

Former owner Mary McLendon's confession during trial last Wednesday led to discovery

A confession in the courtroom last Wednesday by Mary McLendon, former owner and operator of F&M McLendon Funeral Home in Wadesboro, resulted in the discovery of two corpses abandoned for at least two years in the F&M building, located on Highway 109 in Wadesboro. The building has been vacant for several years. After that gruesome discovery, law enforcement officers obtained a warrant to search a 30 acre parcel of land that belongs to the McLendon family, but nothing was found.

McLendon was on trial last week for failing to cremate the remains of Marshall Lee Allen, and was found guilty of Obtaining Property by False Pretenses. She was sentenced to 6-17 months in prison. The charges were brought against McLendon in 2012, based on allegations that she had accepted a payment of \$1,500 from Allen's family for the cremation, but never performed the service. The body had never been recovered.

During the trial on Wednesday, June 4 the judge compelled McLendon to reveal where Allen's body was located, so she accompanied officers from the Wadesboro Police Department and Anson Sheriff's Office to the F&M building where Allen's body was found.

According to WPD Captain Brandon Chewning, "The body was very decomposed and could not be identified. We then obtained a search warrant and searched further, finding another decomposing body in the building. We contacted medical examiner officers who picked up the two bodies. They identified the first body as Allen's. His family was notified."

"The original body was found in a back room wrapped in clothes in a casket. The second body was lying on a table," Wadesboro Police Chief Thedis Spencer said.

This past weekend officers searched a 30 acre parcel of McLendon property on Clemmons Road in Lilesville for several days. Cadaver dogs were used during the search of the property and four acre pond, but nothing was found.

As of press time law enforcement is awaiting the identification of the second body found in the funeral home building. Captain Chewning said, "We are waiting for medical examiners to identify the second body we found last week. McLendon has not revealed that information and is not cooperating at this point. Charges are pending on second body after identification. These will be felony charges, and McLendon will face additional jail time if she is found guilty."

The Wadesboro Police Department expressed their gratitude for help from the Anson County Sheriff's Office, the SBI, the Lilesville Fire Department, Anson County Emergency Management, the NC Forestry Service, NC Wildlife, the Fayetteville Police Department and the NC Emergency Management Task Force 5.

McLendon's troubles began with a separate situation in November 2010, after Sheriff's deputies discovered three corpses in her funeral facility that had not been cremated or buried. The N.C. Board of Funeral Services said McLendon told a law enforcement officer the bodies were people who had died that month. In fact, the board said, one of the deceased, Richard Bennett, had died five months earlier. Another, Willie Mae Odom, had been dead for six weeks, the board said. And Larry Kendall had died about a month earlier, according to the board's letter.

McLendon denied the claims, blaming the problem of the unburied bodies on the foreclosure her funeral home was facing. At that time she said, "I've been painted as a business person that has done wrong. Nobody has told the truth about how I conduct business." Those bodies were sent to another funeral home for cremation and funerals.

In 2012 McLendon lost her operating license because of those charges.

Town of Wadesboro Responds to Sweepstakes Article

Last week The Express ran an article about two sweepstakes operations that were busted by the Sheriff's Office on May 29. Ronnie Burr, Timothy Burr and Amanda Kessler were arrested in the raids. In the article Sheriff Tommy Allen said, "I do not understand how the Wadesboro Town Council could authorize the issuance of a business license (as they voted in their April meeting) to an operation that by statute is illegal. I don't understand their thinking when the law is very clear."

Wadesboro Town Manager Alex Sewel responded to that article. "It's always a pleasure to work with Sheriff Allen and his office. The Town certainly understands and respects the Sheriff's decision as a law enforcement official.

For the Town's position on the matter, please see below an excerpt from UNC School of Government's Business License Expert Chris McLaughlin."

McLaughlin's article states, "Should cities be issuing privilege licenses to new internet sweepstakes businesses? Yes, if the business pays the required tax. A privilege license is simply a receipt demonstrating payment of a privilege license tax. It is emphatically not the city's stamp of legal approval for a particular business.

From a tax perspective, it's important to remember that it's not the job of the privilege license tax collector to determine if a particular internet sweepstakes business is legal or is banned by GS 14-306.4. That's the job of the police or the sheriff or the district attorney.

It seems prudent for the privilege license tax collector to remind a new applicant of the ban on internet sweepstakes and that the city will not refund any portion of the tax if the applicant's business is later shut down by law enforcement (assuming, of course, that the city's tax ordinance does not authorize such refunds). But I do not think the privilege license tax collector has the authority to require the applicant to somehow prove that its business is legal before issuing a privilege license.

