

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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## Zoning Board affirms town's ruling in Shearl case

At the Jan. 14 Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing, the board upheld both 2009 Zoning Board rulings and the 2013 Superior Court ruling affirming a zoning violation issued by the town to John Shearl of J&J Landscaping

for having commercial activity on the residential portion of his split-zoned property on NC 28.

The board voted 4 to 1 that the town, represented by Attorney J.K. Coward, satisfactorily presented evidence and met the required

burden of proof that the zoning ordinance amending the depths of Shearl's split-zoned property – from the original 1988 depth of 230 feet from the center line commercial to 150 feet from the center line commercial in 1990 –

was in effect when Shearl purchased his property in November of 1993.

Charlie Dasher voted against affirming the ruling; Vice Chairman John Underwood, Michael Rogers,

• See SHEARL page 6

## MC teacher bonus plan outlined for the state

By Merritt Shaw

In a specially called meeting on January 15, the Board of Education approved a Differentiated Pay Plan Response which is a proposal for Macon County Schools to be considered one of the 16 out of 115 school districts chosen to participate in a state funded pilot program for differentiated pay bonuses.

The response outlined how the School Improvement Committees feel the bonuses should be distributed and included serious reservations in regard to the original plan handed down by the state last year. The response was written by School Improvement Teams made up of teachers, parents and administrators from each school in Macon County.

Macon County School Superintendent, Dr. Chris Baldwin said it was important to note concerns with the original pay for performance plan, but appreciates the opportunity to come up with a pay plan that is the district's as opposed to something the general assembly or someone

else comes up with.

Baldwin said, the district's plan is based on two main things – the ability to offer a \$1,500 signing bonus for hard-to-staff positions and on performance based upon EVAAS (Educator Value Added Assessment System).

The hard-to-staff positions are Exceptional Children teachers, middle and secondary math, science and alternative school positions. He said Macon County has a unique problem in recruiting qualified candidates who will take positions in the two K-12 schools that are geographically isolated -- Highlands and Nantahala.

Concerning performance, without knowing how much the state will provide for bonuses, the response says each school that 'exceeds growth' would receive a portion of the allocated amount and then the school improvement team would decide how those bonuses are dispersed within the school with final implementation of that plan coming from a majority vote by the faculty.

• See BONUS page 13



At Saturday night's Highlands Fire & Rescue Awards Banquet held at OEI's Spring House, Eric Fielding was named "Fireman of the Year." Pictured with him are Asst. Fire Chief Robbie Forrester and Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

## Fire Dept. honors its own

It's an annual affair, but one whose purpose should be remembered and celebrated – the fact that the Highlands Fire and Rescue volunteers respond to citizens' calls 24-7, in all weather, 365 days a year.

Mayor Pat Taylor and MC Commissioner Vice Chair Jim Tate, who is a member, commemorated the service HFD does the Highlands community but also

the mentality behind it ... they run into burning buildings while everyone else runs out, said Mayor Taylor.

Commissioner Tate said due to his commission duties, he hasn't been a very good fireman the last few years, but his heart is with everyone in the department. He reminded all of the dedication – even having to get up from

• See FIRE page 3

### • INSIDE •

Mayor on Duty.....	2
Letter .....	2
Winter Dining.....	4
HS Sports.....	5
Events .....	8
Spiritually Speaking.....	10
Police & Fire Report.....	13
Classifieds.....	14

## Donations and more discussed at TB meeting

At the Thursday, Jan. 15 Town Board meeting, among other things, designating the small parking spaces on Main Street for compact cars and accepting a donation to rework the planters was discussed.

There are several parking spaces on Main Street whose length is encumbered due to the trees next to the sidewalk. As it is now, oftentimes vehicles parked in those spots extend into the travelway on Main Street, which is a hazard

Commissioner John Dotson said since those spaces are too small for regular size pickup trucks, SUVs and extended vehicles, they should be designated just for compact cars.

The board agreed to designate the spaces for compact cars but the way to do that wasn't fi-

• See TB MEETING page 6

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Understanding the tax reveal



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

County property tax revaluations have been mailed out. There is good and bad news for residents in the incorporated area of Highlands. On average there has been a 15% decrease in property values in the unincorporated areas of Macon County. In some areas, such as Nantahala and Scaly, it is even more. The good news for the Town of Highlands is that the average decrease is only 4.7%. For Franklin even less of a decrease. Apparently, living in a municipality has become very desirable.

As a Highlands homeowner, I am glad my property has not lost 15% of its value. I had rather pay a few hundred dollars more in yearly property tax instead of seeing my house lose thousands of dollars in value. Admittedly, I am a math simpleton, but over a decade if I pay, say \$3000 or \$5,000 more in taxes, but end up selling my house for \$100k more because of its high evaluation, well it sounds like a win for me. I know some folks on tight incomes don't see it that way.

