Delinquent accounts, Mirror Lake, rifles and more

Not a whole lot went on at last week’s Town Board meeting. Most of the news came out of the Report and Consent Agenda arenas.

It’s time to advertise the delinquent utility accounts and also time to write off the accounts delinquent since 2012 -- that was one issue Mayor Pat Taylor was pretty vocal about.

“We know that people get upset when they get their utility bills but it’s because of what we are about to do that we now have a policy in place to ensure the bills are paid,” he said. “After three years we are having to write off $42,945.29.”

Taylor said two parties are responsible for more than half of that -- Gates Nursery at $9,420.14 and Creighton Sossomon at $43,525.05.

Events....................... 10&15
Spring Home Imp........... 11-14
Obituary.......................... 19
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Highlands Hurricanes set team and pool records

By Kristina Kaylor

Thanks to a year-round, enclosed pool, just a year into its rebirth the Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team is going strong and appealing to kids of all ages.

The Hurricanes held an intra-squad meet on Saturday, April 16, and set pool and individual records.

Led by Finneaus Garner, it set 17 pool and six team records. Garner set 10 total records: two individual team records, four individual pool records, two team and two pool-relay records.

Landon Green set five individual and relay team and pool records. Chase Kenter set four individual team records. Both Peyton Kaylor and Dusty Watson set four team and pool relay records. Both Kate Phillips and Makinzee Conn set three individual team and pool records. Connor Hughes set two.

Retrieved from the depths of Lake Sequoyah, boat comes to rest at HHS Village

In February 2015, Lake Sequoyah was lowered for dam repair. While walking the banks of the drained lake, Chip Wisdom discovered an old boat half-buried in the sand and clay. How long it had been under water and to whom it once belonged was a curious mystery -- but not to anyone who had known Furman Vinson.

Eighty-five years earlier, in 1930, Kenyon Zahner had hired Joe Webb and Furman Vinson to build a cabin on the edge of the new Lake Sequoyah west of the Big Creek bridge.

To create a boat landing un-
I also collected. Metal and construction materials were handled an additional 110 bags from NC bags of trash on the Gorge Road. My truck that was so critical to picking up over 300 supported the effort by operating the truck The staff of the US Forest Service again played a key role. The Highlands Chamber of Commerce, as always, played a key role. I am especially grateful for the efforts of the Highlands Sanitation Department for placing the dumpsters at the Conference Center and at Lake Sequoyah. The dumpsters were overflowing by mid-afternoon. The sanitation folks stepped in and removed the trash bags by late afternoon so the bears had no mischievous opportunities.

What a wonderful day last Saturday for the Highlands Plateau and Gorge Cleanup. Jennifer Cunningham of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce diligently coordinated the event. Based on volunteer early signed-ups, plus an estimate of how many folks would show up on that morning, we planned for around 50 participants. Well over 80 people reported for service, so supplies and resources were stretched to the limit.

What a wonderful problem to have! With such a great turnout, we were able to cover areas that had not been cleaned up before. The response by so many concerned citizens went way beyond my greatest expectations. The turnout once again confirmed that Highlanders really care about their community.

There are so many people and organizations to thank. The Highlands Chamber of Commerce, as always, played a key role. The staff of the US Forest Service again supported the effort by operating the truck that was so critical to picking up over 300 bags of trash on the Gorge Road. My truck handled an additional 110 bags from NC 106. Metal and construction materials were also collected.

The Highlands Rotary Club, led by Christy Kelly, was on board providing road vests and volunteers. Old Edwards Inn brought a van load of young people, OEI J1 interns, who were key to cleaning up both the Gorge and Dillard Roads.

The Baptist and Methodist Churches had volunteers on the roads. They both have ongoing programs to clean up our highways. They are committed stewards of God’s creation.

I was gratified to realize the cleanup was a total community effort. There were volunteers who came from Horse Cove to Turtle Pond and from the Dillard Road all the way to the country clubs on US 64. I was glad to see old friends and veterans of past Gorge Road Pickups. I was delighted to meet first time participants.

I also want to thank the Town of Highlands Sanitation Department for placing the much needed dumpsters at the Conference Center and at Lake Sequoyah. The dumpsters were overflowing by mid-afternoon. The sanitation folks stepped in and removed the trash bags by late afternoon so the bears had no mischievous opportunities.

I also must thank law enforcement for their efforts in slowing motorists down during the pick-up. Sheriff Holland had deputies on the Gorge Road coming up from Franklin, and Chief Harrell had officers covering the road going out of Highlands. Their support was essential in this effort that can be very dangerous for volunteers.

