



MONTFORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF ASHEVILLE'S MOST HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD
Vol. 25 No. 12
DECEMBER/JANUARY '20

SEASON'S Greetings



*from the
Montford Neighborhood Association,
the staff, and contributors to the Newsletter*



Mark your calendar—for June 5, 2021 for the
First Annual Historic Montford Garden Tour.
Stay tuned for details!



The New Montford Listserve

Yahoo has decided to no longer offer Yahoo groups...so the original Montford Listserve will not work after **December 15th 2020.**

We have replaced it with a **New Google Group.** Membership in the original Listserve will not carry over—You must join the new Listserve. Visit <https://groups.google.com/g/montford> to join.

Also helpful: <http://montford.org/montford-listserve> .

TEMPIE AVERY MONTFORD CENTER

Center Update

At this time, we are continuing to provide Monday-Friday all day programming in partnership with Asheville City Schools (ACS). ACS provides teaching assistants in the morning as well as breakfast and lunch for the kids. We (Parks and Recreation) provide activities focusing on physical movement and socialization in the afternoons.

PODS: Pandemic's virtual learning students get much-needed help

https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2020/10/20/pods-pandemics-virtual-learning-students-get-much-needed-help/3711013001/

Shana Kriewall
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Photo Credit: Asheville Citizens-Times



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Advertisement for Smart Feller Treeworks featuring a silhouette of a person climbing a tree, the company logo, and various certification logos (ISA, Best of WNCN, TCIA, Living Wage Certified) at the bottom. The background is a photograph of a forest with a swing set.

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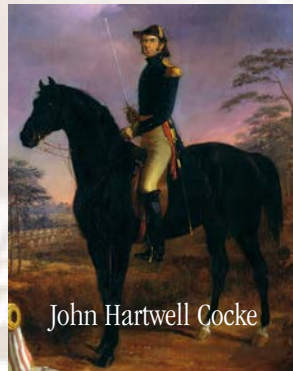


Editor's Note: This home was featured in the 2019 Montford Holiday Tour of Homes.

FEATURED HOME

The history of 230 Pearson Drive

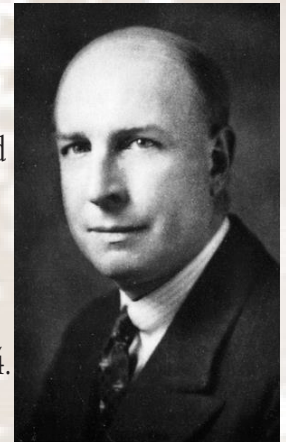
The beautiful stone Dutch Colonial Revival house at 230 Pearson was built by Dr. Charles Hartwell Cocke, Jr. in 1924. Dr. Charles Hartwell Cocke was the great-grandson of John Hartwell Cocke, neighbor and friend of Thomas Jefferson, and the builder of "Bremo" Plantation in Fluvanna County, Virginia.



Dr. C. H. Hartwell was born to Charles Hartwell and Rowena Lockhark Cocke on December 1, 1881, in Columbus, Mississippi. He was the first graduate of the Episcopal High School of Virginia at Alexandria and received his A.B. in 1902 from the University of Virginia. His medical degree was conferred by Cornell in 1905 and he served an internship at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York, 1906–1907. He then took postgraduate work at the University of Vienna and in London and Paris. Dr. Cocke practiced in Birmingham, Alabama, until he became ill with tuberculosis when he went to Saranac Lake. Upon his recovery in 1913, he located in Asheville and in 1914 married Miss Amy Grace Plank of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He was medical director of Zephyr Hill Sanatorium; consultant to Biltmore Hospital, Patton Memorial Hospital, Hendersonville, N. C., Learline Reeves Sanatorium, Greenville, Tenn., and attending physician to Mission and Saint Joseph's Hospitals, Asheville.

In January of 1913, Dr. Charles H. Cocke and his mother, Rowena L. Cocke moved into the house at 216

Pearson Drive. Rowena Cocke, whose husband had died in 1896, purchased the house from Justin & Catherine Wohlfarth. Dr. Cocke lived in the house with his mother until his marriage in 1914, when he and his bride then moved to 144 Flint Street. Rowena continued to live at 216 Pearson until her death in 1924.

