

MARK YOUR CALENDAR *Dining with the Demons*

The Annual Dining with the Demons, a reunion for Granite Falls High School students and teachers, will be held Saturday, May 6, 2023 at Granite Falls Middle School in the recently renovated building that once housed GFHS. The event will begin at 11 a.m. in the auditorium with a welcome by Principal Chris Ackerman. He will also provide instructions for the meal and guided tour. Attendees will divide into two (2) groups. One group will eat lunch while the other will go on a guided tour. The groups will return to the auditorium to switch places. GFMS students will assist with the tours and the meal.

Fellow alumnus David “Cloudy” Williams will cater the meal with a choice of pulled pork or smoked chicken, baked beans, coleslaw, roll, dessert, and tea or bottled water. The cost per

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Left to Right: Mayor Caryl Burns, Linda Crowder, and Gretchen Griffith

TOWN OF GRANITE FALLS *Preservation of History*

During a meeting of the Granite Falls Town Council on Monday, March 6, 2023, Mayor Caryl B. Burns recognized Linda Richards Crowder, Co-Chairman of the Granite Falls History Committee and President of the Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. Mayor Burns announced that Crowder had received the Award of Excellence from the North Carolina Society of Historians (NCSH) “in recognition of invaluable contributions toward the preservation and perpetuation of North Carolina History.” In appreciation for her work, the mayor presented Crowder with a gift from the town. Gretchen Griffith, NCSH Secretary, assisted with the presentation.

Crowder publishes a monthly newsletter, makes videos of special events around the town, and manages a website and a Facebook page for the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. The award-winning entry consisted of copies of the newsletters, DVDs, and screenshots of the website and Facebook page. The Town of Granite Falls will celebrate its 125th Anniversary on May 1, 2024, and the Granite Falls Historical Association plans to publish a history book based upon her work.

During the presentation, Mayor Burns also recognized the following members of the Granite Falls History Committee who were in attendance: Adele Mangan, Co-Chair Jeanne Whisnant, Renae Winkler, Gifford Poe, and Town Councilman M. D. Townsend. Other members include Claudia Bujold, Joel Kaufman, and Barbara Ross. The History Committee oversees the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum, arranges special exhibits/events, and preserves historical information and artifacts.



HIKE TO THE FALLS *Where the Town Got Its Name*

The Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. sponsored a hike to the falls that gave our town its name on Saturday, March 18, 2023. Led by Treasurer Adele Mangan and President Linda Crowder, the hikers walked from the museum to the observation platform and back.

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plate is \$12.00 payable in cash as you leave the auditorium.

Attendees should park in the lot accessed from West Highland Avenue and look for a sign showing the entrance to the auditorium. Please go straight to the auditorium and stay with

your guide; do not wander around on your own. In addition to the meal and tour of the school, there will be time for class photos and catching up with other Blue Demons, their teachers, and guests.

Nancy Reece Martin, Vicky Sherrill, Carolyn Whisnant, and Jeanne Whisnant are working to make this DWTD extra special. To make reservations, comment on the "Dining with the Demons 2023" Facebook page or call/text Carolyn Whisnant at 828-381-9597.



AT THE MUSEUM The Eddie Sipes Historical Collection

Eddie Sipes has donated his extensive collection of historical photographs and documents to the Granite Falls Historical Association. A former GFHA trustee and member of the Granite Falls History Committee, Mr. Sipes has spent years researching records and tracking down photographs and documents that depict local history. Subjects include schools, churches, businesses, and other buildings that have long been torn down and forgotten as well as news clippings about weddings, funerals, and other special events. The notebooks and scrapbooks are now on display in the Train Room at the museum.