I picked up trash with Sam Green on NC 106. Sam called me over and showed me a Bud Light box he had just found. It contained 6 crushed Bud Light cans. I guess the person who threw the box onto the road wanted to leave a "macho" marker or something. Also, in the box was an empty Red Man Tobacco pouch and numerous junk food wrappers. What struck me was that the box and contents were a remnant of a multifaceted, reckless act. First, six crushed beer cans while driving or riding in a vehicle? Scary for all of us. Second, what kind of person would pollute their body with concentrated amounts of alcohol, tobacco and junk food? That they would harm their own body with such substances is one issue, but how could a responsible human being pollute our beautiful natural environment?

Mark Twain once said humanity was, "the vermin of the earth." The person who threw out the Bud Light Box is the epitome of Twain’s sentiments.

On the other hand, to see so many caring volunteers cleaning up litter on our roads was a life affirming experience. It helped me counter the distress of seeing what trashy, uncaring people had thrown out onto our roads.

What’s next? Education, more enforcement and public support. But, now let’s all be thankful for the folks that participated and supported the cleanup.

The Community Coffee with the Mayor is at 10 a.m. tomorrow at the library.
Old Edwards Hospitality Group’s litter pick up team was part of the 100 volunteers who turned out to pick up litter on Saturday.

Saturday’s plateau litter pick up sets records!

According to Highlands Visitor Center Director Jennifer Cunningham records were set Saturday in terms of the number of volunteers (100) and the amount of litter picked up on the plateau. Volunteers scoured the Gorge Road, NC 28, NC 106 and various roads in town proper and filled 450 bags averaging 20 lbs which equals 9,000 lbs of trash (4.1 tons). "This is a new record for the annual litter pickup," she said.

Hopefully, citizens, visitors and workers can keep the plateau and its in-roads clean.

Mayor Pat Taylor with 100 bags of junk in his truck after Saturday’s plateau-wide litter pickup.
**Highlands Area Dining**

- **Cyprus International Cuisine**
  - Dinner: 7 nights a week 5-10p
  - For reservations call: 526-4429
  - Main Street • Highlands

- **Asia House**
  - Japanese • Asian • Thai • Hibachi Cuisine
  - Open Year Round
    - Mon., Tues., Thurs., 11a to 10p
    - Fri., Sat., 11a to 11p
    - Sun., noon to 10p
  - Closed Wednesdays
  - 151 Helen’s Barn Avenue
  - 828-787-1680 or 828-787-1900

- **Wolfgang’s Restaurant & Wine Bistro**
  - Celebrating our 22nd Season
  - Southern Living 2016: "Best Place for Dinner in Highlands"
  - Bistro at 4p and Dining Room at 5:30p
  - Closed Monday and Tuesday
  - For reservations call 828.526.3807
  - www.wolfgangsnets

- **Paoletti**
  - ‘Our 32nd Year’
  - 526 • 4906
  - Serving 7 nights a week

- **Wild Thyme Gourmet Restaurant**
  - Serving Lunch and Dinner Year-Round.
  - Gourmet Foods, Full Service Bar
  - Town Square at 343-D Main St. • Highlands
  - Serving Lunch
    - 11a to 4p
    - Sundays 11a to 3p
  - Serving Dinner
    - from 5:30p
    - Closed Wednesdays

- **The Log Cabin**
  - Highlands, NC
  - Serving Comfortable Italian, Steaks & Seafood
    - Tuesday – Saturday At 5:00 PM
  - Reserve your table now for
    - Mother’s Day Brunch!
    - Sunday, May 8th, 11AM – 2PM
  - 828 526-5777
  - www.LogCabinHighlands.com
  - Just Off Main Street

- **Buck’s Coffee Cafe**
  - Coffee • Espresso Drinks
  - Smoothies • Hot Soup
  - Paninis • Baked Goods
  - On Main Street • Highlands
  - 7 days a week • 7a to 6p • 526-0020
2016 BizWeek honors 'Young Entrepreneur' and Highlands-Cashiers Hospital

Macon County's Economic Development Commission hosted the 2016 BizWeek Banquet & Awards last week at Bloemsma Barn in Franklin, touting the business accomplishments of the county.

Brett Murphy, owner of Arrowood Construction, was named 2016 Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

The award, in its second year, was created to recognize the growing number of young entrepreneurs in Macon County. To be considered for the award nominees must be under 35 years old, have a business in Macon County which has been in operation for at least one year and that has made an economic impact through innovation, vision and job creation.

Murphy noted Highlands in his comments.

"While the year-round population of Highlands is relatively small, the economic impact that it has had in Macon County is large," said Murphy. "I am very fortunate to work in Highlands and be a part of construction in that area. Most people who work in construction have been employed in Highlands at some point. Our service industry workers have also worked in Highlands at some point. We are very fortunate as a county to have that destination within our bounds and I hope to see some nominees for young entrepreneur next year that have businesses in Highlands."

