

Village of Flat Rock  
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# The Village Record

Village of Flat Rock Newsletter  
110 Village Center Drive  
Flat Rock, North Carolina  
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Editor: Dave Bucher

Volume 11 Number 4

March 2006

## From The Mayor's Desk

*Ray E. Shaw, Jr.*

Well Spring is finally upon us. We have withered an ice storm and a wind event that brought down trees and caused power outages lasting from several hours to several days. Most of the debris has been collected and disposed of although the cleanup is not totally complete. Some have purchased generators and others have initiated proactive measures that hopefully will make the next event less stressful. Please see excerpts from a letter from the Flat Rock Playhouse that outlines measures underway on their campus. The Village supports their efforts.

Negotiations with Mediacom for franchise renewal will begin within the next couple of months. For sometime now the five municipalities and the county have been meeting to develop a strategy for negotiations on the agreement. Flat Rock's agreement is the first to expire in July. Unfortunately, monthly rates are not on the table. We hope for and are working toward a fair and beneficial agreement.

On February 24th the Village entered into a contract for an extension of the Village Center Trail from the post office to the Sandburg property. Work should begin in March and we look forward to the completion of this

project.

Now for the Flat Rock Riddle:

Why does Flat Rock have 2 sets of poles adjacent to each other with some almost in the same post hole extending from Saint John's in the Wilderness to well past the Wrinkled Egg?

Answer: Because BellSouth is "short of money".

Does the answer not fit the question? You bet it doesn't. That is the argument that BellSouth is currently using. About 9 months ago Duke Energy began replacing poles on NC 225 in Flat Rock. They removed their lines from the old poles to the new poles. Meanwhile we still wait for BellSouth to move their lines to the new poles so that the old poles might be removed. The "short of money" joke just does not get a laugh in Flat Rock. We intend to stay on BellSouth until they "get flushed with money" and relocate their lines.

Have a nice Spring.

## Schedule of Meetings

All monthly **Council Meetings** are on the **second Thursday** of each month, and will start at 9:30 AM.

**Agenda Workshops** are scheduled to start at 9:30 AM on the **Monday** 10 days prior to the Council Meeting, unless that Monday falls on a holiday.

**The Planning Board** meets the **first Tuesday** of each month from 9:00 AM until 11:30 AM.

**The Board of Adjustment** meets the **first Tuesday** monthly at 3:00 PM (if there are Agenda items).

**Village of Flat Rock** office hours are 9:00 AM—4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

**The Zoning Administration** office hours are from 2:00 PM-4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

*The deadline for articles to be included in the July issue of "The Village Record" is June 8, 2006.*

## Village Directory

<b>Mayor:</b> Ray E. Shaw, Jr.	698-2449
<b>Council Members:</b> <u>District 1</u> Robert V. Staton Nick Weedman	696-4020 693-5300
<u>District 2</u> Judy M. Boleman, Vice Mayor David Bucher	698-8912 696-3269
<u>District 3</u> Terry A. Hicks Jim Wert	697-9022 693-0132
<b>Village Clerk:</b> Rowena M. Sweezy	697-8100
<b>Deputy Village Clerk:</b> Michelle D. Hill	697-8100
<b>E-Mail Address:</b>	vofr@bellsouth.net
<b>Website:</b>	villageofflatrock.org

## One Stop Voting

*Henderson County Board of Elections*

One stop voting will be held Thursday, April 13th through Friday, April 28th. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We will also vote Saturday, April 29th from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Any registered voter in the county may vote at the Flat Rock Village Hall.

You may call the Henderson County Board of Elections at 697-4970 with any questions.

## Traffic Safety Advisory Committee

Of increasing concern to all of us in Flat Rock is the speed at which vehicles travel our three main roads. As the population of the Village and surrounding area grows, that speeding poses increasing risk of accidents and serious injury to our residents. There is need for us together to address the problem now and take appropriate action, before tragedy befalls any one of us.

Who are the speeders? There is no single category of guilty drivers. While some truckers, tradesmen, contractors and transit-ing commuters are numbered among the of-fenders, sadly, many of us residents unthink-ingly drive at speeds well beyond posted lim-its.

What are our options in trying to impose some discipline on the situation? Members of the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) have explored an array of possibili-ties and conclude that there are only two real choices. Either (1) we must establish our own police department, like those in Fletcher, Laurel Park, etc. or (2) together we citizens can decide voluntarily to drive

posted speed limits and, in the process, restrain transient traffic from speeding.