Nor do I think that a city may conclude that all internet sweepstakes are illegal and therefore refuse to issue any new privilege licenses for these businesses. As the many acquittals across the state under G.S. 14-306.4 prove, it's clearly possible for these businesses to utilize systems that escape the reach of the sweepstakes ban."

Sewell concluded, "Similarly, the Town does not take the position that internet sweepstakes businesses are legal. Each applicant for a Wadesboro Privilege License signs a form which contains the following language: 'The issuance of this privilege license is conditioned upon the applicant conducting business exclusively in accordance with Federal, North Carolina, and local laws, including all laws regulating gambling and sweepstakes machines. By issuing this document, the Town of Wadesboro offers no opinion as to the legality of an applicant's business.'"

Wadesboro Farmers Market is Now Open

The Uptown Wadesboro, Inc. Farmers Market is open every Thursday, from 4 to 6 p.m. Come the Square (corner of Wade and Greene Streets) and you will find a variety of produce and other food items from the area.

If you would like to participate as a vendor, please contact UWI at 704-695-1644.

Anson Farmers Market will Open June 21

The Anson County Farmers Market will be open June 21 to November 1. The hours are 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays. It is located on Highway 52 South near Wadesboro Primary School.

Be sure to come out and take advantage of great prices on locally grown produce and other items.

For more information contact Francis Campbell at Francis.Campbell@nc.usda.gov.

Deep Creek School Reunion is this Saturday, June 14

Everyone is invited to attend the annual Deep Creek School Reunion. This year's event will take place this Saturday, June 14, starting at 11 a.m. at Deep Creek Baptist Church. Please bring a covered dish, and enjoy fun and fellowship.

The Express mistakenly ran this announcement last week with an incorrect date. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Town of Wadesboro Announces New Event to Succeed Peoplefest

Peoplefest is back...kind of. In an effort to breath new life into a longtime Wadesboro tradition, Peoplefest, the Town of Wadesboro has announced that it has been renamed Taste of the Pee Dee. The event will be held the second Saturday in October - October 11 - just like always.

After taking a hiatus last year, Wadesboro's big fall event is back. "We have formed a committee and have renamed Peoplefest to Taste of the Pee Dee," said Wadesboro Town Clerk Cindi Pope, who is working hard to pull the event together. "We invite everyone to come and celebrate the southern way of life at this free, family-friendly festival in October. Among the activities are live musical entertainment, handmade arts and crafts, a 5k Run, the Discover Anson Bike Ride, children's activities, delicious food, and a people's choice' cook-off. We are accepting applications from vendors now, so even more variety will be added."

The festival starts at 9 a.m. (rain or shine) and runs until 9 p.m.

Here are some of the activities:

- **Climbing Wall**
- **Food** - Local food, including barbecue by the Anson Rescue Squad. There will be other local food vendors too.
- **Local Foods Bake-Off Contest** - For adults, presented by the NC Cooperative Extension.
- **Wine** - Local and regional wineries, including Wadesboro's own Southern Medley Wine Cellar.
- **Arts & Crafts** - Local arts, crafts and pottery.
- **Music** - Local band starts at 6 p.m. at Washington and Wade Streets
- **Children's Activities** - Face painting, Kiddie Tractor Pull (for kids under 75 pounds), "Creative Squash Contest," and more!
- **5K Run** - Presented by the Wadesboro Police Department. 9 a.m. Preregistration & fee to participate.
- **Discover Anson Bike Ride** - Presented by the Anson County Chamber of Commerce (30, 50 & 75 mile routes). Preregistration & fee to participate.
- **Other Vendors**

Applications for vendor booths are available at Wadesboro Town Hall, or you can get them online at cityofwadesboro.org. The website for Taste of the Pee Dee is tasteofthepeedee.com.

The event is free, the parking is free, and there will be lots to do and see. So, goodbye Peoplefest, it was 30 years of fun and fellowship...and hello Taste of the Pee Dee!

For more information you can contact Cindi Pope at the Town of Wadesboro at 704-694-5171 or wadesboroclerk@windstream.net.

DOT Plans \$3.2 Million in Repaving for Anson County

The N.C. Department of Transportation has awarded \$3.2 million in repaving in Anson County. It is part of about \$21 million worth of repaving work in Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Union and Anson counties.

Over \$82.5 million worth of projects has been awarded statewide in recent weeks by the DOT. The contracts went to low bidders, officials said.