During the recent recession home values took a big hit, so apparently there

is a Highlands real estate come back. Some may counter that in recent years homes sold well below their tax appraised value. On the other hand, there has been a significant up swing in the market this past year, the time of the appraisal process. The average Highlands home sale price in 2013 was \$498,000. It went up to \$611,000 in 2014. While some older properties have declined, new homes are selling at premiums within Highlands. Downtown business properties also remain high. I met with the head of the Macon County Tax Office, Richard Lightener. He showed me his data that supports the 4.7% figure for properties within the town limits. The good news is that the small decline in property values in Highlands means a small adjustment, if any, of the town's 15.5 tax millage rate. That rate translates to 15.5 cents of tax per \$100 of property value. The town commissioners will decide whether to slightly adjust the rate later this year.

Now the bad news. Many town property owners will pay more in Macon County taxes. The county is required to make a revenue neutral adjustment to the county millage rate in order to maintain the current level of tax revenue. The revenue neutral formula developed by the county calls for about a 3.3 mils increase to the county tax rate. The concept behind the revenue neutrality is that whether property values increase or decrease, the tax rate is adjusted to where the county collects no more or no less tax revenue. The overall collections will remain the same, that is stay neutral, unless the board of commissioners vote for a tax increase.

For county taxpayers with property decreasing by 15%, their tax bill will remain the same even though their millage rate will increase by 3.3 mils. If a home's value has gone down below 15%, less taxes will be paid. The increase in the millage rate will not be a tax increase for taxpayers with property declines at the 15% average or more. But, if a property has not decreased in value by 15%, let's say only by 4.7% like most Highlands property, then the owner will pay more in county property tax since the 3.3 mils is applied across the board. The neutrality formula may not seem all that neutral if one's property has held its value

• See MAYOR page 4

## • LETTER •

### Silver Lining

Dear Editor,

There will most likely be some conversation over the coming days regarding the outcome of the John Shearl vs. The Town of Highlands lawsuit that both parties have been embroiled in over the past five years at considerable expense to both. Unfortunately, there were no clear winners in this case.

After hearing seven hours of arguments by the lawyers including the testimony from nine or ten witnesses, and after an abbreviated and truncated review of nearly fifty exhibits, consisting of over two hundred and fifty pages of documents and maps during that same time period, the Highlands Zoning Board was tasked with rendering a decision. We had to do so in a compressed timeframe and without the benefit of any private consultation among ourselves, and under the glare of all involved including the litigants, town officials, local press and several attorneys.

Although I have enjoyed the notion of serving our beloved community in some small and minuscule way, for the first time in my four years as a zoning board member, I felt the weight and consequence of these issues for both parties. Personally, I wondered if I was qualified for this task, and I could not find the right or the wrong in this case. It seemed to me that both parties were partly at fault for the dispute and misunderstanding at hand. However, we were not given the option of splitting this baby, or to implore upon the parties to work out their differences in an amicable and neighborly way among themselves.

After considering the overwhelming

amount of information the best that I could in the amount of time and in the forum that was allowed, my vote was a lone dissenting vote from the other four board members. My vote was, no, the Town of Highlands did not meet the burden of proof that it bore in this matter, and that the NC Court of Appeals had found that it bore in an earlier ruling regarding this case. My "no" vote may be considered by some as a vote against the Town of Highlands. It was a vote against the town. It was a vote for a more accountable to its' citizens and, therefore; a better town.

For me, there was credible evidence on both sides for the litigants to make their respective cases for and against, however; the nearly even balance was tipped for me, and my decision was primarily informed by the testimony given by Richard Betz, who was in charge in an official capacity of those matters at that time. I still stand by my independent decision, and "no" vote, but I fully respect and support the wisdom of the overall board on this matter, and in that sense, a judicious decision has been rendered. I also hope for both parties sake, that this matter is over and finally resolved, and that they can both move on and learn and gain in some way by this tedious and costly experience.

The silver lining in this litigious and taxing exercise for the citizens and taxpayers of Highlands may be that the current and highly qualified staff, and other town officials at Town Hall, are now fast about the business of improving its records

• See LETTER page 11

## • CLARIFICATION •

In the Jan. 8 edition, in the article "Dramatic increase in flu cases alarms health officials," Becky Barr of the Macon County Health Department was misquoted in the following paragraph: "There is a limited amount of vaccines available at this time, even though we are in what is typically the peak of the flu season and there is a higher number of flu cases this year as compared to in the past."

The paragraph should have read: "There is a limited amount of vaccines available, at this time, and we are in what is typically the peak of the flu season and yet there are a higher number of flu cases this year as compared to in the past. According to Barr, Macon County Public Health currently has no plans to order additional vaccine; however this may change in the future based on community need."

We regret the error and are happy to set the record straight.

Barr said there is currently plenty vaccine available in the community,



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### Letter Policy:

We reserve the right to reject or edit letters-to-the-editor. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands Newspaper.

# ...FIRE DEPT. continued from page 1



New Officers: 2nd Lt. Hunter Leffler; 1st Lt. Roger Lee Wilson; Asst. Chief, Robbie Forrester; Capt. Matthew Wilson; Rescue Capt. Eric Pierson; Rescue Lt., David Leffler; Sec/Treas. Lenny Metrick; Chief Ryan Gearhart; and Member at Large, Eric Fielding.



