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## The Guardian

Henderson County Sheriff's Office Newsletter



August 2017

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### Message from the Sheriff

As I take a moment to reflect upon all that has taken place this past week in Henderson County, I realize what an emotional roller coaster our community has endured. I am both angered and saddened by the senseless loss of a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and in the words of so many others "a gentle friend" and a "Godly man". To realize that his life was stolen at the whim of a callous career criminal that saw him only as a means to an end; left us all angry and shaken. I was deeply gratified by the zeal and the compassion of a community of friends and good citizens who came out to offer their help in search efforts and who showered a distraught family with prayer and best wishes. I was frustrated by the pace at which usable information was being developed, although countless law enforcement agencies were working around the clock at a frantic pace to develop leads. My fellow Sheriffs across North Carolina were offering manpower and other resources, making themselves available "anytime, day or night". I was hopeful, as we developed leads and sightings of the vehicle in order to direct searchers into possible areas, to search

and hopefully find Mr. Bryson alive. Frustration and disappointment returned at the end of each unfruitful effort.

It has been said that in the darkest hours, God's light shines the brightest. In three specific areas I was greatly inspired by the light that I saw and moved to pen this very message.

First of all, I believe that we were all touched by the power of faith in God demonstrated collectively by the family of Mr. Bryson. This faith was also demonstrated by his close friends, the community of Mills River, across Henderson County and Western NC. Prayers for strength, for courage, for peace, for clues, for the safety of first responders and law enforcement officers were answered greatly, although the outcome of the search was not what we would have wanted.

As they always do, our first responders, community volunteers, churches and businesses stepped up to selflessly and tirelessly answer the call in a spirit of unity and compassion. Praying together for wisdom, crying out for peace for a wounded family, unified by compassion and duty, everyone brought all that they had. I believe our faith is at the core of what makes us a unique community and has helped to maintain and preserve the quality of life that we still enjoy today in our region of this great nation. With that in mind, let us not grow quickly cold and forget the power of that faith that God has chosen to reveal to us all in these past desperate days. It will certainly be required of us again.

Finally, I must also recognize the efforts of all law enforcement agencies and all of the sworn and nonsworn staff who willingly and stoically never faltered, never slowed and never gave up hope. Together we prayed, missed meals and sleep, put raw emotions and fatigue on hold and pressed forward with dogged determination. Certainly we felt compelled to catch and stop a criminal; but first and foremost, it was always about Tommy and his family. Nothing motivated "our family in blue" more deeply than to bring resolution and closure to an indescribably distraught family.

The vigil held along Highway 280 on Wednesday evening was a tangible and moving display of all these individuals; law enforcement, first responders, family, friends and community coming together to honor a man's life here on earth and celebrate his homecoming.

May God bless you all.

Sheriff Charles McDonald

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Mills River Document Shred & Pill Collection Event**

**Friday, August 18th from 10am-1pm**

**Mills River Park**

**124 Town Center Drive, Mills River**

### **Town Hall: Upward/Dana/East Flat Rock**

**Tuesday, August 29th from 6-8pm**

**Upward Christian Fellowship**

**991 Upward Road, Flat Rock**

### **Etowah Document Shred & Pill Collection Event**

**Friday, September 22nd from 10am-1pm**

**United Community Bank**

**50 United Bank Drive, Etowah**

### **Town Hall: Village of Flat Rock**

**Tuesday, October 3rd from 6-8pm**

**Flat Rock Village Hall**

**110 Village Center Drive, Flat Rock**

### **Town Hall: Henderson County (make-up date/townships invited)**

**Tuesday, October 17th from 6-8pm**

**Henderson County Sheriff's Office**

**100 North Grove Street, Hendersonville**

Henderson County Sheriff's Office  
Sheriff Charles S. McDonald  
100 North Grove Street  
Hendersonville, NC 28792

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