Deciding which of the two options to elect looks to us to be easy. Your Mayor and Council wholeheartedly agree that together we choose the low-cost alternative—we all drive within Village speed limits. When we do that we will be setting the pace as well for transients who travel our roads. If you agree, we propose that, starting today, posted speed limits become the maximum speeds at which we will all drive.

## A Message from the Merchants

*Mary Garrison*

The Village of Flat Rock has many faces. It is an attractive place to live and vacation. Flat Rock has also been a place of commerce since its early times, when Native Americans traded at the great flat rock and a trip to the local mill was a necessity.

Many area residents may not be aware of Flat Rock's business community. It is a diverse group, covering everything from non-profits, to restaurants and lodging to retail stores, galleries, musicians and artists, and individual proprietors in the service industry. The Flat Rock Mer-chants Association has been meeting for ten years now, and has 32 members. Some of our projects for the past year include Christmas sponsorship of families in Flat Rock area schools, maintenance of the greenways side-walk, refurbishment of village signs on High-way 225, and Summer Music Concerts funded by a Hendersonville Travel and Tourism grant.

Come meet the merchants on Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup> when the Ice Cream Social will be held. In addition to the balloons the group donates for the event, we will host a unique hot dog stand. Pro-ceeds will go towards community projects such as the Christmas family sponsorships and more. Many merchants will be open that day as well.

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The next steps are more severe and amount to either the garnishment of financial accounts or the seizure and sale of property to satisfy the lien that is created when the taxes are billed. Again, the cost of those efforts is added to the delinquent accounts.

The net result is that it is best to pay your prop-erty tax bill when it is due and prior to the im-position of penalty and interest as mandated by state law.

Rowena Sweezy, the Village Clerk and Tax Collector stated, "We are proud of the fact that the property owners in the Village have been so cooperative in the payment of their real and personal property taxes". She also said, "the tax billing and collection process has not been without a few problems but overall our results have been great!"

The new tax year begins on July 1 and tax bills should be mailed in September.

If you are one of the very few who are delin-quent on your tax payment to the Village of Flat Rock and have questions or concerns, con-tact Rowena Sweezy or Michelle Hill at 697-8100.

## Celebrate Flat Rock Event Food, Festivities, and Fun

*Scott Schenck*

The Village of Flat Rock, our Fire and Rescue Departments and a number of Flat Rock mer-chants will be holding a festival – Celebrate Flat Rock, on May 6<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Immediately following the event, the Flat Rock Merchants Association will hold their first eve-ning of music for the season.

Volunteer help is sought in several areas.

- Spend 30 minutes dipping ice cream and have fun giving away something for free.
- Before the event we need strong backs to help set up chairs, tables, etc for the event from 10:00 am until 11:00 am.
- Following the event we need volunteers to help take things down and clean up.

We need your help! If you are willing to volun-teeer for any of these needs, please call either Michelle Hill or Rowena Sweezy at the Village Hall (697-8100) or send an e-mail to [vofr@bellsouth.net](mailto:vofr@bellsouth.net). Your help would be highly appreciated.

The events will be held throughout the Village on the grounds of the:

- Fire Department
- Village Hall
- Singleton Centre
- Rainbow Row

There will be free ice cream, fire engines, heli-copters, hourly entertainment, hot dogs, other food, drinks, and music.

The Carl Sandburg House will be open on May 6<sup>th</sup> and, as always, invites the public to stroll down for a tour of their facilities.

In addition, a number of Flat Rock merchants will have special events on that day.

So, mark your calendars and come to help Cele-brate Flat Rock!

In the event of rain, the event will be held on Sunday, May 7th from 11:00 a.m. until 3 p.m.

No one associated with Flat Rock Playhouse is interested in arbitrarily cutting down trees. We recognize that the unique beauty of the Village of Flat Rock is due in large part to the magnificent pines that grace our community. If you drive by the Playhouse you will notice that we already have planted dozens of pine, hemlock, and spruce on our front lawn and across the entire property in an effort to maintain the evergreen canopy.

### Village of Flat Rock Candidate Forums

*Terry Hicks*

Do you know the candidates? The Village is sponsoring two public forums so you can have more knowledge of what they represent. Each candidate has been requested to speak on the issues that most concern Flat Rock citizens.

Who and When:

Candidates for Henderson County Sheriff?  
Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Candidates for County Commissioner?  
Thursday, April 6, 2006

Where: St. John in the Wilderness Parrish  
Hall

These forums are being held prior to One Stop Voting in the hope that they will be of maximum help to Village citizens.

