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Serving Anson County and the Municipalities of Ansonville, Lilesville, McFarlan, Morven, Peachland, Polkton and Wadesboro.

Wadesboro Police Department Participates in Bust of Major Drug Trafficking Operation

Federal criminal complaints were unsealed on December 6 in federal court following the arrest of eight individuals involved in a drug trafficking organization operating in and around Union County, announced Andrew Murray, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. Agents and officers with the FBI, ATF, DEA, ICE-ERO, the Monroe Police Department, the Union County Sheriff's Office and the Wadesboro Police Department executed the arrest warrants on December 5 during an early morning round-up.

According to allegations contained in the criminal complaints, the eight individuals arrested are members of the Garcia Family drug trafficking organization (DTO). Over the course of the investigation, which began in April 2019, the defendants operated as a drug conspiracy and allegedly trafficked narcotics, including heroin and methamphetamine, in Union County and surrounding areas. The complaints charge the eight defendants with conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine. Those arrested and charged are: Elio Garcia Godinez, 30, Ivan Jardon Trujillo, 47, Ivan Trujillo Garcia, 21, Eleonel Castrejon Garcia, 23, Estefani Garcia Sandoval, 25, Luis David Bravo, 36, and Miguel Benitez Castrejon, 39, all of Monroe, and Matilde Isaias Cruz Portillo, 35, of Atlanta, Georgia.

The defendants had their initial appearance December 6 before U.S. Magistrate Judge David S. Cayer. Their next court appearance was scheduled for December 11.

The penalty associated with the drug conspiracy charge carries a minimum term of 10 years and a maximum of life in prison and a \$10,000,000 fine.

The charges contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

In making the announcement, U.S. Attorney Murray praised the outstanding efforts of the FBI, ATF, DEA, the Monroe Police Department and the Union County Sheriff's Office for their investigation which led to the federal charges. U.S. Attorney Murray also noted the assistance provided by ICE - Enforcement & Removal Operations and the Wadesboro Police Department.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Erik Lindahl of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Charlotte is prosecuting the case.

This prosecution is part of an extensive investigation by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). OCDETF is a joint federal, state and local cooperative approach to combat drug trafficking and is the nation's primary tool for disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations, targeting national and regional level drug trafficking organizations and coordinating the necessary law enforcement entities and resources to disrupt or dismantle the targeted criminal organization and seize their assets.

Spectacular Christmas Shows to be Presented at the Planetarium

Also a program celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing

The Wadesboro Rotary Planetarium and Science Center is proud to present a variety of shows for the Christmas season. These free programs are projected onto the planetarium dome with breathtaking effects.

"The Star of Bethlehem" is a full dome planetarium show that takes us back to the little town of Bethlehem long ago where the birth of Jesus was announced to the humble shepherds by "a multitude of the heavenly host" and to the people of Israel by the arrival of the Wise Men.

Guided by the light of the "star that they saw in the east" they traveled far from their lands to "come and worship him." In our endeavor to investigate what this "Star" might have been, we present all the historical and scientific facts we have today in order to unravel this 2,000-year old enigma in a special audiovisual show that fills the audience with a sense of wonder and an air of innocence.

"The Season of Light", a 35 minute full dome video projected on the planetarium dome, is an elegant and sophisticated program about the coldest and darkest of seasons - a time which holds some of the warmest and brightest celebrations of the year. This presentation traces the history and development of many of the world's most endearing holiday customs, all of which involve lighting up the winter season - from the burning Yule log, sparkling Christmas tree lights and candles in windows, to the lighting of luminaries in the American Southwest and the traditional ritual of the Hanukkah Menorah.

"The Capcom Go! The Apollo Story" will also be presented during December to celebrate this year's 50th anniversary of man walking on the moon. An immersive, historical documentary that showcases the achievements of the Apollo program and what it took to put the first human on the Moon. This 26 minute program brings back memories of sitting in front of the black and white tv watching Neil Armstrong touch foot on the moon.

"A Tour of the Animal Room" is also included in the visit to the Science Center.

These programs were made possible by a generous donation from the James R. Braswell and Bonnie L. Braswell Trust Fund. There is no cost for admission, but donations are accepted to help fund science activities for our Anson County students at the Science Center.

Please call for a reservation since seats are limited to 20 per show. Please call 704-694-4417 Ext 1005 and leave a message to make a reservation. Be sure to designate time, date and number of seats.