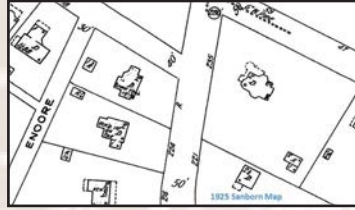


Charles Hartwell Cocke
1881-1944

The two lots between 216 Pearson and Tacoma Street were vacant when the Cokes moved into 216 Pearson in 1913. In 1918, the owner of the lots, H. C. Allen decided to sell. Allen hired Henry T. Sharpe Co. to sell the property, at first as four separate lots, but then the owner decided to sell the property in "its entirety" for \$4250. In October of 1919, Dr. Charles H. Coke and his wife purchased the lots from Allen. They quickly sold half of the property (the southern half) to Robert W. Griffith, who subsequently built the house at 224 Pearson (built by 1921). But the northern half, which formed the southwest corner of Tacoma and Pearson was left vacant.

Rowena Cocke died in November of 1924, leaving her son, Dr. Cocke \$50,000 in cash as well as a \$50,000 Trust Fund. Although I first thought that Dr. Cocke may have begun building his house after he received his inheritance, it seems apparent that the house was under construction, prior to his mother's death, as on January 18, 1925, it was reported that Mrs. Cocke "who has been visiting in Pennsylvania and New York State for the last three weeks is expected to return to her home on Pearson Drive today". Also, in March of 1925, Mrs. Cocke was hosting a meeting in her home of the St. Agnes Auxiliary. It seems infeasible

that the house was constructed and decorated all within two months! I suspect construction began in the Fall of 1924, just prior to Rowena's passing.



Also, the house first shows on the 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. On the 1925 map the outline of the house shows, but no address is given, merely an "A.", which usually was the symbol for "Auto-garage", perhaps indicating that only a garage was completed to insure?

The Cockes had no children to share their home with, however they did have a newsworthy cat named "Tim" who lived with them at 230 Pearson. Tim, was a cross between a Maltese and a Persian cat, and possessed an avowed "general dislike for all birds, and jays in particular". Although Tim had no desire to "kill or injure" any bird, he did like to convey the impression that he was "Ivan the Terrible", as he would "rush the birds that would invade the Cocke flower garden." One day Tim decided to "expand his precinct" to Dr. M. C. Millender's yard at 240 Pearson Drive. Spying three jays sitting on a tree limb in the Millender yard, Tim decided to rout the birds out of the tree, so up the tree he went. The jays however allied to mount a counter offensive attack and began dive-bombing poor Tim and pecking at his head and tail. Tim quickly retreated to his own yard! Sadly, just three months after Tim's big adventure, he passed away in September of 1939. Tim died as a result of consuming poison "obtained somewhere in the neighborhood".

"Residents of Montford Hills," it was reported, "may soon forget his passing, but the birds will long remember him".

Dr. Charles H. Cocke died suddenly from a heart attack on August 3, 1944 at his home on Pearson Drive. His wife Amy was grief-stricken, and shortly thereafter sold the house to T C Smith. Two months later, Smith sold the house to Dr. Charles & Mrs. Dorothy Millender. Dr. Charles W. Millender was the son of Dr. Marion C. Millender, and had been raised at the Millender home just down the street at 240 Pearson.

I suspect that Dr. Charles Millender chose to purchase the house at 230 Pearson to be close to his aging father who

lived at 240 Pearson. Dr. Charles Millender, a physician and surgeon, had been in medical practice with his father Dr. Marion C. Millender, until his father's retirement the year before (1944) at the age of 86.

The house at 230 Pearson became the family home for the Millenders, which included Charles, Dorothy and their daughter Mary. As a teenager, Mary began collecting and mounting plants and wildflowers.



When interviewed in 1958, Mary who was in her first year at Lee-Edwards High School, told the reporter that in her four scrapbooks, she had already collected over 250 specimens. In addition to mounting the specimens into her scrapbooks, each specimen was labeled with its appropriate classification, as well as noted where it was found. Not surprisingly, two years later, at the age of 17, Mary was among 448 high school students around the US to receive an honor award and listed as among "the nations most promising young scientists in the 19th Annual Westinghouse Science Talent Search." In 1973, Mary Millender Yoder donated her scrapbooks, which by then included over 800 specimens, to the UNCA Botanical Gardens, in honor of her father.

The Millender home was also the meeting place numerous church meetings and Girl Scout meetings. Mrs. Millender was the leader of Girl Scout Troop 33, for many years.

