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Marshville Man Arrested in Connection with 1988 Murder of John Griffin in Anson County



Anson County Sheriff Tommy Allen announced on Tuesday, August 12 that Marshville resident Eddie Clyde Helms, 61, had been arrested by Union County Sheriff Eddie Cathey for two murders, one of which involved Ansonian John Terow Griffin III that occurred in 1988. The other murder victim was Charles Ronald Godwin on August 30, 2012 - 24 years after Griffin's murder.

Griffin was murdered on November 10, 1988. He was shot in the back while installing a TV antenna on his roof. This occurred in Peachland. Godwin was also shot in the back.

Helms was taken into custody by members of the Union Sheriff's Special Response Team at about 6:30 a.m. at his home, located at 6912 Fountain Hill Church Road. He operated a business called Prograde Professional Grading and Landscaping.

Helms' residence was being searched with evidence being collected as of press time Tuesday. The investigation of Godwin's murder led detectives to the Griffin case as evidence developed. A parallel investigation was commenced into the 1988 murder also. Evidence gathered built a case that resulted in Helms' arrest on Tuesday.

In both cases there are similarities. The victims were shot in the back by a shotgun. Evidence shows that neither victim saw their attacker because he snuck up on them in the dark. No information has been provided as to a motive for the murders. Sheriff Cathey did say that he believed, "anger and jealousy played a key role."

Helms has also been charged for allegedly stalking Godwin and a female acquaintance. Helms has been charged with First Degree Murder, Shooting into an Occupied Dwelling, and two counts of Stalking in the Union County case. He was also served a warrant for First Degree Murder in the Griffin death. He is being held in the Union County Jail without bond. He has a pending a court date of September 22 for the Anson County charge, and September 30 for Union County.

The Union County Sheriff's Office was joined in the investigation by the State Bureau of Investigation and the Anson County Sheriff's Office.

Back-to-School Bash is Saturday on the Square

The Back-to-School Bash will be held this Saturday, August 16 on the Square in Wadesboro, running from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Students will be given school supplies, school uniforms and shoes from Stride with Pride ... all for free! Colleges and universities will be there to provide information on preparing for college, the Safe Kids program by the Anson County Sheriff's office will have a demonstrations, music by local students and residents, food vendors, and more.

This is a free educational event for all children and their families in Anson County. If your child or children need school supplies, they should attend this event. All students must be present to receive a backpack, and they must visit with participating vendors before they receive any school supplies. Along with the educational vendors, there will be food vendors and local organizations present.

Please join Kesler Chapel AME Zion Church, HOLLA!, the Caraway Foundation, Sheriff Elect Landric Reid, and Back to School with Pride's Vancine Sturdivant this Saturday to show the students of Anson County that we support and care about them.

For more information or to help by volunteering, please contact Sarah Burns at 704-294-8023 or sarahtcf@gmail.com.

Here is the schedule of events:

- MC is Luke Hyatt (Football Coach - Anson County School System)
- 10 a.m. Invocation with Minister Tristan Cox, followed by Welcome from Rev. Rodney Moore and various mayors
- 10:10 a.m. Senator Gene McLaurin, Sheriff Tommy Allen, WPD Chief Thedis Spencer, county commissioners & various town council members
- 10:30 a.m. Rose of Sharon Youth, Daughters of Zion, DJ E-Rich
- 11:15 a.m. Superintendent Michael Freeman along with school staff & Board of Education members
- 11:30 a.m. Zumba with Chenisa Moore
- 11:45 a.m. DJ E-Rich
- 12 p.m. Speaker Dexter Scott
- 12:15 p.m. Fairview Church Youth
- 12:45 p.m. Keeondra Bennett
- 1-1:30 p.m. Autographs by AHS Football team & cheerleaders
- 1 p.m. Speaker Gary Bennett
- 1:15 p.m. Stride with Pride Shoe Drive with Sheriff Elect Landric Reid
- 1:30 p.m. Speaker Gary Henderson, Carolinas HealthCare Administrator
- 1:45 p.m. Performer D'Mond Cox
- 1:55 p.m. Vote of Thanks by Angela Caraway, Leon Gatewood & Rodney Moore
- 2 p.m. Send Off with AHS Football team & coaches
- 2:20 p.m. Closing Prayer with Rev. Larry King
- 2:25-3 p.m. Music by DJ E-Rich, Dancing

The Fracking Fight Heats Up in Anson County

Pee Dee W.A.L.L. invites all concerned Anson County residents to an urgent meeting on fracking Tuesday, August 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hampton Library in Wadesboro. Pee Dee W.A.L.L. Proposes to adopt a chemical disclosure resolution that can potentially stop fracking from coming into Anson County.

