

WGTH ISSUES & PROGRAMS LIST

FIRST QUARTER 2024

JANUARY – MARCH

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS FRIENDS

Tazewell County's special needs population percentage is twice that of the United States. Showing love and compassion to special needs folks in Tazewell County and the surrounding area is important to make them know they are valued as important members of their communities. Demonstrating care and concern for the special needs citizens allows their caregivers to be aware of community support for the needs and concerns of caregivers, as well.

Program: Pre-recorded interview regarding the local "Night to Shine" event... sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation

Dates/Times/Duration: February 7, 2024 @ 11:30 am, and February 8, 2024 @ 6:45 pm/16 minutes

Guests: Allen Gross, Evangelist at Claypool Hill Church of Christ and Restart Worship and Rebecca Gibson Dye, Speech and Language Pathologist and church member involved with event organization

Claypool Hill Church of Christ and Restart Worship have a reputation of caring for those in need in the community. Evangelist Allen Gross and Rebecca Gibson Dye heard about "Night to Shine," a very special prom night experience sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation, for special needs people ages 14 and older. Rebecca, a speech and language pathologist with experience working with people with special needs, and Allen, known to have a compassionate heart, had a casual conversation about the possibility of getting together a group of volunteers from the church and going to one of the closest "Night to Shine" events in order to help out. They had, tentatively, chosen one in Kentucky as a possibility.

As Allen was researching where the events were being held, he decided to go ahead and inquire into sponsoring an event in Tazewell County. After quite a while, he received a response that gave him hope that an event could be held in the area. However, a lot of paperwork, volunteer and location commitments, and a significant number of interested participants among the local special needs

community were required. Gathering all the necessary personnel and having background checks done for safety purposes sounded intimidating for a small town area. Nevertheless, he and Rebecca, along with a group of volunteers that numbered around forty, decided to pursue hosting the event.

Allen reported that everything fell into place with the incredible cooperation of the community. The Tazewell County Sheriff, Brian Heiatt, offered free background checks and seven police officers were assigned to offer security. There was an EMT volunteer to be at the front desk in case of emergency. The director of the YMCA in the Town of Tazewell, Shawn Durham, was on board for having the event there. Noah Spencer, a hometown hero who had advanced well into the competition on “The Voice,” offered his services for the night. Chris Altizer, a local teacher, accepted the call to be the DJ. David Mullins, a local businessman, was willing to be on hand to announce the arrival of each guest as if they were a celebrity. Ramey, a local automotive dealership, agreed to provide special vehicles to shuttle the guests to the front door for a grand entrance. Many offered to be a part of the paparazzi that would line up on both sides of the “red carpet.” Provisions were, also, made for a “Respite Room,” karaoke, selfies, crowns for each guest, and some special sensory considerations for the individuals in attendance as guests.

Additionally, there was a tremendously generous outpouring of financial contributions. So much was donated that there was a surplus that can be used for next year’s event to be bigger and better. Allen and Rebecca explained that once an organization is approved to host an event, the approval is good for as many years as there are resources available and a desire to host “Night to Shine.” Rebecca, who has a heart for working with special needs individuals as she has done for twenty-four years, said that she hoped the church would continue to take the lead in hosting this event for years to come to give the special guests a night they would always remember.

The last requirement to be fulfilled was the commitment of, at least, 75 guests. There were only 42 signed up on January 1st, but 102 was the number at the time of the interview in early February. Allen invited any listeners who would like to have their special needs family or friends in attendance to call or text to register. Only the guests and the approved volunteers would be allowed on the dance floor, but caregivers were welcome to view the event from the balcony.

HUNGER AWARENESS AND FOOD FOR THOSE IN NEED

Hunger will always be a problem for many people. However, those with means to help are, usually, willing to do so... especially if they are made aware of specific plans to fight hunger that include a reputable distribution organization and/or location from which those in need can receive food. When caring people of integrity and a willingness to work hard are involved, contributions of food and money abound from those that are thankful for the ones doing the hard work.