Our format will be the same as in past forums. Each candidate is given ample time for opening comments followed by questions from the audience voiced to the candidates by the moderator. Then candidates will then be given time to make their closing remarks. You can bring your questions already written out or we will

provide cards for you to use at the forums. A large number of candidates have filed for both positions. These forums make it easier for us to be educated voters.

### Tax Collection Report

*Nick Weedman*

As virtually every Flat Rock property owner knows, the Village began to collect a property tax when the new fiscal year began on July 1, 2005.

The Village contracted with three fire departments to provide fire protection to the Village and, in return, agreed to pay for those services. So, the Village taxed property to pay for fire protection and Henderson County, which formerly collected for fire protection, ceased to perform that function. The result is that residents now pay the Village for fire protection when, in the past, they paid for those services through Henderson County. The tax being collected by the Village is not a new tax but replaces one formerly collected by a different governmental agency.

As of March 13, 2006 the Village has collected 99.6% of the taxes billed for the current fiscal year. Only 19 property owners still owe real property taxes for 2005/06 within the Village!

As required by the State of North Carolina law, the Village will be taking several steps to finish collected those outstanding bills.

In March, an advertisement will be placed in the Hendersonville *Times-News* listing property owners who are delinquent in their property tax bills. The cost of that advertising will be charged back to those participating in the ad.

*(Continued from page 2)*

Here is an alphabetical listing of Flat Rock Merchants: Apartments at Twin Oaks, Bansemmer Gallery of Fine Art, Bonclarken Conference Center of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, The Book Exchange, Jane Burgin – Lifetime Member, Carl Sandburg Home, Dean's Deli, Edward Jones Investments, Expressions! Photography, Ferguson's Crown and Bridge, Flat Rock Guitar, Flat Rock Inn Bed and Breakfast, Flat Rock Music Festival, Flat Rock Outfitters, Flat Rock Playhouse, Flat Rock Village Bakery, Flat Rock Wine Shoppe, Garrison Family Dentistry, Hand in Hand Gallery, Highland Lake Inn, Historic Flat Rock Inc., Kenmure Country Club and Restaurant, Lockwood Apartments, Mill House Lodge, Pleasant Surroundings Inc., Rose Tree Bed and Breakfast, Sky Top Orchard, Stuart Stepp AIA, 3D Photo Memories Inc., Tom Fisch Music, The Wrinkled Egg and Chicken Little, and Woodfield Inn.

Membership is open to any Flat Rock business within the limits of the Village of Flat Rock. Dues are \$50 annually for new members, \$40 for renewing members, and may be mailed to Treasurer Bob Horkey at P.O. Box 309, Flat Rock. The group meets every other month on the first Monday evening of that month. Merchants take turns hosting meetings at their businesses. For more information, contact President Dale Bartlett at the Flat Rock Playhouse, 693-0731.

### Playhouse Tree Program

*Robin Farquhar*

After we experienced the wrath of Hurricane Ivan in 2004, the staff and Board of Trustees of the Playhouse realized that we needed to be proactive about protecting our buildings

from potential structural damage from falling trees. Our organization spent approximately \$20,000 on damage cleanup, tree trimming, and treatment of our hemlocks for wooly adelgid, from the fall of 2004 through the end of 2005. We also realized that even in September, we could experience power outages caused by falling trees that could last up to a week or more. The power outage that was caused by Ivan resulted in our canceling four performances of ON GOLDEN POND, which cost the Playhouse approximately \$32,000 in box office revenue.

During the ice storm of this past December and the wind storm of January, tall pine trees on the Playhouse property took down power lines on both Greenville Highway and Little River Road. With Ivan in our recent memory and these two back to back weather events creating even more damage, it became clear to us that we needed to carefully assess the condition of our tall pine trees and remove weak or dangerous trees, particularly ones that are actually leaning over power lines.

Working with a respected tree expert, we have made a careful assessment of the condition of our tall pine trees and find that several of them will need to be taken down in the near future. Let me immediately add that for each tree that we are finding it necessary to remove, we plan to plant another evergreen in its place. I also want to assure you that this process will be done in phases. We will first remove a small number of the most weak and dangerous trees that are the most serious threat to power lines. After planting replacement trees, we will monitor the remaining trees and will not remove any more until it is determined they are diseased and are endangering power lines or structures. We also want to avoid having these trees become a hazard to vehicles on our property, students coming to classes, or patrons attending our shows.

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