"If you have never been involved in environmental issues before, this is one issue worth fighting. I know you love your family and county too much to allow this great fracking tragedy to happen here," appeals Denise Lee, President of Pee Dee W.A.L.L. "For more info go to www.nccitizensagainstfracking.org, email peedeewall@yahoo.com or call 704-826-6324."

For the past year and a half Pee Dee W.A.L.L., a non-profit group of concerned citizens, has been working to protect Anson County's environment and natural resources from fracking. Fracking, also known as hydraulic fracturing, is a very controversial method which the gas and oil industry uses to extract natural gas out of shale rock. In order to frack one well, up to 10 million gallons of fresh water and sand tainted with a cocktail of over 500 hazardous chemicals is pumped into the ground. This tainted water can never be used again. It is hazardous.

Cary Rodgers, pastor of Pathway to Peace Ministries and community organizer with Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, said, "From my detailed research there is nothing good about fracking for Anson County. Reports from other states that have allowed fracking reveal that both well and municipal water systems are at high risks of contamination."

Rodgers continued, "Water is one of our most valuable resources, especially for our farmers. Once our water is contaminated with fracking's toxic brew it will never be the same again. Also there have been reports of increased air pollution, agricultural damage, sick livestock and an increased burden on rural community infrastructure."

Last spring 2013, Pee Dee W.A.L.L. along with other Anson County citizens were able to strategize and energize a grass roots effort to convince Anson County commissioners to place a five year fracking moratorium in Anson County. Pee Dee W.A.L.L. was victorious, but realized that was only a temporary "fence." Earlier this summer the NC state legislature made fracking legal statewide. Currently provisions in this law can legally challenge Anson County's five year fracking moratorium and try make it null and void. It is projected that the state will be issuing permits for oil and gas companies to drill as early as next spring 2015.

Lee said that, "Despite the legalization of fracking in the state, we can still put together more legal strategies to protect our water, air, lives, and assets in Anson County. Did you know that the current NC fracking rules now allow a fracking well to only be 650 feet from your house? Do you want that?"

Rodgers concluded, "We are still at great risk and the fight is heating up. We need each other to keep up the fight. This is not the time to sit and relax. Do you want a loud industrial, air and water polluting fracking well next to your country home or neighborhood? I did not move here for that!"

Compassionate Friends Meet Thursday

The Compassionate Friends, a support group for families who have lost a child of any age, meets at 7 p.m. on Thursday, August 14 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.



Rock Hill MBC Held their Annual Health Fair

The Rock Hill Missionary Baptist Church Nurse's Unit sponsored a free Annual Health Fair which was open to the community on May 31. The theme was "Complete Health Begins with You." Rock Hill Missionary Baptist Church is committed to helping our community lead productive, healthy lives.

The Nurse's Unit was borne from the vision of Pastor T. J. Horne. It consists of registered nurses and certified nursing assistants. The Health Fair was an outstanding way for our community to learn about health care and understand healthy life style options. These options include proper nutrition, correct hand washing, stress management, monitoring blood pressure and blood glucose, oral health, and women's health.

Hadija Horne discussed proper nutrition and how to nourish the mind, body and soul. Free blood pressure and blood glucose screenings were provided. Those with high blood pressure readings were told of the importance following up with the doctor to monitor the effectiveness of high blood pressure medications. Medicine bags and brochures explaining hypertension, and diabetes were provided. April Ratliff, a member of the Nurse's Unit, demonstrated proper hand washing, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The guidelines call for the singing of "Happy Birthday" twice to ensure clean hands and prevent the spread of germs. Michelle Carelock, also a member of the Nurse's Unit, held an interactive illustration on stress management and ways to overcome daily stress with proper diet, exercise, adequate sleep and communication.

Commissioner Vancine Sturdivant was accessible to acknowledge the community during the Health Fair. Ms. Sturdivant encouraged fun, fellowship, and announced the winners of door prizes. Landric Reid reviewed child car seat safety and its proper use to ensure protection while driving. The Wadesboro Police Department distributed brochures supporting gun safety and offered child gun safety locks to the community. The Lilesville Fire Department explained fire safety in the home and obtained names of individuals who needed smoke detectors - delivering smoke detectors to homes free of charge.