After the public has had a chance to view them on the first floor, museum volunteers will move the collection to a permanent location on the second floor. The museum is open from 2 until 4 p.m. on Sundays, except holiday weekends. Persons interested in researching the collection at a different time may call or text Linda Crowder at 828-496-2835 to make other arrangements.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING "Bye-Bye, COVID"

Although scientists predict that COVID-19 will never completely go away, we are saying "good-bye" in this issue of *Tablet II* unless there is a major resurgence. COVID is no longer a major topic of conversation, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) plans to stop issuing a bulletin entitled "Covid Data Tracker Weekly Review" on May 12, 2023. However, some of the information will be available elsewhere on the CDC website.

Locally: Community levels for Caldwell County remained low as of March 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30.

According to a front page article in the *Hickory Daily Record* on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, Frye Regional Medical Center announced on Tuesday, March 28 that masks would be optional in public areas, offices, and break rooms, but would be required where patients are receiving care. The same article noted that Catawba Valley Medical Center made masks optional on March 20 in all areas except where patients require isolation, including persons with COVID and persons exposed to COVID. These rules are subject to change if COVID conditions worsen.

Nationally: If the COVID public health emergency expires on May 11, 2023 as previously announced, insurance coverage may change. The 2023 Medicare handbook (published in September 2022) notes that coverage could end for vaccines, diagnostic tests, antibody tests, monoclonal antibody treatments, and over the counter (OTC) tests. Telehealth rules are also subject to change. Since insurance policies (including private, employer-sponsored, Medicare supplements, and Medicare Advantage Plans), differ in coverage, pay attention to mail you receive from your providers, check their websites, and/or call them for updated information when the emergency ends.

Internationally: The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced that its Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) has revised guidelines for the COVID vaccines. While the group still recommends a second booster for older adults and immunocompromised persons, their experts note that other people may do just as well with the primary series and one booster. WHO also noted the organization is not recommending annual boosters at this time. For more information, read the news release on www.who.int/news.

The Town of Granite Falls has received five ElectriCities Public Power Of Excellence Awards and the American Public Power Association (APPA) Certificate of Excellence in Reliability.

Dateline: Granite Falls, N. C. 1931 - 1946

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

- In 1933, the Town of Granite Falls decided to establish its own water system and replace the one set up by Dr. O. J. Corpening in 1926. The town terminated its agreement with Dr. Corpening on September 1, 1934.
- Also, in 1934, the town had a wastewater sewer treatment plant built in an area that is now along Hwy 321. The completion date was October 1, 1934.
- On October 16, 1934, the town board chartered a volunteer fire department and agreed to pay firemen \$2.00 per call if they threw water and \$1.00 per call if they didn't throw water.
- In 1935, the town amended its charter to increase the number of council members from five to six with staggered two year terms.
- In 1936, residents realized the downtown area needed more room in order to grow and wanted to develop the land on the corner of Dudley Avenue and Market Street (now Dudley Alley) where Bethany Methodist Church (forerunner to First United Methodist) had a cemetery. The town agreed to move the bodies to Pinecrest Cemetery, which it owed. The actual move probably took place in 1938.
- In December of 1936, the downtown area was decorated for Christmas for the first time. Merchants donated the decorations, and the town provided the lighting and the manpower.



• In 1938, work began on a new municipal building on land secured from Shuford Mills. Built through a program sponsored by the depression-era Works Progress Administration (WPA), the new facility had room for police, the jail, fire trucks, a kitchen, and a large meeting room upstairs where the council

met. The town council held its first meeting there on February 7, 1939.

- In 1941, the town built a new water filter plant on Lake Rhodhiss at a cost of \$50,000.
- In July 1942, the town built a tool shed, which became the Public Works Building, on Payne Street (Lakeside Avenue).
- In 1944, the town council issued bonds in the amount of \$10,000 to pay for upgrading the wastewater treatment plan. In 1946, the town upgraded the sewer system with \$60,000 in bonds and improved the water supply with \$40,000 in bonds.