In 1959, Dr. Charles Millender sold the house to his sister Margaret and her husband Lovell Rhodes. Lovell Rhodes was co-owner/operator, along with his brother Bonsall, of the Biltmore Wheat Hearts cereal manufacturing company. Margaret Rhodes, who was active in several historical societies, would often host meetings of the Asheville Colony of the Descendants of the Mayflower Society and the Buncombe Committee of the National Society of Colonial Dames in America in the State of North Carolina.

The Lovell & Margaret Rhodes sold the home in 1968 to Herman E. & Mary Sue Davis. The Davis family only 5

owned the house for four years, selling it to Johnnie C. & Juanita Jackson in 1972.

In 1984, the home was purchased by Lonnie & Evelyn Wyatt who decided to use the house as a Bed & Breakfast Inn. They opened the house as The Cornerstone Stone Inn. Evelyn Wyatt was sought to improve Montford's image by chairing the Montford Community Club Beatification Committee. The Committee actively cleared vacant lots and planted and maintained attractive planting in key areas of the community. The Wyatts sold the Inn in 1990 to Gary & Nancy Gaither, who operated it under the same name.



CHRISTMAS TOUR — The Cornerstone Inn, built by Dr. Charles Harwell Coker in 1924 in the Montford area, will be one of the featured bed and breakfast homes in the Preservation Society's "Christmas at the Inns" tour Sunday.

Just two years later, in 1992, the Gaithers sold the home to Everett & Ann Colby who, operated it as Colby House Inn. It continued to be operated as an inn through subsequent owners until 2010 when it was purchased by Jennifer Farmer and Dan Rosenthal. Jennifer and Dan undertook a renovation of the house and restoring it to a more traditional style. They

also turned the house back into a single-family home, and in 2014 sold the house to Jennifer's parents (the current owners) Woody & Mickey Farmer.

Much of the furniture in the Farmer's home was inherited from Woody's father, a physician whose patients sometimes paid in the form of furniture or lumber. On display is Woody's remarkable collection of historic maps, as well as a glassware collection inherited from Mickey's mother that was salvaged from her New Orleans home after Hurricane Katrina. The Farmer's collection of local, regional, and international artwork reveals their many interests.

Compiled by: Dale Wayne Slusser, October 2019

1. "Chest Journal", September–October, 1944 Volume 10, Issue 5, Pages 468–469. [https://journal.chestnet.org/article/S0096-0217\(15\)34030-9/fulltext](https://journal.chestnet.org/article/S0096-0217(15)34030-9/fulltext)
2. Asheville Citizen Times, February 18, 1918, page 10.
3. Asheville Citizen Times, January 18, 1925, page 21.
4. Asheville Citizen Times, March 22, 1924, page 24.
5. Asheville Citizen Times, June 1, 1939, page 8.
6. Ibid.
7. Asheville Citizen Times, September 29, 1939, page 14.
8. Asheville Citizen Times, June 1, 1958, page 25.
9. Asheville Citizen Times, January 29, 1960, page 14.
10. Asheville Citizen Times, October 4, 1988, page 47.

Correction:

in the **September 2020** issue article: *Featured Home, The history of 321 Pearson Drive.*

"I read with interest the article about the home I grew up in and would have loved to know in 2019 it was in the Montford Holiday Tour of Homes.

I wanted to correct a few items in the story:

Anne Tillinghast was Jack Benning's sister (my mom) not George Benning's.

She was a social worker at Highland, not a nurse.

My brother Thomas was known as Fleet, not Thomas. He decided to change his name around the age of 5 and it stuck. His given name is Thomas Fleetwood Benning.

I found your article fascinating and I thank you for writing it."

Warm regards,
Anne Plyler

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The Montford Neighborhood Tree Grant returns for the 2nd year! The Neighborhood Association will pay up to 50% of your cost for planting a tree on your property - up to \$150 per tree and up to \$300 total per household.

From September 2019 through May 2020, the MNA helped residents plant 36 trees, awarded \$2029 for tree planting, and leveraged \$8523 worth of tree planting projects.

Any Montford property owner, renter, or local organization may apply. Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Award of grants is at the discretion and funding availability of the MNA.

Remember, fall is for planting!