Perfect Attendance: Jimmy Petrone, Roger Lee Wilson, Matthew Wilson, with Asst. Chief Forrester and Chief Gearhart.



Years of Service Pins: Asst. Chief Forrester, 20 years; 1st. Lt. Roger Lee Wilson, 25 years; Jamie Barnes, 5 years; Travis Ramey, 10 years; also pictured Chief Gearhart.

## Christmas dinner.

Chief Ryan Gearhart also thanked the wives and families, who put up with their early morning and late night hours and who graciously accept the intrusion into their personal lives.

Recognized were the Fireman of the Year, officers for 2015, new members, those with perfect attendance and those who have hit the 5-, 10-, 20- and 25-year mark with the department.



New Members and Jr. Firemen: Lea Dallmann and Austin Forrester. Not pictured: new fireman Paul Corbin and Jr. Firemen Benjamin Miller and Bert Zachary.

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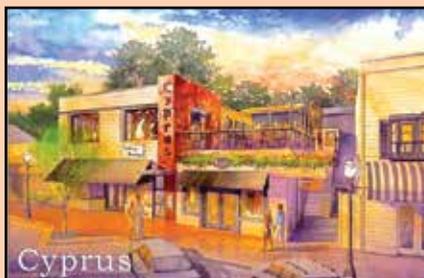
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## ...MAYOR from page 2

or increased. There are winners and losers in the revaluation process, including your mayor who has seen a 10% increase in his home's value.

So what does this mean for Highlanders? The town will be carrying even more of the tax load for Macon County than in the past. Some past estimates were as high as 50%. For many it is the painful truth, for others an often ignored fact. I want to make sure constituents understand where most town residents will fall in the overall revaluation process.

Now I am not passing the buck, but please don't expect us folks at Town Hall to adjust your property revaluation. Municipalities cannot by law do the property assessments. The county tax assessor is charged with the revaluation of all parcels in a county. Appeals to a revaluation are processed through the county tax office. The Macon County Tax Office has posted a complete PowerPoint presentation with information and examples concerning the revaluation process at: [www.maconctax.com](http://www.maconctax.com). It also outlines how citizens can appeal their assessment to a county board of adjustment. The front counter at Highlands Town Hall also has brochures from the county that have information about the tax revaluation.

To be clear, the Highlands town property tax is collected by the Macon County Tax Office, who receives a small fee for doing so. For Highlands residents, the tax bill has a breakdown of the county tax and the town tax owed. Some town folks look at the total bill and assume that it is all town tax. The Highlands tax bill is just over 1/3 of the total tax bill.

To be fair, county taxes support major government responsibilities like the public schools, the sheriff's department, the landfill and fire departments. There are additional social and health services mandated by the state and federal government for the county to staff and operate. The county also funds most of the Highlands Recreation Department since all county residents have access to the facility and programs.

Highlands has been the most prosperous area in the county. This little hamlet of 940 permanent residents has a substantial portion of the real estate value in the county, therefore a big, collective tax bill. It is the price we pay for living in a highly desirable community. With that said, we all enjoy some of the lowest county and municipal tax rates in the state.

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# • HS SPORTS •

## Varsity Basketball

Tuesday, Jan. 13, the teams hosted Hiwassee Dam.

The Lady Highlanders went into halftime behind with a score of 32 to 18. They came out in the second half and played strong but ended with a loss of 67 to 37.

High scorers were Ann Marie Crowe with 9 points and Kirstyn Lamb and Courtney Henry with 7 points each.

The boys came out playing a very strong game. They went into halftime behind 29 to 25. They came out in the second half playing a very intense and close game but lost 46 to 43.

High scorers were Johnny Lupoli with 23

points and Brent Amundrud with 14 points.

Saturday, Jan. 17, the teams hosted Walhalla.

The girls went into halftime behind 31 to 17 but came out in the second half playing a very close game but lost 54 to 50.

High scorers were Whitney Billingsley with 16 points and Madison Lloyd with 11 points.

The boys went into halftime behind 31 to 23 and ended up losing 61 to 47.

High scorers were Brent Amundrud with 28 points and Johnny Lupoli with 10 points.

—Sierra Nylund



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## ...SHEARL continued from page 1

Jack Peay and Sam Green voted to affirm. Chairman Steve Chenoweth was absent.

### Back Story

In September of 2014, the NC Court of Appeals determined the burden of proof verifying the existence of an amended 1990 zoning ordinance and map did not fall on Shearl as originally ruled by the Superior Court in 2013, but rather on the town.

As such, the Superior Court sent the case back to the Highlands Zoning Board of Adjustment to be heard again. The town was to provide evidence that the zoning map and ordinance were amended – decreasing the dimensions of the commercial part – prior to Shearl's purchase.

In both scenarios the residential portion begins at that demarcation line – whether from 230 ft. mark or the 150 ft. mark – and extends to the rear property line abutting a residential neighborhood.

The problem is the 1990 Zoning Map verifying the change has been lost – neither Shearl nor the town can find it.

Prior to the establishment of its own mapping department, mapping for Highlands was contracted out to surveyor Charlie McDowell and the Division of Community Assistance in Asheville and finally to the Macon County Mapping department.