Organizers gave a special thank you to Dr. Lincoln, Dr. Lisa Bracey, and Mr. Samuel Cash who answered questions, and delivered a wealth of knowledge to the community on various diseases, signs, symptoms and instructions for general health in maintaining the theme of the Health Fair "Complete Health Begins with You."

The Nurse's Unit Leadership Team of Joanne Harris, President, and Tasha Carelock, Vice President, offered their sincere appreciation to members of the Nurse's Unit, vendors, and providers for reaching and giving back to the local community. Rock Hill Missionary Baptist Church is looking forward to next year's Health Fair. They are dedicated not only to crisis response, but to a proactive approach to first educate and equip the community with tools for holistic wellness.

Pictured above are, from left, front: April Ratliff, Rev. T. J. Horne and Tawanda Hamilton. Middle row: Eva Lindsey, Sylvia Knotts, Shameika Gaddy, Japonica Horne and Pamela Medley. Back row: Joanne Harris (President), Carrie Pratt, Tasha Carelock and Michelle Carelock.

The Arts Council and Ansonia Theatre Depend on Community Support

The Anson County Arts Council and the Ansonia Theatre have many exciting things on the agenda for 2014-2015. You can check out some of the upcoming events at www.ansoniatheatre.com or www.ansoncountycouncil.org. And, The Express will always keep you informed of everything going on.

The Arts Council's funding comes solely from sponsorships, donations, grants, and memberships. Nothing is possible without the help of the community, so they are launching their support campaign. You have an opportunity to sponsor the upcoming theatre season and/or Arts Council projects in the community and our schools.

Sponsorship levels range from \$100 to \$5,000 and include a variety of perks and benefits, some of which are advertising opportunities for you or your business. A family membership in the Arts Council is included with any sponsorship.

If you can help please contact the Anson County Arts Council (704-694-4950) for a sponsorship package. Any donation to the Arts Council or the Ansonia Theatre is tax deductible.

Sandy Bruney Releases New Book

Anson County writer Sandy Bruney's novel, *A Question of Boundaries* will be published by Astraea Press on August 26.

The story takes place in the late 19th century, but the United States is not the country studied in history books. Instead, it is ruled by the Jeffersonian dynasty and King Thomas the Fourth is on the throne. Moreover, due to the outbreak of a deadly plague after the War of 1812, its borders have been sealed ever since. No one has had contact with the outside world for 80 years.

When Caroline Featherstone's father, the famous inventor, disappears after declaring he has created a way to remove all boundaries, she enlists the aid of her local Member of Parliament, Nathan Llewellyn. Her comfortable life is turned upside-down when she realizes Nathan and his friends are not all they appear to be.

Then again, neither is she. *A Question of Boundaries* will be available on Kindle, Nook, and most other e-book sellers.

Bruney is the author of two mainstream novels, *Angels Unaware* and *The Lunch Club* and a memoir, *I'd Rather Go to California*. She is co-author with Elbert Marshall of a psychological thriller, *Plotz*. More information is on her website, www.sandrazbruney.com.



Benefit for Family of Jimmy Ratliff

Everyone is invited to come out for great food and fellowship at a dinner being held to benefit the family of Jimmy Ratliff. Mr. Ratliff passed away suddenly, leaving behind a disabled wife and two daughters. The event will take place on Saturday, August 16, beginning at 5 p.m. at Oakdale Baptist Church, located at 3304 Highway 218 in Polkton.

The menu turkey, dressing, all the fixings, tea and dessert. You can eat in or carry out.

Gospel Show at the Ansonia Sat.

You are invited to come to the Ansonia Theatre this Saturday, August 16 at 7:30 p.m. for An Evening of Gospel Music. The Red Hill Quartet will headline the event, and feature other performers as well. Tickets are \$5 with general seating. For more information call 704-694-4950.

Democratic Party Monthly Meeting

The Anson County Democratic Party will have their monthly meeting at the Hampton B. Allen Library at 6 p.m. on Thursday, August 21. All poll workers and citizens are asked to come to this important meeting. The Executive Committee will finalize the program for the Blue & White Gala scheduled for September 20 at the Lockhart-Taylor Center.