Jim Tate, Vice-Chair of the Macon County Board of Commissioners and County Commissioner Ronnie Beale, both liaisons to the Macon County Economic Development Commission, recognized the 2016 BizWeek honorees.

County officials also recognized the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital for its outstanding contributions to the business community in Macon County.

Tate commended Highlands-Cashiers Hospital for the economic impact it has on Highlands. Tate said that he could easily tout the hospital's influence in the community and tell of how the hospital impacted his life personally, from care he received their as a child, to the more than a decade he served alongside the hospital as an EMS driver; but the banquet is about the economic benefits the facility has on the community.

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital stands as the number two employer in Highlands with 150 workers. The hospital, located between Highlands and Cashiers -- the two areas it serves, takes in $25 million annually in revenue. It was chartered in 1947 and opened on January 2, 1952 with eight beds available for patients. In 1993, the hospital expanded with 24 patient beds and 80 nursing home beds and was relocated to its current location on the 40-acre complex located on Highway 64.

On Tuesday, there was a groundbreaking ceremony at the site of its planned $6.7 million Emergency Department expansion.

...BOAT continued from page 1

derneath the cabin, Vinson built a boat to remove the dirt. Unfortunately, he over estimated the boat's capacity and filled it too full. The boat promptly sank to the bottom of the lake.

Chip Wisdom's discovery inspired local Highlanders and the Highlands Historical Society to retrieve the boat, still filled with the dirt that sank it and move it to the Historical Village for preservation.

Of the 36 celebrated Joe Webb log cabins, the Zahner cabin was among the first dozen built and one of the most remarkable for its rustic design. Unfortunately the cabin, which was used as a summer home, burned in 1971. The only artifact associated with it today is the boat rescued from the mud and clay of the drained lake.

As an integral part of Joe Webb lore and early Highlands' history, it is also a fitting testament to Furman Vinson's high standards of craftsmanship.
RIFLES continued from page 1

$15,462.62.

“After three years, they just
don’t have to pay,” he said angrily.

According to Town Clerk
Rebecca Shuler, the prior admin-
istration didn’t make people pay
their full bill if they couldn’t af-
ford it – if they owed $300 and
could only afford $50 that was al-
lowed. All the while late charges
accrued while the accounts were
still open and running up larger
balances.

“This is the last huge write-
off, there will be subsequent
write-offs but none this big,”
Shuler said. “People have been
paying off their delinquent ac-
counts and our new policy
doesn’t allow anyone to get that
depth in arrears.”

In lieu of writing utility
debts off, according to the UNC
Institute of Government, under
G.S. Chapter 105A, utility prov-
ers may submit a delinquent
claim to the state’s debt set-off
program for recovery against the
debtor’s state income tax return
or state lottery winnings, if any.

“We have done that,” said
Shuler, “but many of these are
people who live out of state and
don’t pay state income tax.”

Mirror Lake
During the Reports and
Comment period, Commissioners
voiced concern about the recent
draining of Mirror Lake.

Evidently, the Mirror Lake
Improvement Association has
drained the lake so NC DOT can
clean out culverts that empty into
the lake, but a clear timeline hasn’t
been defined.

“I understand they are work-
ing with DOT but who knows
when they will do it? It could be
a year from now,” said Commis-
sioner Eric Pierson.

Commissioners are con-
cerned with the visual effects of
the draining, as well as the silt
that likely ended up in Big Creek
which is the town’s drinking water
supply.

“We need a way to measure the
turbidity of the water draining
from the lake,” said Commission
Amy Patterson.

She also questioned the legal-
ity of the draining since a permit
was not issued by the town’s Wa-
tershed Administration, which is
the Town Planner.

According to the Unified De-
velopment Ordinance, Sec. 11-54,
Sec. 11-54, a permit is required
before an impoundment can be
approved.

The permit must be requested
from the Watershed Administrator
in writing not less than 30 days pri-
or to draining, specifying the name
of the impoundment, the location
of the impoundment, the surface
area of the impoundment, and the
size of the contributing drainage
area.

“The owner or his agent shall
not proceed with the draining
without issuance of an impound-
ment draining permit from the wa-
tershed administrator,” it reads.

Furthermore, for impound-
ments either more than one-half
acre in surface area at full pool, or
receiving the surface water run-
off from more than 75 acres of
contributing drainage area, a plan
must be submitted by a N.C. pro-
fessional engineer, indicating the
method to be used in draining and
the measures to be taken to pre-
vent the release of sediment from
the impoundment.

A time schedule for comple-
tion of the draining is required and
the limit is 60 days without written
permission from the watershed
administrator. Evidently, none of
this was done prior to the drain-
ing of Mirror Lake and technically
financial penalties could be levied.