Though the Superior Court said the 1990 map would be the best evidence, the town could submit other evidence verifying the amended map and zoning ordinance changing the demarcation of his split-zoned property.

Long story short – and it was a long story complete with 29 exhibits from Shearl's attorney Craig Justus, several exhibits from Coward as well as witnesses

• See SHEARL page 11

## ...TB MEETING continued from page 1

nalized.

Signage was discussed, as was stenciling on the pavement or on the curb face. Planning Director Josh Ward said the town was trying to diminish its signage but ideas will be presented at the February Town Board meeting.

### Donation

Miguel Ortega of Palillos Stone Masonry has joined the recent lineup of philanthropists making donations to the town.

With the completion of the Third Street wall, Ortega has offered to rebuild the four planters on Main Street to match the walls on Third and Oak at the Town Hall complex – for free.

Of course the town accepted the generous donation only noting that steel pipes be placed on the parking space side of the planters to ensure their safety from vehicles. That's something the town will do.

The planters will be rebuilt one at a time to the same dimensions as the old ones and the material and equipment will take up two parking spaces.

### Hydro-Electric Plant

During the public comment portion of the Town Board meeting, Tucker Chambers urged the town to retain ownership of the hydro-electric plant below the Sequoyah Dam on the Cullasaja River which a company from California is trying to claim.

“This could be a second resource for power and the citizens should have a say in the hydro-plant decision,” he said.

Chambers said after repairing the plant for the estimated \$4-\$5 million, it would eventually produce income for the town and should be phased in as a capital outlay item after the repairs are made to the Lake Sequoyah dam and the intake valve is up and running.

Mayor Pat Taylor assured Chambers that he has heard and is listening to everyone about the FERC application and he and staff are monitoring the process. He also said he is will be announcing a hike down to the plant and will encourage citizens to join him.

### Town Manager Report

Town Manager Bob Frye reported that the pool contract has been signed, materials ordered and construction has begun on the glass enclosure which will cover the pool and make it a year-round facility.

The lowest bids for work inside the Civic Center were opened and accepted, too.

The main level restroom bid and interior painting of gym walls was awarded to Warth Construction; the Floating Gym Floor was awarded to Carolina Hardwood & Construction; the Motorized Bleacher

• See TB MEETING page 13



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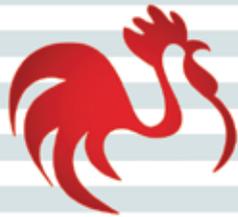
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A DIFFERENT FULL DINNER EVERY NIGHT. SERVES FOUR SERVING MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY FROM 4:30 UNTIL WE SELL OUT - CALL AHEAD TO RESERVE.

**MONDAY:** CHOOSE EITHER: FOUR CHICKEN AND FOUR CHEESE ENCHILADAS, REFRIED BEANS, MONTEREY RICE, HOMEMADE TORTILLA CHIPS, SALSA, SHREDDED LETTUCE, TOMATOES, SOUR CREAM OR... 24 BUFFALO WINGS OR 2 LBS CHICKEN TENDERS AND HAND CUT FRIES  
*\$19.95 SERVES FOUR.*

**TUESDAY:** MADE IN-HOUSE ITALIAN SAUSAGE LASAGNA AND A LARGE HOUSE SALAD  
*\$19.95 SERVES FOUR*

**WEDNESDAY:** CHICKEN OR STEAK POT PIE AND A LARGE SALAD  
*\$19.95 SERVES FOUR*

**THURSDAY:** ROASTED MEATLOAF WITH MASHED POTATOES, GRAVY AND A LARGE SALAD  
*\$19.95 SERVES FOUR*

**FRIDAY:** WILD CAUGHT FRIED SHRIMP, BAKED POTATOES, HUSH PUPPIES AND COLESLAW  
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**SATURDAY:** IN-HOUSE SMOKED BBQ, COLESLAW, APPLE AND BACON BAKED BEANS, AND YEAST ROLLS  
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# HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS

## Ongoing

The Cub and Boy Scouts of America have three drop offs for worn and tattered flags. They properly retire them. Drop offs at Highlands Doors and Windows 2242 Dillard Road, the Highlands Fire Station or Highlands United Methodist Church office. Contact Phil Potts for more information 828 526-3719

## Monday

Shortoff Baptist Church hosts a non-denominational Men's Meeting the first Monday night of each month at 7 pm and all men are invited to attend.

## Tuesdays

Reading dog "Beebles" will be at Hudson Library every Tuesday at 3:30pm. Please call (828)526-3031 to register.  
Free Community Table Dinner at the Community Bldg. at 6p.

Zumba at the Rec Park at 8:05a. \$5.

## Starting Tues., Feb. 24

12-week NAMI Program to educate families dealing with mental illness, 6:30 to 8:30p. The course has the dual focus of education, and understanding the experience of living with mental illness. Confidentiality is maintained. Class size is limited and pre-registration required. Contact: Ann 369-7385 or Linda 369-9838

## Mon., Wed., Fri.

- Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.
- Zumba at the Rec Park at 9:05a. \$5

## Wednesdays

First Baptist Church is happy to present a new season of X-treme Games at the Highlands Rec. Park. The games will be held Wednesday nights from 6 to 7:15 pm. For more information or to pre-register your k - 6th grade child, please call 526-4153.