Program: Pre-recorded interview regarding “Souper Bowl of Caring”

Dates/Times/Duration: February 7, 2024 @ 11:30 am, and February 8, 2024 @ 6:45 pm/16 minutes

Guest: Rebecca Gibson Dye of the Claypool Hill Church of Christ and Restart Worship

In a portion of the interview regarding “Night to Shine,” Rebecca Gibson Dye, of the Claypool Hill Church of Christ and Restart Worship, shared about a ministry in their church that is near and dear to her heart. The “Souper Bowl of Caring,” she explained, was started in 1990 with a prayer from a church youth group. They began to raise awareness of hunger and to provide food for those in need, annually, in late January and early February in conjunction with the NFL’s Super Bowl. They accomplished this by collecting money and cans of soup and other nonperishable food items and calling it, the “Souper Bowl of Caring.” Rebecca said that the idea spread to many other churches. To this point, at least \$170 million worth of food and money have been collected to fight hunger through the “Souper Bowl of Caring.” Rebecca’s mother, Peggy Gibson, had been in charge of the ministry at their church. Rebecca took over the ministry at their church when her mother went Home to Heaven in 2019. She encouraged those interested in helping out to call or text for more information.

PROVIDING A SAFE PLACE FOR TEENS TO ENGAGE IN FUN ACTIVITIES AND TO DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS

Teens, especially at-risk youth with difficult situations at home, need places to hang out with friends in a fun and safe environment with adult supervision and positive influence. Teens need to find activities that interest them and may lead to productive career choices. Knowing that their community has cared enough to provide a nice facility, entertainment options and resources, and free snacks, as

well as, people that care being present and available should show teens that their community values them and their future.

Program: Live remote interview regarding “Teen Venture” at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/10:04 am/7 minutes

Guest: Annmarie Burks, Executive Director at the Teen Venture Center

Annmarie Burks, Executive Director of Teen Venture, spoke on behalf of the nonprofit organization and the center in which it is housed. Teen Venture is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization located in Richlands, Virginia. It was started by area business professionals, church leaders, educators, and others that were wanting to provide a safe after school environment for middle and high school age youth. Annmarie said the center is open Monday through Friday from 3 until 8 pm. There are some special events that take place there on some Saturdays. The ages of the youth at the center are from 13 to 19 year-olds. She said that those with disabilities are welcome. It is an all-inclusive facility. The cost of membership is \$40 each year. Area churches, charitable organizations, and individuals donate food items, pallets of water and other drinks, and money in order to provide snacks for the teens. Town of Richlands water bills allow for \$1, \$3, or \$5 donations.

There is a long list of activities offered to participants... a large indoor skate park, a rock climbing wall, boxing club, basketball, an art studio, game room, computer lab, music studio, broadcast studio, movie room, and an internet café. Annmarie said that Teen Venture works closely with local businesses, other youth-oriented organizations, and the local community college in order to help teens to know what career opportunities are available to them and to assist them in finding where their personal interests lie. The activities in which they participate and the respectful adult interaction help them to develop skills for business and for life. For example, Annmarie said that leaders from the community came to remodel part of the center and showed the teens how to hang sheetrock and how to use various tools. The youth, also, participate in service projects in the community.

Annmarie shared the fact that quite a few of the teens come from difficult home situations. They come to the center and stay as long as possible, because they do not want to go home. Mental health, she said sadly, was crucial these days. Suicide awareness, coping skills, and avoiding drug abuse were topics that needed to be addressed with most of the participants.

THE VALUE OF HONEYBEES AND THE WINTER HONEY FESTIVAL

For quite a few years, honeybees have become the center of attention during the month of February, also known as Winter Honey Month. Their importance as pollinators and the value of the honey they produce has become the focal point of the annual Winter Honey Festival in the Town of Richlands and the surrounding area. The festival has drawn the community together in many ways and provided an unusual economic boost to the area during a season when activities are, normally, at a minimum.

