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PUBLISHED BY
THE MOUNT AIRY NEWS

Mount Airy News

319 North Renfro St., Mount Airy, NC 27030 • 336.786.4141

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Mayberry Days has something for everyone

ENG & CHANG BUNKER

Mount Airy's 19th Century COSMOPOLITANS

BY RYAN KELLY |
ryan.kelly@mtairynews.com

Mount Airy may be best known to the wider world as the real-life Mayberry but the connection to one of the crown jewels of televised Americana is not the only claim to fame for the small town with a big personality sitting along the Ararat River.

There was a time when two men who lived their later lives in this area, Eng and Chang Bunker, were considered to be among the most well-traveled and perhaps most written about men on the planet.

As conjoined twins, the likes of which had never been seen before, they were considered in equal measure at differing times by different parties to be freaks of nature, novelty acts to witness, and later as farmers and prodigious procreators of 21 children between them, leaving a strong family line in place around these parts even today.

This summer, the Surry Arts Council opened a new museum in their honor which pairs nicely with the already popular Andy Griffith Museum just across the street. The new Siamese Twins Museum dedicated to the "Original Siamese Twins" Eng and Chang Bunker opened in the sesquicentennial anniversary of the twin's death in 1874 at the age of 62.

Just one ticket can allow visitors to place a foot into Mayberry while the other finds its footing on a historical cross-continental tour of the late 19th century following the path of the Bunkers. Inside the museum visitors have an opportunity to peel back the curtain on the men and discover a more complete history of the pair who remain among the world's most famous pairs of twins.

After months of hard work, Surry Arts Council Executive Director Tanya Jones explained that the museum was designed to both entertain and educate with unique items that include many donated by the Bunker family.

As the great-great-granddaughter of Eng Bunker, she took the creation of the museum, and the curation of its artifacts personally as did the many direct descendants of the Bunker family who still reside in this area.

Born May 11, 1811, in Mekong, Siam, now Samut Songkhram in modern-day Thailand, the pair were connected at the breastbone by a small piece of cartilage. The King of Siam when he heard of the boys thought it was an ill omen for the country but later took a shining to the twins and sent them out as teenagers on a diplomatic mission to India.



RYAN KELLY | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE
A temple inspired by Wat Bang Kung, the original found in Eng and Chang Bunker's birthplace, is part of the new Siamese Twins Museum in Mount Airy. According to the museum, the Bunker twins were the first known Buddhists to arrive in the United States.



A bronze statue depicting Eng and Chang Bunker was commissioned by the Surry Arts Council for display in the Siamese Twins Museum in Mount Airy.



RYAN KELLY | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE
Traditional Thai dancers performed at the Surry Arts Council's to celebrate the Siamese Twins Museum featuring a bronze statue of the Eng and Chang Bunker.



FILE PHOTO
A photo from inside a previous year's Bunker Family Reunion. Eng and Chang Bunker were most famous for being conjoined twins but were also successful farmers and landowners who between them had 21 children.



RYAN KELLY | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE
Before the Siamese Twins Museum in Mount Airy opened to the public, Bunker family descendant Kester Sink shares a private view of the Bunker twin's statue with Tanya Jones of the Surry Arts Council who is the great-great-granddaughter of Eng Bunker.

It was in 1829 when the men began a series of tours in Boston, London, and New York City. After only a few years of touring, the men grew discontent with being managed by others and others making money off them.

"They saw that they were being treated as lesser beings by the people who were making the money so when the contract was over, they decided to show themselves," Jones explained.

She said that some of their past managers did not see them as equals. "Even though they were friends, they were often self-serving and even after the twin's death, their 'friends' recognized the value of even their dead bodies."



PHOTO BY HOBART JONES
Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, Ambassador of Thailand to the United States, talks with another member of the embassy's delegation while touring the Siamese Twins museum in Mount Airy.

They decided to tour under their own direction from 1832 to 1839 and were successful in crisscrossing the country while also visiting Canada, Cuba, and Europe.