## 1st Wednesdays

Family Movies at the Hudson Library at 3:30pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

## 3rd Wednesdays

General Audience Movies at Hudson Library at 2pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

## 1st & 3rd Thursdays

Free local ongoing support group for caregivers. Are you involved with the care of a loved one who is physically or mentally facing challenges? Sponsored by The Counseling and Psychotherapy Center of Highlands and the Highlands United Methodist Church, this group meets at 4 p.m. at Room 203 at the Peggy Crosby Center. Facilitated by Bonnie Gramlich, a licensed professional. Drop in or call for further info, 828.342.0546.

## Thursdays

Storytimes with Miss Carol at Hudson Library 10:40am. Open to the public.

Highlands Writers' Group meets every Thursday from 1-3:30 pm at Hudson Library. Writers of all genres welcome. For info call 526-8009 or 526-2295.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) offers a peer support group for individuals that are dealing with depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar, schizophrenia, etc. and the family members or friends of loved ones dealing with these challenges. Join us in a safe, confidential environment to share concerns and gain insight. Join us for our Weekly Support Group from 7 - 8:15 pm @ 14 West Palmer Street in Franklin NC, email dcwithnami@yahoo.com, Donita (828) 526-9510.

## 2nd Thursdays

Sapphire Valley Needlepoint Guild meets at the Highlands Rec Park at 10 a.m. Newcomers welcomed.

## Last Fri. of each month

Weight Watchers support group meets every Thursday at 6pm at the Cashiers Community Center. Questions? Call Lisa 828-506-3555.

Community Coffee with Mayor Pat Taylor from 11a to noon at The Hudson Library.

## Sundays

At the Mountain Laurel Tennis Club at 4:30 pm. Multi-denominational, Interactive Bible Study and Fellowship. Open to all.

## Thurs., Jan. 22

PAC Youth Theater informational meeting at Highlands School at 9:30a in the Media Room.

PAC Youth Theater informational meeting at Blue Ridge School at 12:15p in the commons area.

## Sat, Jan. 24

The Highlands Plateau Greenway monthly work day from 9a- noon. If you are interested in participating, please email Ran Shaffner at highlandsgreenway@nctv.com or leave a message at 828-526-5622. We'll meet at the large upper parking lot (near the pool entrance) behind the Recreation Center at 9:00 AM for a brief orientation session, where you will be furnished with the necessary tools and safety equipment.

PAC Youth Theater auditions at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street at 1p. For more information call the Performing Arts Center: 828.526.9047.

American Legion Post 370 Special Called meeting at 2 p.m., at the Highlands Civic Center on N. 4th St, Highlands. The purpose is to discuss the continuation of the post and to offer all veterans a chance to become familiar with the Legion's programs and possible membership. For more information, call Ed Jones at 828-743-0986 or Jack Greve at 828-389-0263.

The Friends of the Scottish Tartans Museum and Heritage Center present THE BURNS NIGHT DINNER honor-

ing the 255th anniversary of the birth of poet Robert Burns on Saturday at 5:30 pm in Tartan Hall, Franklin Presbyterian Church. Tickets available at the Scottish Tartans Museum (828-524-7472) or tartans@scottishtartans.org. Reservations by January 20, 2015

Live HD Series at the Performing Arts Center at 7p. National Theater of London Treasure Island. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047.

## Sun., Jan. 25

The Live HD Series at the Performing Arts Center presents the Bolshoi Ballet live from Moscow performing Swan Lake at 12:55 p.m. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047.

## Tues., Jan. 27

Two Ladies Night Out Programs on Healthy Eating. The guest speaker will be Jeffrey Whitridge, RD, CSO, LDN. Healthy eating starts with learning new ways to eat. One will be at 4 p.m. and one will be at 6:30 p.m.

At the Tuesday Men's Night Out Program, the topic will be Financial/Investments. The guest speaker will be Russell W. Hawkins, II, Financial Advisor with Edward Jones. The meeting will be at Angel Medical Center in the Video Conference Room on the 3rd floor, at 6:30 p.m. For more info call Don Capaforte at 349-6887 or Dawn Wilde Burgess at 349-2426.

## Friday, Jan. 30

Community Coffee with Mayor Pat Taylor is held on the last Friday of each month at the Hudson Library in the Meeting Room from 11am 'til noon. This month's subject: Town Board issues and upcoming retreat.

## Sat., Jan. 31

At the Satolah Fire Dept., chili, music and more. Eating begins at 5p: \$6 plate includes chili, cornbread and a drink. Take out available. Music begins at 6p. Oliver Rice and Mark Visage. Auction items. Cake Auction. All money raised goes to the Clear Creek Baptist Church to help with its furnace replacement cost.