Work on these contracts can start July 1 and must be completed by next June (2015).

In Anson County Barnhill Contracting won the \$3.2 million contract for work that includes 7.8 miles of N.C. 742, from south of Robinson Bridge Road to the South Carolina state line; and 2.7 miles of U.S. 52 from south of Diggs Road to north of the Morven city limits. Also in the contract is work on three sections of secondary roads.

Upcoming Events at the Ansonia Theatre

- June 28** The Malpass Brothers, 7:30
- July 12** David Burnham, 7:30
- July 13** Stanly County Singing Americans, 3:00
- July 19** Big Bang Boom Band (Kids' Concert), 3:00
- August 16** Gospel Sing, 7:30
- August 24** In One Era and Out the Other, 3:00
- September 6** The Sammie's, 7:30
- November 7 - 9** Steel Magnolias, 7:30 (Sunday, 3pm)
- November 14 - 16** Steel Magnolias, 7:30 (Sunday, 3pm)
- December 13** Sweet Potato Pie, 7:30

Compassionate Friends Meet Thursday

The Compassionate Friends, a support group for families who have lost a child of any age, meets this Thursday, June 12 at 7 p.m. in the Training Room at Pee Dee Electric, located on Highway 52 South in Wadesboro.

For more information call 704-694-8774 or 704-475-5005.

Board of Elections Regular Meeting is June 17

The Anson County Board of Elections will hold their regular meeting on Tuesday, June 17. The meeting will take place at 5 p.m. in the Boardroom.

The Board of Elections is located at 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro. The telephone number is 704-994-3223.

BRLC Summer Fun Day Camp

Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center will hold their Summer Fun Day Camp beginning Tuesday, June 24. The camp will be held Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., until July 24. Any student, aged 4 to 16, is welcome to enroll.

With the theme, "Children are Human's Greatest Seed," the camp will offer two nutritious meals each day, along with inspirational time, computer skills enhancement, and much more. Each student will continue to grow academically and socially during the summer months - enjoying days filled with fun, making new and lasting friends.

Youth volunteers will have the opportunity to earn volunteer service hours, plus learn job training skills that will be used when they become employable.

The fee is \$45 per child. If you register before June 20 the cost is only \$40. This small amount is the total cost for the entire 5 weeks of camp - including the two meals per day! Remember to register early to save \$5.

Contact BRLC as soon as possible to enroll your child.

Would you like to sponsor a student to attend the Summer Fun Day Camp? There were 57 children in the program last year. Sponsorships made it possible for many children who may have otherwise not been able to attend.

For more information about the camp or becoming a sponsor, please call BRLC at 704-826-8182 or 704-826-8737. BRLC is located on Highway 742 North, across from the Burnsville Fire Department. The address is 1961 Wightman Church Road, Polkton, NC 28135.

Healthy Living and Eating Seminar June 15

Pathway to Peace Ministries presents ANEWSTART, healthy living seminar and cooking class on Sunday, June 15, from 3 to 5 p.m. Learn how to cook plant-based foods that will heal you. Learn how to lose weight, have more energy, reduce cholesterol, reverse diabetes, lower blood pressure, and much more.

Interested? Come! Seminar and cooking class is FREE! It will be held at 11775 Highway 109 South in Peachland. For more information call 704-695-1441.

Parks & Recreation Youth Swim Lessons

Anson County Parks and Recreation will offer four Youth Swim Lessons this summer. These sessions will teach American Red Cross certified swim lessons.

- Session #1 June 16 - 26
- Session #2 June 30 - July 10
- Session #3 July 14 - 24
- Session #4 July 28 - August 7

Sessions are Monday to Thursday for two weeks. The cost is \$18 per session. Classes are open for registration until filled.

The schedule during each session is:

- Level 1: 9 to 9:30 a.m. • Level 2: 9:45 to 10:15 a.m. • Level 3-6: 10:30 to 11 a.m.
- Parent and Child, Preschool Aquatics: 11:15 to 11:45 a.m.

Contact Wendell T Small, Water Safety Instructor, at 704-694-5868 or 704-695-2782.



Kommander

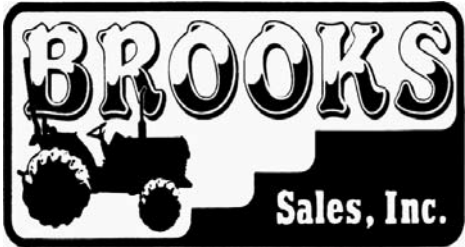
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