Eng and Chang did well for themselves and were able to settle down into a state of semi-retirement in North Carolina originally in neighboring Wilkes County. The pair met and married sisters Adelaide and Sarah Yates in April 1843 and both couples welcomed their first daughters, Katherine and Josephine, six days apart in February the following year.

In 1854, the brothers moved to Mount Airy to seek better farmland and put down roots before building a second home in the area three years later and beginning the three-day rotation

between the two homes.

Understanding of the men, and press coverage of them, was often unkind, unflattering, or just flat out racist. The New York Courier ran a wedding announcement for the Bunker brothers and Yates sisters that left no room for doubt when they thought of it all. "The women, or creatures calling themselves such, who perpetrated this marriage, and Elder Colby Sparks, who consented to perpetrate this piece of bestiality, should have been dunked in the nearest horse-pond and then drummed out of the country."

Undeterred by such attitudes, the brothers wanted the best for their children and sought to emulate some of what they had seen on their European tours. Jones pointed to depictions of the Bunker children saying, "Look at their kids, their dress and manner... They wanted their kids to be educated, not just the boys. Chang had two deaf kids who went to the School of the Deaf in Raleigh."

"Eng and Chang had toured Europe and Great Britain, and they recognized how the daughters dressed, educated, and were well read and they also read the classics. They were in part self-educated, but in part also you could say they were almost tutored because their exhibitors recognized the more conversive the

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twins are, the better this is going to work.”

The men had interests like any others and enjoyed time outdoors, in fact it was a friend of theirs who initially encouraged them to travel to North Carolina to take advantage of hunting and fishing opportunities.

Jones has described how the brothers would split time between their two homes going back and forth every three days. She said, “When they’re at Eng’s home Eng is the master, and when they at Chang’s, same thing.”

She noted the pair of couples shared 21 children between them and acknowledges it may raise an eyebrow or two. But she said, “Their perception was that was their normal.”

Rumors have persisted for decades that the twins sought out medical opinions to have themselves separated but Jones said that simply is not true. “I realized the amount of misinformation that was out there on the twins exceeded anything I could have imagined,” Jones said.

As is the case with told histories, as stories get passed along they are often corrupted. Jones said don’t believe every tale told of the Eng and Chang. “A lot of times when you read a book, you imagine that everything is accurate. What happened over the years with the twins, misinformation gets perpetuated from one book to another to another and then if it’s in multiple books, it must be true, right? But it’s not.”

“They would make things up about the twins; make up things the twins had said or wanted, frequently saying the twins sought separation. No, they did not. The twins were basically content with their status because they had never known anything else.”

The Bunkers did see a slew of doctors she said because, “Their managers wanted to validate that Eng and Chang were not a hoax but then they wrote pamphlets which often had more sensational things in them to attract people. They were selling a product, and they were making lots of money.”

Jones added that even the name granted to the men is deceptive. “It’s worth noting that while born in Siam, they were ethnically Chinese as their father was a fisherman from China and their mother was half Chinese.”

“The question arises if they are Chinese or Siamese, they are both. However, it is interesting that they presented themselves as Chinese until one of their early managers, James Hale, said they should be Siamese twins instead.”

Jones explained it was all about driving interest in order to sell more tickets, “People knew about China, they didn’t know about Siam – so it was more exotic.”

Today there are Bunker family descendants all around this area and they have come together for many, many years in an annual Bunker Family Reunion that continues today, despite a hiatus during the Covid pandemic.

While there is no Thai Consulate office in Mount Airy, there have been diplomats from Thailand to visit over the years including Thailand’s Ambassador to the United States Tanee Sangrat in 2023. Also, Ambassador Manasvi Srisodapol attended the reunion in 2021, and Ambassador Pisan Manawapat visited the Mount Airy in 2017.

The tradition has continued this year, with Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, Ambassador of Thailand to the U.S., making the trip to Mount Airy for the 2024 Bunker family reunion.

Mount Airy entered into a sister-city relationship with the Province of Samut Songkhram, Thailand, in July 2019.



FILE PHOTO

A Thai dancer performs during a past Bunker Family Reunion. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of the reunion in 2020 but it has since returned.