## Live HD at PAC this weekend



The Live in HD Series continues at the Performing Arts Center next weekend. Saturday, January 24 at 7 p.m. the National Theatre of London presents Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island; a story of murder, money and mutiny. Suitable for 10 years and over. On Sunday, January 25 at 12:55 p.m. the Bolshoi Ballet presents live from Moscow the classic ballet, Swan Lake. An unforgettable tale of ideal love and good versus evil. Don't miss these two remarkable productions. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047.



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# • AREA EVENTS •

## PAC Youth Theatre auditions this Sat.



The PAC Youth Theater is starting its NINTH SEASON! Join us for auditions at the Performing Arts Center on Saturday, January 24th at 1pm. Informational meeting will take place at the schools Thursday, January 22nd. Highlands School: at 9:30am in the Media Center and Blue Ridge School: at 12:15pm in the Commons Area. Come see what all the FUN is about for actors, tech crew, front of house, costumes and much more. For more information call the Performing Arts Center: 828.526.9047. Pictured are Tiffany Preda, Katy Potts and Dean Zuch in the 2014 production of Little Women.

**Live in HD Series**

<p><b>Treasure Island</b> Saturday, January 24 7pm Suitable for 10 years &amp; over</p>	<p><b>Bolshoi Ballet</b> Live from Moscow <b>Swan Lake</b> Sunday, January 25 12:55pm</p>
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Highlands PAC 507 Chestnut Street  
Tickets available online: [highlandspac.org](http://highlandspac.org) or by calling 828.526.9047

## ...SPIRITUALLY from 10

somed them by dying on a cross and shedding his own blood as payment. Those who know Christ relationally know they belong because they know others who walk in similar power and life-on-life experiences are powerful. Those who know Christ know love because God is love. Those who know Christ know they have someone to follow who will walk with them to reach their destination.

Those who don't know Christ seek in their own way to earn such things. God forbid this world gets an even greater hunger for these needs to be met while rejecting Christ as the answer. You think this age is violent? It's going to get even worse. I read ahead in the book. It's not pretty. Remember what he said, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the father except through me" (John 14:6).

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## Why ISIS?

By Gary Hewins  
Community Bible Church

On the darker side of things, why do people do what they do at seemingly great expense and potential loss of life?

Why would a man here in this country decide to leave the safety of the United States only to go to Syria and join the fight with ISIS as a radicalized fighter? Why do two masked men systematically execute a whole office of newspapermen in downtown Paris? Why systematically execute innocent children? Or for that matter, why does a young teen on the streets of Chicago join a street gang?

All of these endeavors are obviously evil in their intent yet they exist because they meet incredible needs present in every person in the human race. That's right, every person.

These incredible needs also exist in people who join causes that are for the good of mankind. Our motivation for joining causes is quite common in every person. Sometimes those motivations are so intense that we as humans engage in anything to have our needs met. Why do you think we have issues with sex, drugs, eating disorders, pornography, greed, etc.?

What are these unmet needs that thrust men and women into almost any initiative to have these needs met? These needs will always be the same because we are each sinfully deficient whether we like it or not. Another thing, we are going to have these needs met no matter what.

We have a need for significance. We have a need to belong. We have a need for purpose. We each have a need to follow. We have a need to be loved. In any context where these needs are not being met we will get them met.

All religions on earth that teach a way to happiness, Nirvana, knowledge, prosperity, eternal life or a better Karma end up disappointing. ISIS provides a way to purpose, mission, eternal life, significance and belonging to thousands of young men who couldn't discover such within their own religion or culture or family or themselves. In many respects they aren't that different from the rest of us. They just go to incredible extremes.

No religion can meet these needs though they all attempt to do so. By religion, I mean an organized set of beliefs that provide a way to a spiritual deity and a transcendent lifestyle. No religion works. Rather than religion consider this word—"Relationship"

Christianity is different because of the following: Jesus didn't teach a way to anything. He said, "I am the way." He didn't describe a way to a better life. He said, "I am the life." He didn't prescribe a means to discover a subjective moral truth. He said, "I am the truth." He is an all-inclusive package.

So apart from lifeless religion is this relationship he calls every person into. Knowing him alleviates the need to eradicate anyone who doesn't know him for there no longer exists any threat. To know him is to experience belonging. To know him is to have purpose. To know him is to know love. To know him is to have significance. To know him is to have someone to follow. Every need we have in life, and we all have them, is met in knowing Christ in a relational context versus a religious context.

ISIS exists because these basic human needs are not being met in terrorists by a religion that promises that they will be.

In conclusion, those who know Christ know they are of value before they do anything in his name because he ran-

• See SPIRITUALLY page 9

## Proverbs 3:5

### BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965

Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7

Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore, Pastor

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

### CHAPEL OF SKY VALLEY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

Sundays: 10 a.m.: Worship

Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month

Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer w/Holy

Communion

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011

464 US Hwy 64 east, Cashiers

Sun.: 9:15a Christian Education at Buck's Coffee Cashiers

Crossroads; 10:30a Faithful, Family Service w/ Music &

Communion.

Mon.: Bible Study & Supper at homes - 6 p.m.

### CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas • 743-5470

Sun. 10:45am, S.S 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.

Tues. Guys study 8am, Gals 10am.