Show times are as follows:

- Friday, December 20
10:00 am *Apollo Story*
2:00 pm *Star of Bethlehem*
- Saturday, December 21
2:00pm *Season of Light*
4:00 pm *Star of Bethlehem*
- Monday, December 23
10:00am *Apollo Story*



"On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me..."

"...nine young ladies twirling"! These MBM Twirly Girls enjoyed performing during their annual Christmas Show, held in the auditorium of Wadesboro Primary School on Monday, December 16.

They have also recently been selected to perform in the Walt Disney World - Twirl Mania Spectacular Night Parade on Main Street USA in February!

Pictured above, from left, are Sophie Goodwin, Ashley Cameron, Mallory Sikes, Emma Trexler, Chloe Drake, Anijah Williams, Kaeley Whitlock, Kaylie Burris and Kayla Carpenter. Congratulations girls!

Travis Steagall Named Principal of the Year, Tracy Preslar Named District Teacher of the Year

Educators recognized by the Anson County School System

Anson County Schools recognized educators for exceptional performance and dedication to our county's youth. The School Board, along with Superintendent Michael Freeman, honored the educators.

Dr. Travis Steagall, Principal at Peachland-Polkton Elementary School was named Principal of the Year for 2019-2020. Tracy Preslar, a teacher at Ansonville Elementary School, was named District Teacher of the Year for 2019-2020.

Teachers and Paraprofessionals from each school in Anson County were also recognized.

TEACHERS OF THE YEAR:

- Ellen Jeffries, Anson Academy High School
- Rhonda Benton, Anson County Early College
- Courtney Morton, Anson High School
- Frankie Godwin, Anson Middle School
- Tracy Preslar, Ansonville Elementary School
- Sharon Belcher, Lilesville Elementary School
- Abby Young, Morven Elementary School
- Heather Gerald, Peachland-Polkton Elementary
- Amanda Vann, Wadesboro Primary School
- Georgetta Williams, Wadesboro Elementary School

PARAPROFESSIONALS OF THE YEAR

- Kristen Mims, Anson Academy High School
- Ericka Chaney, Anson County Early College
- Lynn Edwards, Anson High School
- Sandra Spencer, Anson Middle School
- Lillian Maner, Ansonville Elementary School
- Connie Kiker, Lilesville Elementary School
- Favbeion Melton, Morven Elementary School
- Nakia Robinson, Peachland-Polkton Elementary School
- Constance Knotts, Wadesboro Primary School
- Natacha Deberry, Wadesboro Elementary School

Congratulations to all the honorees!



Travis Steagall (left) with Michael Freeman



Tracy Preslar with Michael Vetter (left) and ACS Superintendent Michael Freeman



2019-2020 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



2019-2020 PARAPROFESSIONALS OF THE YEAR

Town of Lilesville Christmas Holiday Schedule

The Town of Lilesville Town Hall will be closed Tuesday through Thursday, December 24, 25 & 26 to allow the employees time to spend with their families and enjoy the Christmas holiday. Garbage will be picked up on Friday, December 27.

Lilesville Town Hall will be closed on Wednesday, January 1, 2020, for the New Year holiday.

Town of Wadesboro Christmas Schedule

The Town of Wadesboro Town Hall will be closed on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, December 23-25 to celebrate the Christmas holiday. There will be no garbage collections on those days. The normal Monday and Tuesday garbage collection routes will be picked up on Thursday, December 26. The normal Wednesday and Thursday garbage collection routes will be picked up on Friday, December 29.

The Town of Wadesboro appreciates your consideration in allowing our employees time with their families during this holiday season. As always, you will still be able to leave your utility bill payments in the night deposit box at Town Hall.

If you have an emergency, please call Dispatch at 704-694-2167.

Anson County Government Christmas Schedule

All Anson County offices will be closed from Tuesday, December 24 through Thursday, December 26 for the Christmas holiday.

Emergency services will be operating throughout that time.

Free Movie is Meet Me In St. Louis

The Hampton B. Allen Library announces the free movie *Meet Me in St. Louis* showing Monday, December 23 at 10:00 a.m. in the Little Theatre.

Meet Me In St. Louis is a classic MGM romantic musical comedy that focuses on four sisters (one of whom is the nonpareil Judy Garland) on the cusp of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The film spotlights the sisters' education in the ways of the world, which includes, but isn't limited to, learning about life and love, courtesy of the prototypical boy next door. In the end, love -- accompanied by song, dance and period costumes, all in glorious Technicolor -- conquers all.

Everyone is invited to come and enjoy the movie.

For information call the library 704-694-5177.

The Express is on the web at www.TheExpressNewspaper.com