Program: Pre-recorded interview regarding the upcoming Winter Honey Festival

Dates/Times/Duration: January 30, 2024 @ 7:06 pm, and January 31, 2024 @ 11:30 am/26 minutes 42 seconds

Guest: Dr. John Willis, Coordinator of the Richlands Winter Honey Festival

Dr. John Willis, coordinator of the Richlands Winter Honey Festival shared a wealth of specific information regarding the dates, times, and locations of a wide variety of activities that would be taking place in February. He shared some background information about the importance of honeybees and Winter Honey Month, as well. Dr. Willis stated that the Commonwealth of Virginia officially declared February to be Winter Honey Month three years ago. As far as Richlands is concerned, the festival has been a vehicle to promote beekeeping and to promote unity for the community by providing a means for citizens to work together for the good of the community. It has, also, been a financial asset, according to Dr. Willis.

Program: Live remote interview from the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/9:42 am/12 minutes 30 seconds

Guest: Dr. John Willis, Coordinator of the Richlands Winter Honey Festival

Just prior to the 10 am opening of the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition, Dr. John Willis, the festival's coordinator, was interviewed about a variety of topics concerning honeybees, what to expect at the Grand Exposition, and several of the remaining activities that would be taking place throughout the remainder of the month of February. Dr. Willis noted that there were, at least, 55 vendors in attendance. He, also, noted that there was more honey available for purchase than there had ever been in past festivals.

When talking about honey and honeybees, Dr. Willis pointed out that no bacteria lives in honey. Water sucks out the bacteria. This is a major factor in its value for medicinal purposes. Furthermore, the welfare of honeybees was somewhat improved and that may be due, at least in part, to the increased knowledge of beekeepers. Beekeepers' ability to split hives and to do other things to promote healthy hives may be making a difference. Dr. Willis said that there is still a 30% to 40% loss of hives in the United States annually.

When asked about his talk at Historic Crab Orchard Museum to kick off the celebration of Winter Honey Month, Dr. Willis gave a synopsis of "Honey of the Holy Lands." This was the topic he chose because of his recent trip to Israel. He said that when Joshua and Caleb talked about the land "flowing with milk and honey," some scholars theorized that the "honey" was, actually, syrup made from dates. He does not agree, stating that Sumer and Babylon already had beekeeping, bees were found in tubular hives that dated back to 1,000 years before Christ, and there was evidence of organized beekeeping before the time of Christ. He showed samples of honey from three distinct regions of Israel. The color and taste of each varied according to the types of plants used by the bees, the weather in each location, and other related factors.

When asked about plants used by local honeybees in Tazewell County, Dr. Willis said the first honey would come from trees, such as poplar and maple. The "big one" would follow and be most prevalent, namely clover. The last would consist of such plants as wingstem and goldenrod. He said the goldenrod would "light up the night," having a nuclear appearance.

Program: Live remote interview from the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/9:58am/6 minutes

Guests: Jason and Ainsley Deel, owners of Haysi Supply Company

Jason and Ainsley Deel, owners of Haysi Supply Company in Dickenson County, were in their sixth year of providing a wide variety of beekeeping supplies. They had full hive kits that were assembled, smokers, insulated hives that were "almost bear proof," swarm traps, and other items of interest or necessity to beekeepers. They, even, had "Mountain Mike's Remedies Sting Stop" that was a great help to beekeepers or anyone prone to getting stung.

Program: Live remote interview from the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/10:21 am/4 minutes

Guest: Dr. Tom Bays, local beekeeper and instructor for this year's beekeeping class

Dr. Tom Bays is a local beekeeper. He invited anyone interested in beekeeping to attend the "Beginning Beekeeping" class that he will be teaching at the Teen Venture Center the next Saturday, February 17th beginning at 10 am and lasting a couple of hours. This time only there was to be no charge for the class.

As of this year, he has been keeping bees for 15 years. He has mentored several folks over the years, including some young people. He said he is not sure of how many. Tom stated that he will always be grateful to Herley Blankenship, now deceased, for mentoring him when he began. At his booth at the Grand Exposition, Tom was selling honey, beeswax candles, homemade baklava, and candies... all of which he had made himself.