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INSIDE
PILOT MOUNTAIN AND THE CRUISE IN
BLUE RIDGE MUSIC CENTER
AND FIDDLER'S CONVENTION
WAS MAYBERRY IN THE

“Chazz is a good example of the artistic talent we have in Mount Airy”

- LIZZIE MORRISON

ELSTONE

makes master works from metal

BY TOM JOYCE | tjoyce@mtairynews.com

Creating artwork that stands the test of time can be a challenge with mediums such as canvas, glass or cloth, but as a metal sculptor Charles “Chazz” Elstone doesn’t have that problem.

As studies in iron or steel, his pieces are built to last to say the least, further strengthened for posterity by imaginative designs.

This might include merging an old plow bought at a farm auction with assorted pieces of steel to form a stylish flower planter, complemented by a metallic butterfly perched on top which appears ready to take flight at any moment.

Or a long-discarded camshaft and other auto parts picked up at a junkyard will become a gigantic bird or some other creature — possibly unidentifiable but definitely a piece of fine art suitable for adorning the entrance to any mansion or gallery.



FILE PHOTO

METAL SCULPTOR CHARLES “CHAZZ” ELSTONE

poses with ladies from the Mountain View Gardeners Garden Club outside the Mount Airy Post Office in recent years to celebrate the installation of his creation called “Blooms” honoring a late club member.



Unlike some artists known for adhering to certain themes or subject matter, there is no rhyme or reason behind the creations Chazz turns out — but plenty of inspiration.

"If I get an idea, I go get parts that are going to work," he explained.

Other times, the opposite occurs, with Chazz sometimes spying a piece of farm equipment, for example, and drawing a sense of direction from that.

"It's metal sculpture — what you see is what you see," he said of pieces evolving.

Chazz, 76, is a New York state transplant who moved with his wife Vivian to Surry County in 2006.

She gave him the nickname "Chazz." It doubles as an abbreviation for Charles while also reflecting his musical specialties that include "jazz" along with folk, blues and gospel.

Elstone's artistic magic unfolds at a workshop/studio complex outside his home on N.C. 89 west of Mount Airy in the Beulah community.

There Chazz wields equipment such as welders, torches and grinders to create pieces via a procedure he describes as "brute force and ignorance."

At any given time, folks can be seen touring his facilities that are adjacent to the Scoops ice cream shop Chazz also once operated but now leases to someone else.

Students are among those visiting, who might be treated to a demonstration of the arc welding process or other steps involved in his unique art form.

"It's a little bit different from blacksmithing," Chazz explained, although some of the dynamics can be the same.

CHORD STRUCK LOCALLY

Regardless of the methodology employed, Chazz Elstone's work has caught the eye of admirers over the years.

"I've probably sold between four and five hundred (pieces)," he estimated.

Elstone's creations have shown up at art shows, stores and



TOM JOYCE | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE

KIDS ON AN UNOFFICIAL TOUR

of Chazz Elstone's studio/workshop facilities gaze at a metal sculpture that could be described as a scuba-diver robot — or something.



TOM JOYCE | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE

THIS METAL SCULPTURE

resembling an eagle and sitting on a star-covered base has become a fitting fixture at the Mount Airy War Memorial.

in collections stretching from Canada to New York City, Florida and New Mexico.

Since coming to Surry County nearly 20 years ago, local residents and visitors alike have been mesmerized by his

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artwork.

Elstone's creations tend to wind up in public spaces, including a metallic sculpture reminiscent of an eagle sitting on a base covered in stars at one highly visible venue.

It is an appropriate adornment to the Mount Airy War Memorial on the corner of South Main and Rockford streets which honors Surry County's fallen heroes.

Also, a metal sculpture by Chazz with a floral design, known as "Blooms," was placed five years ago in a flower bed planter at the Mount Airy Post Office.

The planter was dedicated in memory of an active member of the Mountain View Gardeners Garden Club who lost her battle with cancer.

Another Chazz creation has found its way to the Market Street Arts and Entertainment District.

The public parking area on North Main Street across from Leon's Burger Express also hosts one of his renderings, with another resting in a flower bed at Reeves Community Center.