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

Wednesdays - 7 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbhighlands.com • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC

Senior Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun.: 9:30am: Sunday School

10:30am: Middle & High School; 10:45am: Child. Program,

10:45am: Worship Service

Wed.: 5pm Dinner (\$7 adult, \$2 child), 6pm CBC

University

### EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. Bruce Walker • 526-2968

Sundays: Eucharist Rite I 8a in chapel; Education

and choir rehearsal, 9 am, Holy Eucharist Rite II,

(sanctuary), 10:30

Wednesday: 10 a.m., Morning Prayer

Thursdays: Holy Eucharist, (chapel), 10 am

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor

220 Main Street, Highlands NC 28741

Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Prayer Mtg 6:15 pm;

Choir 5 pm

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

Sun.: Worship: 11 a.m.; School: 9:30

Mondays: 8 a.m.: Men's Prayer Group & Breakfast

Wednesdays: Choir: 5:30p

### GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

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## John 3:16

## PLACES TO WORSHIP

### HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville, Nc • 743-2729

Pastor Nathan Johnson

Sunday: School 9:45a, Worship 11a & 7p, Bible Study 6p

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

### HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed, Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street

Sundays: Worship: 11

### HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson

670 N. 4th Street (next to the Highlands Civic Center)

Sun.: Morning Worship 10:45 a., Evening Worship, 6:30 p.

Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

### HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376

Sun: School 9:45a.; Worship 9:09, 10:50.; Youth 5:30 p.

Wed: Supper: 5:15; youth, & adults activities: 6; Handbell

rehearsal, 6:15; Choir Rehearsal 7. (nursery provided)

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Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11, Choir: 6 p.m.

Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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828-369-9270 or 828-293-5197

### MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

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Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

### SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

Wed: Adult Bible Study & Youth: 7 p.m.

### SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 7

### THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 South, Office: 743-2359

Rev. Dr. Virginia Monroe

Oct-May: Sunday Services: Rite I, 8a Rite II, 10:30

June-Sept: Sunday Services: Rite I, 8a, Rite II, 9:15 & 11a

Nursery available for Rite II services

Sept 7- Oct 26- Informal Evening Eucharist- 5:30 p.m.

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

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Religious Education - 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

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### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am



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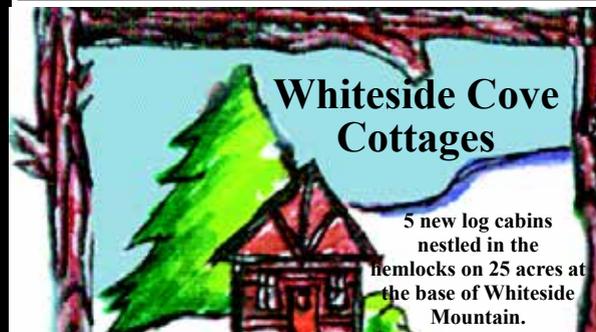
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# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**The Highlands Police log entries from Dec. 28. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

**Dec. 28**

• At 4:38 a.m., Alec Devon Schmitt, 25, of Boston, MA, was arrested for DWI on 6th Steet.

**Jan. 2**

• At noon, officers were called about a larceny at a residence on Cullusaja Drive where a flat bottom kayak was taken while the owner was away from the home.

**Jan. 4**

• A little past midnight, officers responded to a call of assault and battery at a residence in High-

lands Walk Town Homes.

• A little past midnight, Scott C. Lagessie, 43, of Navarre, FL, was arrested for simple assault at Highlands Walk Town House.

**Jan. 6**

• At 4 p.m., officers responded to a call of a man being threatened with the tire tool at a residence on US 64 west.

**Jan. 9**

• At noon, the dept. responded to a two-vehicle accident on NC 28.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Jan. 5.**

**Jan. 5**

• At 10:16 p.m., the dept. assisted Scaly Mountain F&R in a search.

• At 10:26 p.m., the dept. stood

by at the hospital for the MAMA helicopter.

**Jan. 7**

• At 7:39 a.m., the dept. responded to a laundry fire at the hospital.

**Jan. 8**

• At 6:14 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Main Street.

• At 7:20 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Main Street.

• At 1:37 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers FD on a structure fire at a residence on Whiteside Cove Road.

• At 6:43 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Highlands

Mountain Club.

• A little past midnight, the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers FD.

**Jan. 10**

• At 12:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Church Street.

**Jan. 14**

• At 8:31 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Broadview Circle.

**Jan. 16**

• At 3:06 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Hickory Trail.

• At 6:49 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Flat Mountain Trail.

• At 9:19 p.m., the dept. re-

sponded to a possible gas leak on Main Street.

**Jan. 18**

• At 8:10 a.m., the dept. provided traffic control on Horse Cove Road.

• At 10:14 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Buck Creek Road.

**Jan. 19**

• At 7:32 a.m., the dept. stood by for the MAMA helicopter at the hospital.

• AT 1:27 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers on a structure fire.

• At 3:44 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Upper Divide Road.

## • BIZ/ORG NEWS •

### Highlands Middle School collects donations for MC Animal Shelter



During the month of December, the Highlands Middle School Student Government Association held a fundraiser for the Appalachian Animal Rescue Center in Franklin. All students from Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade were asked to participate in this supply drive to benefit homeless animals of Macon County.