LOCAL AND AFFORDABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Getting an education and/or training for a job requiring specific skills and knowledge are nearly essential for employment that will yield a salary sufficient for supporting oneself and, maybe, a family. Being able to go to a local community college and having it be affordable is a dream-come-true for many area students. Opportunities are available for most people, but awareness and taking action are necessary.

Program: Pre-recorded interview at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/12:40 pm/4 minutes

Guest: Mandy Barrett, representative from Southwest Virginia Community College

Mandy Barrett represented Southwest Virginia Community College (SWCC) at a booth at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition. When interviewed, she said that SWCC offered more than 90 programs of study, and there are lots of financial aid opportunities. Programs of study last from four weeks to two years, according to Mandy. Some are credential-based training that allows for students to enter the work force quickly upon completion. Others are transfer programs where the students will take two years of classes and, then, go on to finish at a four year college or university. Mandy indicated that some students qualify for an education

at no cost. She said that dual enrollment classes – where credits were received for high school and college simultaneously – were offered to qualified high school juniors and seniors and, occasionally, sophomores, too. This is a great “jump start” on college, according to Mandy. Mandy added that SWCC’s athletics includes more than 14 sports and additional club sports. The student housing is, also, an important addition at SWCC for those that live at a distance.

RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Caring for heart health is important for a body’s total wellness. Knowing possible symptoms that could lead to a heart attack is helpful in receiving intervention prior to a major incident. Realizing the need to act quickly in case of a heart episode is crucial to the best possible outcome.

Program: Pre-recorded interview at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/12:45 pm/2 minutes 43 seconds

Guest; Natasha Ramey, health care professional representing Clinch Valley Medical Center (CVMC)

Natasha Ramey, a health care professional from Clinch Valley Medical Center, spoke about February being National American Heart Month. She reminded the listeners that CVMC is an accredited chest pain center. Natasha explained that bodies go down like dominoes. If the heart is not healthy, the entire body is at risk. She revealed important symptoms for which to be on the lookout. Aside from the expected chest pain, many women have jaw or tooth pain. Fatigue and shortness of breath are two additional symptoms of which to beware. She warned those experiencing symptoms not to drive themselves to the hospital but to call an ambulance if transportation is not available. Quick response is urgent, as she stated that the most significant heart damage happens within the first two hours, Calling 9-1-1 tends to get professional medical attention up to an hour sooner than not calling, according to Natasha. She, also, mentioned that fatigue and shortness of breath could occur up to three weeks prior to a major incident.

MAKING AN IMPACT THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE

People of all ages can make an impact in their community through serving. The type of service may vary according to age, but providing resources and doing so creatively can make a huge difference. Being generous is always a great quality.

Program: Pre-recorded interview at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/12:53 pm/2 minutes 38 seconds

Guest: Debbie Damron, representing the Richlands Women's Club

Debbie Damron, representing the Richlands Women's Club, was wearing red in recognition of National American Heart Month. When asked about the Richlands Women's Club, Debbie said there are currently 17 ladies, and they do lots of service projects. She gave a number of examples. They have made disposable washcloths for Legacy Hospice. They have provided pillows and baskets full of toiletries for the Women's Domestic Shelter in Tazewell. They have provided throws and snacks for the children at the Care Center. Their most recent project was a \$100 donation to Teen Venture for snacks.

PROVIDING FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO RENOVATE AND EQUIP THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Public library funding is seldom sufficient to provide all the services and resources that the library staff would desire to offer. Providing books and digital assistance, paying staff and paying for basic maintenance probably consume most of a library's budget. Anything over and above would need to come from additional funding.

Program: Pre-recorded interview at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/12:40 pm/1 minute 17 seconds

Guests: Wendy Brady and Jane Sorensen of the "Friends of the Tazewell County Public Library" (TCPL)

Wendy Brady, of the Friends of the Tazewell County Public Library, explained that their mission is to provide funding for programs and materials not covered by the regular budget. They, especially, focus on children's programs... giving money for materials quarterly. They, usually, give money for the children's summer entertainment, as well.