Meanwhile, the wife of late Mount Airy Mayor David Rowe has bought four pieces for her flower garden, Chazz mentioned.

A publication at Scoops Ice Cream and Such at 5091 W. Pine St. near his studio catalogs other pieces available for sale.

BIBLICAL SUBJECTS

Chazz is excited about some of his recent creations, including a "Scriptures in Steel" series depicting different biblical accounts centered on John the Baptist and others.

"It's pretty abstract," he said.

On a similar theme, the artist has turned out a sculpture dominated by seven twisted heavy-steel rods resembling serpents, referring to the seven deadly sins.

Chazz recently has been crafting "Good Medicine," a piece that will be placed at Surry Rural Health Center on Scenic Outlet Lane.

Of everything Chazz Elstone has produced, he seems most proud of "David's Dance," a creation that stands guard in front of the ice cream shop which depicts an animated King David.

But regardless of the shapes and styles, it's a sure bet



TOM JOYCE | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE

SOME OF CHAZZ ELSTONE'S CREATIONS

can be left up to the interpretation of the viewer in determining what they depict.

Chazz Elstone's work will be admired for years to come while celebrating a unique local craftsman.

"Chazz is a good example of the artistic talent we have in Mount Airy," former Mount Airy Downtown Inc. official Lizzie Morrison has said. "Chazz Elstone is the coolest."

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After more than 30 years

MAYBERRY DAYS

KEEPS GROWING

BY JOHN PETERS

jpeters@mtairynews.com



There's just something about "The Andy Griffith Show." For long-time fans, there's nothing new to be seen when watching episodes -- there are plenty of folks who know every word of the script, each expression of the characters, by heart. Many can even quote the script while watching an episode, in advance of the characters saying the words.

Of course, there are still new fans getting their first look at the series most every day, even now, 56 years after the final episode aired. They laugh, they stifle a few tears, and generally enjoy their first time through watching an episode, as much -- if not more -- than any modern television show.

Much the same can be said for the annual Mayberry Days Festival, set this year for Sept. 23-Sept. 29.

When long-time fans visit Mount Airy for the festival, they

1

Floyd the Barber, portrayed by tribute artist Allan Newsome, addresses a packed Blackmon Amphitheatre during the opening ceremonies of the 2021 Mayberry Days Festival. The ceremony is always held the Friday of the festival, even though many activities are held during the preceding week.

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2

Karen Knotts, daughter of "The Andy Griffith Show" star Don Knotts, waves from her float during the 2023 Mayberry Days parade. Even in the rain, Main Street was lined with fans for the annual procession.

RYAN KELLY | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE

3

T. Graham Brown, a country music star who was in Mount Airy in 2021 to both perform and enjoy Mayberry Days, hoists the ceremonial Key to the City he had just received from Mayor Ron Niland.

JOHN PETERS | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE

know what they are getting. Shows and talks by a few of “The Andy Griffith Show” child actors, talks and appearances by some of the surviving cast members or relatives of the cast members who have passed on, trivia contests, viewings of movies starring Andy Griffith, a parade that sometimes draws thousands to the town, shows patterned after some of the episodes of the show, and so much more.

That’s not to say the festival offers nothing new. Founded in 1990 by the Surry Arts Council and its executive director, Tanya Jones, to mark the 30th anniversary of “The Andy Griffith Show’s” network premiere, Mayberry Days was originally Mayberry Day, a one-off festival meant solely to commemorate the anniversary.

Then came year two, and year three, and soon enough Mount Airy was the home for all things Mayberry. Over the years, the festival has expanded to a full week, with a variety of the aforementioned talks and shows, numerous displays, a big golf tournament, and a number of concerts and other shows in town that week that aren’t necessarily related to Mayberry Days, but take place to keep the festival visitors entertained.

Among those are concerts by The Embers featuring Craig Woolard, The Entertainers, and Envision, all showing off their repertoire of Beach Music, Top 40, and related hits with shows at the Blackmon Amphitheatre.

