery, chopped
2 medium, carrots, sliced
1/2 lb. fresh green beans (or one can), cut in 1-inch lengths
6-8 scallions or one medium onion, chopped
2 teaspoons salt
black pepper to taste
2-3 teaspoons dried basil
2 1/2 cups stock or water
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
Parmesan cheese and minced parsley for garnish (omit cheese for vegan soup)

If using dried beans, soak for several hours overnight. Then cook 1-2 hours until just tender.

Sauté garlic, onions, and all vegetables in 1-tablespoon butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil (can use water rather than oil). Add salt, pepper, and basil. Gently cook 10 – 15 minutes. Add beans and stock or water. Cook 30 minutes. Add lemon juice and simmer 10 minutes more. Serve hot, topped with Parmesan and parsley. I also like to sprinkle with sunflower seeds. (based on a dish prepared at Moosewood Vegetarian Restaurant)