Find additional information and the grant application at Montford.org. Click "Links" then "Tree Grant"

or go to this link: http://montford.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/TreeGrant_2019_1209.pdf



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Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County

Montford Action Agenda 11/11/20

Members present: Chair Emily Kite, Valeria Watson, Sara Gardner, James Vaughn, William Eakins, Gail Lazaras, Will Hornaday, Emily Spreng

Staff present: Alex Cole, Shannon Tuch, Jannice Ashley

Item, Summary and Action

*55 Woodlawn Avenue (PIN 9649235130) - Replace non-original front door with new wood door half-lite door.

Action—Approved

*62 Cumberland Circle (PIN 9649046981) - Restore porch on rear elevation; raise porch railing heights; replace porch flooring; install two skylights on rear facing section of roof.

Action—Approved with conditions

Please refer to the website (www.ashevollenc.gov) for the full approved minutes after the following month's meeting.

HRC Application Portal

The city is now accepting HRC applications digitally via the Development Portal at this address:

<https://develop.ashevollenc.gov/>

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A Culinary Tale (Part 2)

Jerry Conner, Westover Drive

Never resisting a challenge and always seeking a new inventive way to expand my source of income; I started getting ready for the holidays (both Jewish and Christian). In addition to the bagels and bagel chips, I was also making Jewish Challahs and specialty NY rye breads. My mother's mother had just passed away, which meant no more of her fruitcakes at Christmas, so I hunted and found her recipe. These were not the perpetual ones passed around; they were soaked in wine and eaten. With some downtime in the bakery and to help reduce the debt of the bagel chip investment, I made up fruitcake samples and set about taking orders for December delivery. I went to the Fancy Food and Confection Show in New York, same as I have done for many years and ran across the buyer for Neiman Marcus, he loved the cakes and gave me an order under their private label. Between the bagels, breads and now fruitcakes along with the catering, I was able to keep my head above water.

The decision came when it was apparent that the cost of producing all the baked goods wasn't enough to satisfy the bagel chip debt and with my catering increasing, I made the tough decision for catering full time. I sold off the equipment, scrapped the packaging materials, and went to the bank to see what my options were. As it turned out, this was during the period of great growth in finance. My money market and treasury accounts were earning around more than the loan. With all this in mind, I found a quaint Georgian home that would be perfect as a catering kitchen and venue, took out a loan, and began the next phase of my culinary career.

By now, I had quite a reputation as a caterer in Charlotte, especially known for my elaborate edible centerpieces and unique canape menus. In addition to the catering, I became the go-to personality for newspaper and TV food views and articles. One instance, that I will never forget, was when I was asked to create a series of Public TV cooking shows in the early 80s. I arrived for my first session, walked into the arena, and found some 300+ guests surrounding a large wooden counter with sunken burners on one side and overhead mirrors. I was a bit nervous, but had given classes previously for a kitchen shop and just shrugged everything off. Just as we were beginning to tape, a woman jumped up and shouted, "Are you going to

teach us how to make Quick-ie Lorraine." Immediately, like the beginning of an avalanche, light mumbles of laughter began and then erupted into a wave of loud belly laughter. My nervousness left me and the taping was a success.

With the Georgian home as a venue, many of my clients kept asking when we would open for meals. I decided that the next step would be with lunches only during the week, leaving evenings and weekends for use as a venue. We were located on 7th St.; which became the impetus for the name 7th Street Coach House. Because of my reputation, I wanted to set the restaurant apart from others in the area with a bit of European flair. The menu was heavy with French, Austrian and Italian influences but at affordable prices. My next step was to introduce Charlotte to freshly made Croissants. We were the first and only NC establishment making them in the 80s. They weren't like those you find today. You could smell the butter rolled into each one and they were so flaky, I had to supply my waiters with "crumbers" to sweep the tables during the meal. To follow through with the ambiance, I played recorded music from my vast record collection, representing all the countries on the menu. Omelets were big back then, so three different ones were offered for lunch including a special Grand Marnier Soufflé dessert omelet. I was in the kitchen when one of the waitstaff brought back her Soufflé omelet and asked if I could cook it more. I understood that to some people the egg would seem not cooked, so I placed the omelet in the oven briefly to cook it a bit more. All the while holding my tongue. The server returned to the guest with the dish and then came flying back into the kitchen, asking "Do we have any Ketchup?" I asked what for, and was told the omelet. I couldn't hold my tongue any longer. I dashed to the dining room and removed the omelet from the table. "Ma'am, I will be glad to replace this with anything else on the menu; but you may not have this omelet!" She looked up at me in disbelief, got up, and huffed off. Just as she was leaving, all the other patrons in that part of the restaurant began clapping and cheering. Sometimes it is the principle of things.