Jane Sorensen, of the Friends of the Tazewell County Public Library, gave a funding challenge to the listeners for a special competition they have going.

Program: Pre-recorded interview at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/1:18 pm/9 minutes 48 seconds

Guests: Aaron and Regina Roberts, beekeepers and community leaders
Regina is, also, on the Board of the Tazewell County Public Library (TCPL)

During an interview with Aaron and Regina Roberts about a variety of topics related to honeybees and the Winter Honey Festival, Regina spoke about the connection of the festival and the Tazewell County Public Library since the festival began. Dr. Willis has made awareness of the renovation project of the Richlands Branch of the TCPL a part of the festival since its inception. Regina has worked for five years on the TCPL Board... seeking to raise funds for the renovation project and attempting to see it through. She says the much-anticipated elevator is on its way.

For its part, the TCPL has worked in conjunction with the festival by participating in book readings and by creating very nice honey and honeybee related take home activity packets for children at no charge. They have, also, had a nice display of children's books about bees and honey in each of the three TCPL branches during February to celebrate Winter Honey Month.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN BUSINESSES TO SHOWCASE THEIR BUSINESSES AND/OR SERVICES

There is a large Christian community in Richlands and the surrounding area. Although Christians support local businesses that are not distinctly Christian, there is a comradery among Christian small business owners and service providers. Some of the Christian small business owners and service providers have very creative ideas, but they need exposure to market their ideas, wares, and/or services.

Program: pre-recorded interview at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/1:18 pm/9 minutes 48 seconds

Guests: Aaron and Regina Roberts, beekeepers and community leaders

Regina Roberts, with help from her husband Aaron, has been organizing a new event in conjunction with the Winter Honey Festival. It is called "Bee a Blessing." The event is scheduled for Saturday, February 24th from 10 am until 4 pm at the Richlands Tabernacle Family Center. The purpose of the event, according to the Roberts, is to allow the Christian business community to showcase

their businesses and/or services that they provide. The setup will be similar to the Grand Exposition, but on a smaller scale. Approximately, 25 vendors have already signed up to participate.

Additionally, during the interview, Aaron made some remarkable educational comments about honeybees. He said that a healthy hive contains around 60,000 bees. Honeybees work well in community. Aaron said that, in order to communicate directions to available pollen, they do an amazing “waggle dance” based upon the direction of the sun. He, also, stated that – in just one day – the distance that an entire healthy hive will travel to get their pollen is equivalent to going to the moon and back twice. He related these facts to the importance of small things in life and encouraged listeners to “dance and live in the light of the Son.”

OPPORTUNITIES TO BRING THE “CREATIVE” OUT OF PEOPLE

Oftentimes, people are so busy in life that they cannot, or do not, take the time to pursue activities and hobbies that they might really enjoy. Many people do not realize a talent or skill that they have until they give it a try. With a little help from an artsy-craftsy person with a knowledge of techniques and proper tools, some people find that they have a lot of “creative” in themselves... just ready to burst forth.

Program: Pre-recorded interview at the Winter Honey Festival Grand Exposition

Date/Time/Duration: February 10, 2024/12:32 pm/5 minutes

Guests: Ramona Simmons, owner of House & Barn Collectables where there is now space for craft classes, and Janet Christian, a painter with certification as a Bob Ross instructor

Ramona Simmons, owner of House & Barn Collectables in Richlands, increased the size of her available space in her building so that she could offer craft classes to those who would like to try something new. She introduced Janet Christian, a very talented painter with Bob Ross instructor certification. Janet talked about learning to paint and, now, helping others to be able to paint, as well. She and Ramona talked about classes that she would be teaching at Ramona’s place of business.

Ramona expressed a desire to offer a wide variety of classes. She invited anyone who would like to teach a craft to get in touch with her. She, also, welcomed all those who had not tried their abilities to come take some classes.