TOWN OF GRANITE FALLS 125 Years Old in 2024

The Town of Granite Falls will begin its 125th year on Monday, May 1, 2023 by holding a special commemoration during a regular meeting of the town council. Granite Falls became a town on Monday, May 1, 1899 by a vote of 38 to 6 with 18 registered voters not participating in the election. All voters were male because women could not vote until the passage of the Nineteen Amendment in 1920.

The Granite Falls History Committee will plan events for the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. Throughout the coming year, members encourage local residents, businesses, civic groups, school organizations, and churches to recognize the town's quasiquascentennial anniversary during special events to be held in 2023 and/or 2024.

Special Events in 2023

Monday, May 15 at 6 p.m.: Art in the Park featuring Fox and Company Band on Field #2 at the recreation center

Saturday, September 16 from 2 - 8 p.m.: 13th Annual Granite Falls Merchants Association Festival on Main - downtown

Thursday, November 9 at 10 a.m.: Veterans Day Ceremony at the recreation center

Monday, November 20 at 6:15 p.m.: Festival on the Square and Light Up Granite Falls Tree Lighting - downtown

Saturday, December 2 at noon: Granite Falls Christmas Parade - downtown



NEWS FROM THE TOWN OF GRANITE FALLS *Police Report for 2022*

Police Chief Chris Jenkins recently presented the annual police report to the Granite Falls Town Council. He began by stating, "The mission of the Granite Falls Police Department is to improve the quality of life of citizens by providing a safe and secure environment and to enforce the laws of the United States, state and local government and preserve the peace while protecting the rights of all and applying the highest standard of professionalism, integrity, and accountability in partnership with the entire community." He continued by noting the core values of the department - respect, integrity, and dedication.

The Granite Falls Police Department participates in four (4) programs designed to reduce crime.

1. Governor's Highway Safety Program, including the "Booze it & Lose it" and "No Need to Speed" campaigns.
2. Security Checklist, which allows residents and business owners to request that officers periodically check property if owner/occupant is out of town of if there is suspicious activity.
3. Trespass Agreement Program, which allows police to ban or remove a person from private property
4. School Resource Office/DARE Program, which provides security for our local schools and training for their students. The DARE Program is geared toward reducing substance abuse, membership in gangs, and violent behavior. September 21, 2021

During 2022, police officers in Granite Falls underwent 656 hours of mandatory in-service training and 459 hours of specialized training.

Six (6) department employees received special recognition for their accomplishments.

1. Jeanne Davis received her certification in Advanced Emergency Medical Dispatch and was on the Western Carolina University Chancellor's List.
2. Daniel Sharpe was promoted to patrol sergeant with certification to be a field training officer.
3. Travis Bentley was promoted to patrol sergeant with certification to be a field training officer.
4. Ricky Lail was promoted to lieutenant.
5. Clint Ferguson was promoted to detective sergeant.
6. Madelyn Trivette was voted officer of the year by her peers.

The Granite Falls Police Department placed third in the Lenoir Police Department's National Night Out Car Show.

Granite Falls police officers partnered with Honda of North Carolina to collect and give away over 70 bicycles at Christmas.

During 2022, the headquarters building received two ADA upgrades - an entrance ramp on the side of the building and a restroom. Western Piedmont Council of Governments developed the plans so the building would be in compliance with applicable laws.

The department also installed two (2) digital signs to remind drivers of the speed limit and purchased two (2) new Dodge Chargers (2021 and 2022) for patrol cars.

In addition to investigating crimes, Granite Falls police provides security at community events: Walmart Black Friday/Christmas, special school functions, festivals, parades, Art in the Park, Veterans Day Ceremony, and council meetings.



Tablet II is a publication of the Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. The purpose of the publication is to provide members with news and information about the Association along with articles and photos of historical interest. The purpose of the Association is to preserve and interpret the history/heritage of Granite Falls and Southern Caldwell County by historical preservation, publications, active museum and historical site programs, public meetings, and various activities related to these programs.

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For more information about the Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc and the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum, go to the website - www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org or the Facebook page under "Granite Falls (N. C.) History and Transportation Museum."