Other acts include John Floyd, The Mouth of Mayberry with four shows of his comedy routine; Karen Knotts and her new show, Make America Funny Again; Rodney Dillard (one of the original Darling Boys) and The Dillards; Elvis tribute artist Michael Hoover along with Patsy Cline tribute artist Denise Glass; the Mayberry Merloides; and Tim White & Troublesome Hollow.

In addition to the shows and events, Mount Airy’s Mayberry Days has been a major driving force behind the continuing popularity of “The Andy Griffith Show.” A number of similar, but smaller, festivals have sprung up throughout the South and the Midwest, many of them by organizers who credit Mayberry Days as the impetus behind the smaller fairs.

Mayberry Days has also given rise to a sort of “The



FILE PHOTO

The year 2019 was a reunion of The Kids of Mayberry. Here, from left, are Clint Howard (who played Leon in “The Andy Griffith Show”), Dennis Rush (who played a character known as Howie Pruitt or Howie Williams), Keith Thibodeaux (who portrayed Johnny Paul Jason), along with Professor Neal Broward, who was leading a presentation for the three with Mayberry Days fans in 2019.

Andy Griffith Show” spin-off called “Mayberry Man.” The film, released in 2021, grew out of a visit to Mayberry Days by brothers Cort and Starke Howell. They visited Mount Airy on behalf of their late father, Hoke Howell, who played the character Dud Walsh in the original show, and the two were taken by the enthusiasm and genuine affection fans had for the show and for one another at the festival.

That movie, has in turn, given rise to a limited series, “Mayberry Man, The Series.”

This year, while there may not be too many major firsts

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for the festival, there is still a long line of events and stars, sure to please long-time Mayberry Days fans and those perhaps visiting Mount Airy for their first time.

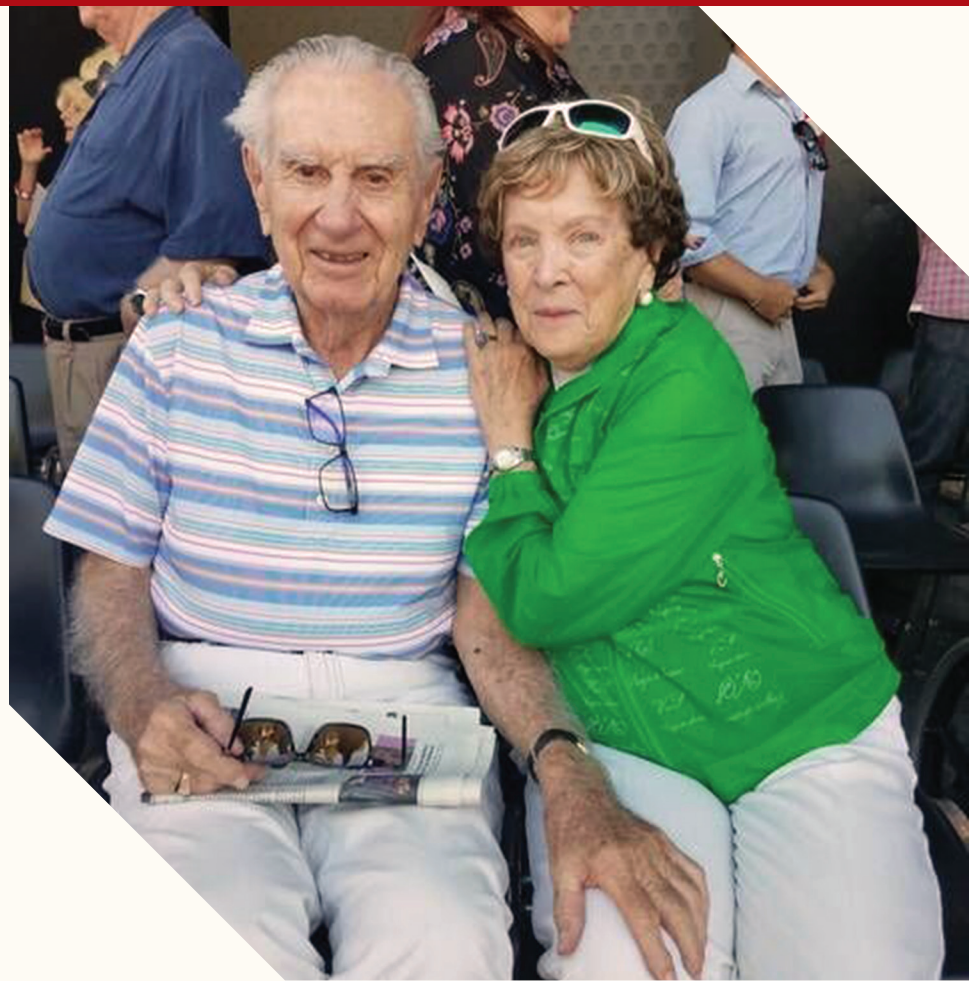
Among the stars and guests planning to be here are:

- Rodney Dillard, one of the Darling Boys, will be appearing in concert as part of The Dillards
- Ronnie Schell, who appeared in one two episodes of the show and in the role of Duke Slater in the spinoff series, "Gomer Pyle U.S.M.C."
- Dennis Rush, who played Opie's boyhood friend Howie Pruitt
- Keith Thibodeaux, Opie's boyhood friend Johnny Paul Jason
- Margaret Teele, who appeared in episodes of both "The Andy Griffith Show" and Gomer Pyle
- Dan Roebuck, who played Cliff Lewis in Griffith's series, "Matlock"
- Karen Knotts, daughter of Karen Knotts
- Dick Atkinson, producer of the movie "Murder in Coweta County," starring Griffith and Johnny Cash

- Dreama Denver, widow of Bob Denver, who appeared in two episodes of the show
- Andy Bullock, Kerry Bullock Scarvie, and Andy Scarvie, family members of Harvey Bullock, one of the show's writers.

More guests are likely to be added to the list before the 2024 Mayberry Days get underway. To keep up to date on the list, as well as to see a full schedule of events when it is released, visit the Surry Arts Council at

<https://www.surryarts.org/mayberrydays/index.html>



JOHN PETERS | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE
Sometimes, Mayberry Days can be quite the romantic event. Margaret Kerry, who played Bess Muggins in two episodes of "The Andy Griffith Show," with Robert Boeke, a friend from her youth who she had not seen for decades before the 2019 Mayberry Days festival. They were married a few months later.



JOHN PETERS | SIMPLY MAYBERRY MAGAZINE
Speaking of Mayberry and romance, the 2023 Mayberry Days included a real-life wedding, attended by folks dressed up as Andy Griffith Show characters. Eric Lowery, right, an ordained minister and Mayor Pike tribute artist, performed the ceremony for Bonita Sohn, dressed as Charlene Darling in a wedding dress, and Chris Bray, dressed as Ernest T. Bass, with Bonita's daughter, Toby Sohn, serving as maid of honor. The wedding took place at the Blackmon Amphitheatre shortly after the conclusion of the Mayberry Days opening ceremony.

What's Happening In **MAYBERRY**

Concerts, shows and more!

Your comprehensive guide to live concerts, shows, and other entertainment in Mount Airy and the surrounding communities. For additional information on all Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series shows, performances at The Historic Earle Theatre, or shows at The Andy Griffith Playhouse, please see <http://www.surryarts.org/surryart/index.html>. Please call ahead for any show to confirm it is going on as planned, particularly before setting out for those shows that are some distance from Mount Airy.

CONCERTS & EVENTS

Note: For tickets to all concerts that are part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series or the Blue Ridge And Beyond series, or to purchase season tickets, visit <https://www.surryarts.org/shows/menu.html>, or call 336-786-7998. Season ticket prices, good for admission to any or all of the summer concert series shows at the Blackmon Amphitheatre, are \$160. Tickets for individual Summer Concert Series tickets are \$17, with children 12 and younger admitted free. Prices vary for the Blue Ridge And Beyond series. Concessions are on sale at each of the Summer Concert Series shows. Those attending the concert are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

AUGUST

15 The Band of Oz returns to Mount Airy, bringing its popular brand of Beach Music to the Blackmon Amphitheatre stage beginning at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series. Those attending the concert are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

16 The Extraordinaries, from Hickory, has been known to have its audience on their feet dancing to the sound of four horns and strong vocals, incorporating brass instrumentation to provide high energy rhythm and blues sounds. The band was formed in 2003 and now plays popular and rock classics from across the years as well as plenty of beach music. Mount Airy concert will take place at the Blackmon Amphitheatre beginning at 7:30 p.m. Part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series.