It wasn't long before, dinner was added and we became a full-fledged restaurant and catering facility. With the evening meal, I added another element for the weekends, a harpist playing Viennese Waltzes and French songs. Adding a bit more Europe to Charlotte. I studied wine in Paris at the Academie du Vin and transformed the entire basement into a wine cellar.

I was proud to have the largest selection of wines in NC at the time. Realizing that many of the wines I carried could not be purchased in Charlotte, I took out a retail license. Now, you could enjoy a bottle for dinner and take home the same wine for another time. Among the many other innovations I established was: serving a high tea every Wednesday, fitted in between lunch and dinner. We had to make it by reservation only, as we never had room for walk-ins.

One of my good customers requested a Sunday afternoon personal tea for her and 100 of her friends along with live music. I brought in the Charlotte Symphony String Quartet. Everything was going nicely when she flagged me over to her table. "Could you please ask them to lower the volume, we can't hear each other talk," she requested. I was dumbstruck and just replied, "I am sorry they are live and you can only soften the sound so much, which they already were." I often relayed this story to friends who were musicians and they just rolled over laughing.

During that time, Charlotte was a hub for textiles and the restaurant became a focal point for many of the overseas company executives. I had one owner that would regularly call me from Switzerland and go over his monthly visit. Here was where I got to excel in my creativity. Needless to say, he loved us.

My best review at the time was from a now-defunct airline, Ozark. I was featured several times as THE Up and coming young Chef and restaurateur. Next came a Television show called PM Magazine, I was featured both locally and nationally for my "High Tea." Life was great, I had my dream with every day a new challenge for creativity. Then, it all came crashing down.

My wife, who wasn't too keen on the restaurant part of the business, decided she wanted a divorce. I was so wrapped up in the business, that the restaurant became the mistress in the marriage and I didn't see we were drifting apart. I was completely blindsided and a little in shock. She got custody of my son; So, resilient that I am, decided to carry on with a new beginning. I closed the restaurant, loaded up all the equipment, brought along my chef, whom I had trained and moved back home to Jacksonville.

With a few modifications to the menu and a renovated former chain restaurant building, I opened to a tremendous success.

The uniqueness was, I maintained the ground level as a fine dining experience and required proper attire, the second level was more rustic and featured an open area looking down below. There, you could come dressed as you like and were served the same menu. It wasn't long before we started lunches in addition to dinner and even created delivery service lunches. My life began to bounce back.

Living on the east coast of NC is sandy and swampy home to many different insects and reptiles. One is chameleon lizards, There is no way to completely eliminate their appearance from your home or business. You just sweep them out or ignore them. The restaurant had a Florida Room, which we used for lunches. It was completely glassed-in with draperies and ceiling fans and a raised wood railing running along with the glass. One day, a visitor to the area let out a scream and called for me to come over. "You have rodents in your restaurant!" she shrieked. I looked over and saw the little lizard just quickly moving along the railing. I looked over at the lady and said "Don't worry, he's a lizard and won't eat much!" and then proceeded to explain how they come in through the doors, eat bugs, and are like pets. She begrudgingly continued her lunch. We had a resident one that loved to scamper above the Espresso machine and look at us as we made coffee.

My son came for a visit over Christmas and New Year. It was great having him there as I missed him a lot. The holidays over, it was time to put him on the plane back to Charlotte and his mom. A month went by and I received a call to come pick up my son. My wife couldn't handle him any longer; they never bonded as a mother and son and he was a hindrance to her career. I was so happy to bring my son to live with me; however, it was going to be very difficult with the new restaurant and all. My parents jumped in and offered to keep my son at their house during the week, seeing him when I could, and then take him over the weekend. This worked out great for a few months; however, he was my son and my responsibility. I brought him to live with me and began hiring a series of helpers to look after him while I was working. This was putting a big strain on me and I began seeking out a partner to both invest some money but mostly time. I found just the partner; he was a jeweler and looking for an investment. We divided up the load and my life was beginning to get better. This went on for some time when I started noticing something with my son. He was starting to act out and his grades were dropping.

I conferenced with his teacher and discovered that he felt abandoned. First, it was his mother and now, I was spending so much time with the restaurant, that he felt left out. The pendulum had now returned in full swing. My dreams and sacrifices were the food industry and my restaurants; however, I loved my son and didn't want him to grow up with any kind of stigmas. So, I did the next thing.