The students were asked to bring contributions of pet food, pet supplies, cleaning products, linens, and toys to assist the shelter in its efforts to help the animals. The class that donated the most supplies was rewarded with an ice cream party. Mrs. Dooley's kindergarten won the party.

Cathy Howman, the shelter director, was very grateful for the generosity of our students. "This is wonderful!" she said. "These supplies are really needed." She described how the shelter benefits from the donations of community members and how much the efforts of Highlands School students are appreciated.

Ms. Howman and her assistant, Ms. Shlatter, extended an invitation for the students of Highlands to come to the shelter to volunteer or tour the facility.

### ...BONUS continued from page 1

Those schools that 'meet academic growth' would receive 25% less per student than the schools meeting 'exceeding growth', but the parameters are the same, he said.

The amount each school receives will be based upon that school's ADM (Average Daily Membership) which is a count of students that is taken at different times of the year to satisfy local, state and federal data collection needs and to ensure that school districts are adequately funded, according to student population.

The committee felt that

it was important to state that the bonuses needed to be equal across all job descriptions. "We felt all the teachers and employees at the school should receive the same amount with the alternative school teachers included," said Baldwin.

According to Baldwin the state will use the \$10 million that was set aside for the original bonus program for the top 25% highly effective teachers last year to fund this pilot program and \$3 million will be taken from another pot for a total of \$13 million – "not a lot of money to work with," he said.

School Board Attorney, John Henning said there are aspects of the session law that are unclear. "The session law calls for the funding to be a teacher pay program but it is not clear whether you can spread the money across an entire school. A lot of districts are doing the same thing as Macon County and it's a good approach, but who we will actually be able to give bonuses to is yet to be seen."

The response was due by Jan. 15.

### ...TB MEETING continued from page 6

and Goal System was awarded to Learning Environments.

Total for the projects is \$279,786.16 with the Williams donation paying for \$235,000; \$44,786.16 will be appropriated from the town's undesignated fund balance.

He also said rain has impeded the draining of Lake Sequoyah – it was halfway down to where it needed to be to repair the dam but rain filled it back up again. Two more pumps have been ordered to maintain the flow of drainage, so the project is back on track.

He also said steel plates have been installed under the bridge on US 64 west to retain water in Big Creek so that the water plant can continue to operate properly.

**Landscaping bids**

Mountain Hardscapes was

the low bidder on all the town's landscaping contracts this year.

Those include Highlands Park and Recreation, Pine Street Park and Amphitheater, Zachary Park, Highlands Memorial Park, and general Town Landscaping.

Commissioner Dotson said since the town appears to be changing contractors year to year, that this year's contract as well as contracts in subsequent years, should include verbiage giving the town permission to swap out contractors to the next in line if the town isn't satisfied with the work during the course of the year.

**Personnel Study**

David Hill from HR Essentials Consultants presented the results of the recently completed Salary and Position Classification

Study where statistics from like municipalities were used to determine if Highlands' pay scale was on par with other like municipalities. Except for five positions, it is at the minimum grade.

He recommended the town adopt the Pay Plan with the placement of each employee in the appropriate salary grade, at the minimum or current salary, whichever is higher, and develop a methodology for the future advancement of employees both horizontally and vertically within the Pay Plan.

The cost to bring the five positions up to the minimum scale as compared to other municipalities is \$16,348.20, excluding Retirement and F.I.C.A.

The five positions are Street Maintenance Equipment Opera-

• See TB MEETING page 14

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## LOTS/LAND FOR SALE

**LAND FOR SALE IN CLEAR CREEK:** 2.18 acre parcel has road frontage on Mack Wilson Rd. \$17,000. Any reasonable offers will be considered. Call 828-526-2874. (st. 10/23)

**FOR SALE BY OWNER** - 3 building lots in the gated community of Rustic Falls. Macon County tax records value at \$51,000 each. Must sell due to health reasons. Asking \$15,000 each. Call owner at 803-640-6004. (St. 5/1)

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## ...TB MEETING continued from page 13

tor, Assistant Fire Chief, Fire Chief, Lead Tree Trimmer, and Finance Director.

Commissioners adopted the study and its findings but opted to discuss implementation specifics at its worksession set for Feb. 12.

### School Resource Officer

Mayor Taylor explained ongoing discussions he has been having with the county concerning the Highlands School Resource Officer (SRO)

Some years ago, the town decided to staff and pay for the SRO at Highlands

School which is a member of the Highlands Police Department.

Since Sandy Hook, the county and the sheriff's office have been striving to install SROs in all the schools. These are paid with county funds and Mayor Taylor has been in discussion with the county about it paying for the Highlands School SRO as well.

Ideally, the officer would be hired and housed by the Highlands PD, but the position would be funded by the county.

- Kim Lewicki

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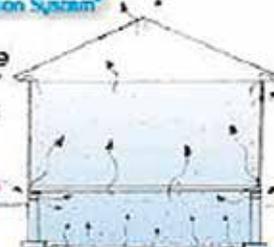
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