17 Founded in 2005, The Konnection has been tabbed as one of the East Coast's premier party bands, specializing in a variety of music including Top 40, Rock, Country, R & B, Beach, and Oldies and has become a regular in Mount Airy. The concert gets underway at 7:30 p.m. at the Blackmon Amphitheatre. Part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series.



CRAIG SOUTHERN & PHOENIXX

Steep Canyon Rangers will be in concert at 7 p.m. at the Blue Ridge Music Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Galax, Virginia. Over the years, the band rose to the top of the bluegrass genre, headlining festivals such as Merlefest and Grey Fox Bluegrass. Steep Canyon Rangers have expanded their genre into country, jam, and Americana, with their sound often being compared to icons like, The Band, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and the modern Zac Brown Band. Steep Canyon Rangers have recorded nine solo albums and took home the Grammy Award for Best Bluegrass Album for "Nobody Knows You" in 2013. Parking is free, opening at 5:15. Gates open at 5:45 p.m. Tickets are \$45 in advance (non-refundable), \$50 day of show, \$20 for ages 12 and younger. Visit <https://www.blueridgeparkway.org/poi/blue-ridge-music-center/> for more.

22 The Catalinas are known for their Beach Music, though they perform other genres as well, and will be bringing their show to the Blackmon Amphitheatre in Mount Airy for a 7:30 p.m. show as part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series. Those attending the concert are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

23 Another show in the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series will feature what is considered one of the South's great party bands for nearly 40 years, North Tower Band. The group will be on stage at the Blackmon Amphitheatre at 7:30 p.m. providing the best in oldies, beach, top 40 and funk. Those attending the concert are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

24 The Castaways are "the premier party band in the Carolinas and Virginia," organizers said. "They have been pleasing audiences with their unique flavor of beach, soul, and Rock N' Roll for generations of fans. But don't let the fact that the band has been around for 50 years fool you. High energy, current songs, and fun on stage will bring a party to all ages." Part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series. Concert begins at 7:30 p.m. at the Blackmon Amphitheatre.

The Alison Brown Quintet with more than 30 years of roots and bluegrass music, will bring its sound to the Blue Ridge Music Center near Galax, Virginia. The show begins at 7 p.m., with tickets priced



CASSETTE REWIND

at \$30, \$10 for those age 12 and younger. Also performing in concert that night is Wayne Henderson & Friends. Parking opens at 5:15 p.m. and is free, gates open at 5:45 p.m., with season pass holders gaining admittance 15 minutes earlier. Those attending the outdoor concert should take a chair or blanket for seating — show is rain or shine. Concessions will be sold on site. Visit <https://www.blueridgeparkway.org/poi/blue-ridge-music-center/> for more information.

29 Jim Quick and Coastline will return to Mount Airy with a 7:30 p.m. concert at The Blackmon Amphitheatre as part of the Summer Concert Series. Those attending are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase. The band, recipient of multiple Carolina Music Awards, will perform a fusion of soul, blues and Americana music.

30 The Magnificents Band has a wealth of live playing experience in varied styles of music, including classic soul, beach, Motown, Top 40, and dance hits. The band brings a diverse of high-energy collection of music and motivation to get people dancing. Part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series. Show is set to begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Blackmon Amphitheatre.

31 The nine-member band Phatt City plays the best of Motown, dance and beach music. Phatt City draws inspiration from the bands Chicago, Earth, Wind & Fire as well as the energetic audiences that attend their concerts. Part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series. The concert is set to begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Blackmon Amphitheatre.

Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway will be featured in concert at the Blue Ridge Music Center, near Galax, Virginia. A virtuosic, award-winning guitarist with a gift for insightful songwriting, Molly Tuttle lends her signature sound to boundary-breaking songs. The Golden Highway band includes Bronwyn Keith-Hynes (fiddle, vocals), Dominick Leslie (mandolin), Kyle Tuttle (banjo, vocals), and Shelby Means (bass, vocals). Parking opens at 5:15 p.m. and is free, gates open at 5:45 p.m., with season pass holders gaining admittance 15 minutes earlier. Those attending the outdoor concert should take a chair or blanket for seating — show is rain or shine. Concessions will be sold on site. Visit <https://www.blueridgeparkway.org/poi/blue-ridge-music-center/> for more information.



EMBERS

SEPTEMBER

6 The Holiday Band plays hits from the 1950s through today, blending genres such as Current & Classic Top 40, Soul, Funk, Rock & Roll, Motown, Jazz, and more. The group will be performing on stage at the Blackmon Amphitheatre beginning at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Summer Concert Series. Those attending the concert are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

7 The Rick Strickland Band will be in concert at the Blackmon Amphitheatre in Mount Airy beginning at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series. Those attending the concert are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

12 The Elkin Big Band will bring its unique sound to the Blackmon Amphitheatre with a concert set to begin at 7 p.m. as part of the Summer Concert Series. Those attending the concert are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

13 Much Sylvia will play a little of something for everyone on Friday. “The audience can expect to hear anything from a few unplugged tunes, some beach, Motown, funky 70’s, retro 80’s, a few of the top current hits, and even some country.” Part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series. Concert is slated to begin at 7:30 p.m. at the



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ELKIN BIG BAND

Blackmon Amphitheatre.

21 Kids in America: Totally 80s be in concert at 7:30 p.m. concert the Blackmon Amphitheatre Part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series. Kids in America is a high-energy, power-packed, ultra-fun, six-piece band paying tribute to the 1980s. Kids in America covers all genres from this decade including new wave, pop, dance, rock, hair metal, and sing-along iconic ballads. Kids in.

24 The Entertainers bring their R&B and Beach Music to the stage at the Blackmon Theatre. But the band is not limited to those genres, regularly diving into the latest Top 40 hits, classic rock & roll, and even country music in this Summer Concert Series show beginning at 7:30 p.m. Those attending the concert are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

25 The Embers featuring Craig Woolard make another return to the Blackmon Amphitheatre in this 7:30 p.m. show that is part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series.

26 Envision returns to the Blackmon Amphitheatre for this special Mayberry Days Concert beginning at 7:30 p.m., bringing its cover of hits from the 60s, 70s and 80s, all the way up to the contemporary sound of today's Top 40 to the Blackmon Amphitheatre. Those attending the concert at the Blackmon Amphitheatre are encouraged to take lounge chairs. Concessions will be available for purchase.

OCTOBER

5 The Elkin Big Band returns for a 7:30 p.m. show at the Blackmon Amphitheatre, playing a broad repertoire of greatest hits from the 1920s all the way to the present day. This 18-piece band features 13 horns and a full rhythm section. Irving Berlin, Miles Davis, Stevie Wonder, George Gershwin, and Quincy Jones are just some of the many artists whose work the band performs.

12 Craig Southern & Phoenixx will be in concert in a show slated to get underway at 7:30 p.m. at the Blackmon Amphitheatre as part of the Surry Arts Council Summer Concert Series.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Experience the Merry-Go-Round, the second-longest continuously running live radio broadcast in the nation, with a live show every Saturday at The Historic Earle Theatre from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.



ENVISION

each week. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Admission is \$8 or a Merry-Go-Round Annual Pass is \$20, or a current Surry Arts Council season pass.

ONGOING

The Old-Time Music Heritage Hall, housed in the Historic Earle Theatre at 142 N. Main Street in Mount Airy, is open daily throughout the year. Exhibit hours are 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Sundays, noon to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, and on Saturday WPAQ's Merry-Go-Round and exhibits from are on display from 11 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Self-guided tours of the Old-Time Music Heritage Hall are \$8 per person plus tax per person and includes admission to the Andy Griffith Museum, Betty Lynn Exhibit and Siamese Twins Exhibit.



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