

INSIDE...

Obituaries
Police/Crime
Sports.....
School News.....

Banner News

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Racers take to the streets this Sunday

The 2nd Annual Belmont Criterium bicycle race will begin at 12 noon on Sunday, April 13. Certain streets in downtown Belmont, including N. Main, will be blocked off from 7am to 7:30pm to allow over 400 participants to hold races for amateur as well as professional cyclists on a 0.67-mile long course that will include part of N. Main,

Glenway, Davis, Kenwood, and Woodrow. A portion of S. Main near Stowe Park will be closed for a BMX exhibition.

The Belmont Criterium is a partnership between the City of Belmont and the Belmont Merchants Association and is sponsored by Carolinas HealthCare System. For more information visit www.belmontcrit.org.



ARBOR DAY WINNERS – Mount Holly Middle School's Seth Sturgis captured first place and Hailey Newman took third place in the Arbor Day Poster Contest. In the Gaston County Art Show, Kaylie Nelson earned second place in mixed media and Melissa Schleicher took second place in color drawing.

'Victory Garden' idea is making a comeback

By Alan Hodge
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At long last spring is here and many people's thoughts turn to gardening.

But not everyone has access to a large piece of land on which to see their agricultural endeavors played out. That's where a concept from long ago is making a comeback.

Back in World War II, the government urged folks to raise what were called "Victory Gardens." Heeding this call, countless people tilled plots in backyards and on vacant lots where they raised vegetables for their kitchens and by extension helped the war effort.

Jack Page of Belmont recalled the Victory Garden craze.

"Early in 1942 our government planners began to publish all sorts of pamphlets and news releases aimed at moving our war effort forward," Page said. "There was an air of panic to many of these tracts and it was apparent in looking back that some of the writers were being very basic in what they were writing about."

According to Page, the literature was interesting but not revolutionary reading.

"The pamphlets on agriculture stated the obvious," he said. "For example, one quote said 'many people will need help in planning and tending a garden'. They suggested that NC State or our local county agent could be of help. It was suggested that we might have commu-

nity gardens. The town was urged to scout out any empty lots and get the owner's permission to use it for a community garden. A tool shed needed to be constructed to store tools, fertilizer, and insecticides. The local police could monitor the garden to make sure that produce was not stolen. However, free seeds formerly distributed by the county agent would no longer be available."

Page remembered other tips the government offered.

"They further suggested that farmers should plant much larger fields and additional crops," he recollected. "Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Sunday school classes could be recruited to help farmers in their efforts."

Page says local entities got in on the Victory Garden action as well.

"A Junior Chamber of Commerce bulletin declared, 'Every pound of food produced at home is a help to the national and world food situation, because it releases a similar amount to the already strained commercial sources. We need an educational program that will hold losses and failures to a minimum. These new gardeners need to choose varieties that are tried and true.' One bulletin suggested that plans were needed for rodent control and for rabbit control. Also there was a need for experienced gardeners to oversee these efforts. No mention was made of where lumber, nails, and wire could be obtained," said Page.

In Belmont, as in many other Gaston and Cleveland county towns and mill villages, backyard gardens Victory type or not, had long been the norm for folks trying to inject some fresh produce into their otherwise

See VICTORY GARDEN, 5A

It all began with a blind date...

McIntosh's to mark 70 years of marriage

By ALAN HODGE
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"Beware of blind dates, you never know where they might lead you."

That's the advice 93-year-old Baxter McIntosh of Mount Holly gives out, but it's all in fun since one he went on back in the summer of 1943 led to marriage with his wife of 70 years, now 90-year-old Sally.

Fact is, the McIntosh duo will mark those seven decades of holy and happy matrimony on April 22.

The story began when Baxter, a native of Lucia, was in the Army and stationed in Mississippi. Sally, was working in Hattiesburg and the two met on the aforementioned blind date. After courtship, they were wed on April 22, 1944.

"I got a three day pass so we could get married," Baxter said.

After the war and Baxter's discharge from the service, the McIntoshes came to Mount Holly where they rented an apartment on Catawba St. Baxter's father was in the construction business and in 1948 built the house on Glendale St. that they still call home.

During his career, Baxter worked in the hosiery business until he retired in

1982, while Sally mostly stayed home and raised their three children, John, Debra, and Mark. Sally's talent at the sewing machine saw her make much of the family clothes as well as drapes for the house.

Life's simple pleasures filled their spare time with Baxter playing golf and woodworking in a little shop out back, while Sally enjoyed yardwork.

According to the McIntoshes, their membership in First Baptist in Mount Holly has been a source of strength, spiritual guidance, and pleasure for as long as they've lived in town.

Before their marriage, Baxter was a Methodist, but says Sally influenced his "conversion".

"I married a better Baptist than I was a Methodist," he said.



Baxter and Sally McIntosh on a date in 1943.

The list of activities that Baxter and Sally have been involved in at First Baptist is phenomenal. Baxter was a deacon for half a century, from 1955-2005 and was named deacon emeritus, the first in the church. He also taught Sunday school for many, many years. He served on three pastor search committees. Sally was a leader in the Women's

See BLIND DATE, 5A

'Death Race' is not for the faint of heart!

By Alan Hodge
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When a person signs up for something called a "Death Race" they've got to have a pretty good idea it's going to be tough, but for Jason Colomb of McAdenville, that's exactly what he thrives on.

Colomb, 37, and a native of Montana, is married and has two daughters. He is Health Promotions Coordinator for CaroMont Health. Last September, he took part in the Team Death Race that was held in the Green Mountains of Vermont near the town of Pittsville. The Death Race events are the idea of Andy Weinberg and Joe Desena and are designed to push participants to the limits of their physical and mental endurance- and beyond. The events are held over a three day period and involve over fifty hours of grueling and

at times diabolical exercises.

Last year's Death Race had nearly 100 participants and only twenty finished.

"I take part in this type of event because of the challenge," Colomb said. "It's a race against yourself. It is hard, very hard, and changes your life. It teaches you not to sweat the small stuff."

Activities that Death Race folks take on vary from event to event, but during Colomb's 2013 adventure they included building a bridge of timbers and concrete, sitting as a group in an icy stream to create a human dam, and tackling the "Ultra Beast"- a 24-mile obstacle course.

One of the most trying events that Colomb and his team tackled last September was one in which contestants had their legs zip-tied together, but one

See COLOMB, 5A



Photo by Alan Hodge
Jason Colomb of McAdenville shows off a couple of awards he earned at his first Death Race last year. He will be taking part in another similar grueling event in June.



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