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Remembrance: A look back on the Sept. 11 attacks in Ashe County

BY ANDREW COLE

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Editors Note: This article contains interviews and other information from past editions of the Ashe Mountain Times and The Jefferson Post.

ASHE COUNTY — There are some days that just stay with a person: Sept. 11, 2001, was one of those days. Whether it was on the job site, sitting in traffic on your daily commute or dropping the kids off at school, anyone of proper age can recall exactly where they were when the news broke that America was under attack.

Sept. 11, 2021, will make 20 years since

that devastating act of terror cost the lives of 2,977 individuals. Today, we look back at how Ashe County responded to the tragedy on that that fateful fall day, now twenty years past.

Two days following the attacks, the headline of the Sept. 13, 2001, edition of the *Jefferson Post* read “National Tragedies” touch Ashe County. According to the article, during a service at the United Methodist Church a woman began to cry, her cousin and her relative’s husband had worked in the World Trade Center and her ex-husband had worked at the Pentagon. At the time she had not received word that they were safe. There was a sense of uncertainty

of what lay ahead for both the county, and the nation at large. Locally, people prepared for the worst. According to the newspaper, the school superintendent at the time, Donnie Johnson, asked school resource officers to stop cars on school grounds and Governor Mike Easley put all NC National Guard units on standby. Meanwhile, Senator Richard Burr called the attacks an “act of war.”

In downtown West Jefferson, local shop keepers displayed black ribbons as a show of respect for those lost. One local business owner — Angelina Cambre — noted that even her small shop had felt



PHOTO FROM ARCHIVES

This artwork was featured in the *Ashe Mountain Times* on the 10 year anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

SEE REMEMBRANCE ON PAGE 2A

Peace, love and blues



PHOTO BY ANDREW COLE

Jim Ferree (U.S. Army Retired) leads a conga line through the crowd during a performance by Daryl Davis at the 19th annual New River Blues Festival. Ferree says he makes the trip from Rowan County each year to attend the festival.

19th annual New River Blues Festival draws crowd to Ashe County riverside

BY ANDREW COLE

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GRASSY CREEK — By promoting the natural beauty of the High Country, along with the soulful sounds of the blues, the 19th annual New River Blues Festival once again drew in hundreds for a day of sunshine and music on the afternoon of Sept. 5.

Each year the festival is produced by Ashe County blues and American roots act, the King Bees, which is comprised of Rob “Hound Dog” Baskerville on guitar, Penny “Queen Bee” Zamagni on bass and Jim Gillon on drums. Unlike other festivals in Appalachia which typically present old-time and traditional bluegrass music, this event is unique in that it showcases the iconic sounds of the blue.

“This is the only event in the North Carolina mountains that brings in real deal, authentic blues, and celebrates our beautiful scenic outdoors,” said Zamagni of the King Bees.

This year’s event kicked off around 1 p.m. at the River House Inn and featured performances national renowned acts such as Boogie Woogie blues master Daryl Davis, South Carolina’s First Lady of R&B Wanda Johnson and fan favorite Donald Caesar the Blues Emperor, a veteran performer of the festival.

“It’s like family, and that’s the good thing about blues is that it does bring people together, old, young, it’s all about a good feel-



PHOTO BY ANDREW COLE

Louisiana Bluesman Donald Caesar plays the washboard during an upbeat performance by Boogie Woogie piano master Daryl Davis and local American roots trio the King Bees. The performance took place at the 19th annual New River Blues Festival held on Sept. 5.



PHOTO BY ANDREW COLE

The Wright family of Boone enjoys an afternoon of music down by the river during the New River Blues Festival on Sept. 5.

ing man,” said Caesar about the New River Blues Festival. “You can forget about your troubles and let the blues take you away.”

Concert goers also witnessed a lively, unrehearsed performance by seasoned Coastal Virginia bluesman Bobby Blackhat. This

year marked Blackhat’s first appearance at the New River Blues Festival, an occasion which he noted had been delayed in the past due to the national pandemic.

“This is so cool, it was a challenge getting here because GPS doesn’t like neck of the woods,” Blackhat joked. “But we got here, and everybody has been so hospitable and just so friendly. Music is one thing that unites so many people, and right now we’re just here in the moment enjoying the music and watching people dance and smiling and socialize. It don’t get no better than that.”

Other acts included Mountain bluesman Lynn Foddrell, and the King Bees themselves who provided a backing band for many of the visiting musicians. Others involved in the festival include event sponsor Celtic Force Productions, Kristin’s Hooked on Smoke who provided food, the River House Inn who provided the space, as well as beverages and volunteers such as the local Lions Club who parked cars.

According to Zamagni, this year’s festival looks slightly different due to the recent uptick in COVID-19 cases. In order to ensure ample room for people to socially distance, the festival promoters made the decision to sell less tickets.

“We have a limited number of people, because these days you have to. We’re about 200 tickets

SEE FESTIVAL ON PAGE 3A

Ashe sees 53rd death from COVID-19, nearly 200 individuals in quarantine

BY CHANDA RICHARDSON

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ASHE COUNTY — AppHealthCare has reported the 53rd death related to COVID-19 on Sept. 3 along with 83 active cases and 199 individuals in quarantine.

As of Sept. 3, Ashe County has seen a cumulative total of 2,803 positive cases since testing began. Neighboring Watauga County has seen 5,395 total, 150 current active, 217 in quarantine and 35 deaths. Alleghany has a total of 1,213, 41 active, 145 in quarantine and have also reported their sixth death.

Ashe remains in the “red” representing a high level of community transmission. AppHealthCare offers testing by drive-thru on Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 to 10 a.m. No appointment is needed.

According to the Sept. 3

SEE COVID-19 ON PAGE 2A

Traffic on NC-16 shuts down following a fatal collision on Sept. 6

BY ANDREW COLE

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GRASSY CREEK — Motorists traveling on NC Hwy-16 were advised to find an alternative route as first responders rendered medical aid following a fatal head-on collision on the afternoon of Sept. 6.

The wreck occurred at about 3:25 p.m. near the North Fork of the New River Bridge on NC Hwy-16, just north of Healing Springs Road. First responders from multiple agencies — including four medical helicopters — responded to the call.

According to the wreck report

SEE WRECK ON PAGE 4A



INSIDE THIS EDITION

Opinion	6A	Classifieds/Public Notices	13B	Comics	12B
Obituaries	4A	Faith	10B	Sports	1B

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a cloth mask
over your
nose and
mouth



WAIT
6 feet apart.
Avoid close
contact.



WASH
your hands
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