Unable to find a buyer, I waited till school was out for the year and then closed the restaurant. My son went to stay with his other grandparents for the summer and I set about reinventing myself. This took me to the NC mountains and helped a fraternity brother expand his restaurant. I also began consulting with the owners of a French restaurant near Grandfather Mountain helping them to reopen for the season. In addition, I was contacted by a local college about conducting cooking classes. My summer was well taken up. I really enjoyed all of the best parts of culinary without any of the pressure. As summer ended, it was time to decide where to live and what to do. I have always loved the beauty and serenity of the mountains but also needed to be in or near a city where I could find my special ingredients and enroll my son in school. Enter Asheville, North Carolina.

I first found the best school for my son, then sought to find a house nearby to rent. Mission accomplished. The school year started with both of us relocated. While I was making the decision to move, I also discovered only one real caterer was in town, Laurie Masterson. We became great friends, though competitors, and often helped each other out. Next, I began doing some more restaurant consulting and even some corporate work for a major food distributor. Later on, I formed an alliance with two other owners and created a Mountain style restaurant. Though the recipes were created by me, they gave that bit of NC Mountain appeal. The theme was apples and I even created a sweet-sour apple house dressing. We had a great run and then after a series of mishaps and my health issues, it was decided to close the restaurant. I continued catering and gained a reputation again for my ability to take the ordinary and turn it into something special.

I look back on my restaurant days and was so fortunate to have fulfilled my dreams. Competing in food competitions became a way of leaving my mark. Winning was even better

with gold and silver medals. Then winning NC's first hot foods competition, Asheville's first culinary showcase, Taste of Asheville, and more medals from CIA along with numerous other awards. It was nice to be recognized, but the rush of inventing something new or creating a different way of presenting food became the goal. All those years were worth it.

My final culinary experience lasted for over 14 years, using my talents to help create specialty soups and dishes for the homeless at a local crisis center. The look, smiles, and utterances of gratitude were plenty for me to know how much they liked and appreciated what I brought to the table and I was so honored that they got to enjoy my offerings.

Resource Directory

Historic Walking Tours

Stroll the neighborhood or downtown. Walking tours of historic Montford, Riverside Cemetery, Biltmore Village and downtown Asheville, call 777-1014.

Professional Stone Works

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- Peter Pfister, Owner
- 828.775.0095 • soaringpath@yahoo.com
- peterrocks.com

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How to Contact the Asheville Police Department



- For emergencies, call 911.
- For nonemergencies and to report suspicious activity, call 252-1110.
- For the Crime Prevention Division, call 259-5834.
- For Police Dispatch, call 259-5888.
- **Sarah Baker is our new Community Resource Officer. Contact her at sbaker@ashevillenc.gov**

Green Corner

Mitch Russell



I think we can all agree that 2020 has been a hell of a year. Corona virus, protests, the election, and everything in between. Definitely something not to recycle.

Given that it's the holidays and fall and a time to reflect I'd like to encourage all of us to do so regarding what we have. A warm house, three meals a day, warm clothes, trusted neighbors, and many more things we often take for granted. Now think about local business owners and their employees and what they may or may not have as compared to us and even their pre-corona virus selves.

In addition to reflecting on our fortune and the same and/or misfortune for local businesses and their employees, I'd like to challenge you to take action to assist those business owners and their employees by shopping local this season. Not just for a few things, but for most things. No, it won't be as convenient as clicking away online while ordering from Amazon, Target, Walmart, etc who'll deliver it to your door. It will however keep the doors open at Spiritex, Youngblood Bicycles, Wedge

Brewing, French Broad Food Co-op, and many others who have been a part of the community for years.

This brings me to my point of recycling that I mentioned at the beginning. The impacts that these businesses have on Asheville and surrounding communities are profound. Not only are they employing one or two to tens of people, but independent/small businesses also hire "freelance" attorneys, accountants, designers, and many others. They pay taxes and give back via monetary or in-kind donations, i.e. products, food, etc. The money that they bring in through sales is then recycled via their employees, "freelancers" and city and county government. Additionally, they are more likely to utilize another local small business vs a big box or national corporation when given the chance.

Although most of us do not want to see 2020 recycled in the near future or perhaps ever we can help to recycle our dollars by shopping local in the coming weeks.

Paul Dixon
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