Watershed Administrator
and Town Planner Randy Feierabend
said he would look into it.

Rifles
A couple of months ago, Po-
lice Chief Bill Harrell requested
and got a grant to purchase 12
A-15 rifles that required matching
funds from the town. The town
OK’d the request, but as it turns
out, the rifles were donated to the
town so the grant wasn’t needed.

“I have been negotiating
with the vendor of these rifles
for weeks and finally got them to
see our inherent need and safety
concerns. After a recent company
board meeting, they agreed to pro-
vide the rifles to us at no cost,”
said Chief Harrell.

That’s a $7,000 savings to Highlands’
taxpayers.

“These long guns are years
overdue, as our nation’s climate
toward catastrophic violence has
changed over the years. We are
simply outgunned. Our sidearms
and shotguns are outmatched
by rifles that simply have a lon-
ger outreach, especially in these
woodland demographics,” he
said. Harrell said Highlands is
probably the only public safety/
law enforcement agency in the
area that isn’t equipped with a rifle
that can be accurate at a distance
farther than 40 yards and carry
many rounds – guns that attackers
often have and use, he said.

“These rifles are not fully
automatic like most assailants use,
but it gives law enforcement a
fighting chance by carrying more
ammunition and ensuring accu-
racies when used from a covered
approach using safer tactical bar-
rriers.”

Harrell said his officers won’t
carry these rifles on their persons
during regular patrol – they are
locked in the cruisers in a mount
that can’t be accessed by anyone
other than the officers, as needed.

“We simply need to be
equipped to handle these unpre-
dictable incidents and provide the
public the safety they deserve and
expect,” said Harrell.

K-H Founders Park
Representatives of K-H

• See RIFLES page 17
B R E A K F A S T
Full breakfast made to order every morning until 11:00am
Cage free eggs, waffles, French toast, bacon, sausage, ham, biscuits, muffins, croissants. Espresso bar and coffee roasted in-house.

L U N C H
Grill - every day of the week starting at 11:00 until close
Fresh cut natural meats, homemade deli salads, specialty sandwiches, homemade potato chips, daily soup specials.

Deli - Serving all day
Fresh cut natural meats, homemade deli salads, specialty sandwiches, homemade potato chips, daily soup specials.

Wood Fire Pizza Oven -
Every day from 11:00 to close
Authentic Neapolitan pizza made from scratch, fresh mozzarella, basil, crushed tomatoes, homemade Italian sausage, pancetta, and daily specials.

SUNDAY SOUTHERN BRUNCH BAR
Every Sunday from 11am – 3pm
Skillet fried chicken, country Angus steak, skillet corn, biscuits & preserves, mashed potatoes, veggies, cobbler, plus the entire soup & salad bar.
$11.99 (dine in) or $9.99 a pound (to go) biscuit...$8.95

P R E P A R E D  F O O D S
A large selection of take-away items fully prepared and ready to take home. Grilled pork loins, homemade mac & cheese, mashed potatoes, herb rubbed chicken, made in house BBQ, chicken salad, deli salads & much more.

D I N N E R S  T O  G O
A different full dinner for two every night, Monday-Saturday from 4:30 until we sell out. Call ahead to reserve...

Monday - Low Country Lobster / Shrimp Boil - Maine lobster tails, wild caught large shrimp, red bliss potatoes, summer corn, house made sausage, all steeped in our seasoning. Served with drawn butter and cocktail sauce. $34.95 serves two

Tuesday - Oven Off Night
Two natural chicken breasts grilled with our Tuscan herb infused olive oil, served on a bed of greens with stuffed brie, spiced pecans, our extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar on the side with two cups of homemade gazpacho and a baguette from our bakery. $24.95 serves two

Wednesday - Prime Rib with Baked Potatoes & Salad - Premium Angus standing rib roast, cooked medium rare w/ red wine au jus. Two baked potatoes & a large Caesar salad. $34.95 serves two

Thursday - Two Racks of Baby Back Ribs
- cooked until fall-off-the-bone-tender. Served with house made bacon/apple baked beans and potato salad. $27.95 serves two

Friday - Wild Caught Shrimp: fried or steamed. Wild caught North Carolina shrimp either lightly breaded in our seasoned corn flour mixture, and then properly fried in peanut oil & served w/ hush puppies; or steamed to order in our low country seasoning. Both come with coleslaw and rosemary sea salt broiled red potatoes, tarter & cocktail sauce. $28.95 serves two

Saturday - In-House Smoked BBQ - Hand rubbed pork butt, pit-smoked over night and hand pulled to order. Comes with coleslaw, apple bacon baked beans, and yeast rolls $23.95 serves two

W I N E  M A R K E T  &  C R A F T  B E E R
An excellent, comprehensive selection of wine with the best prices in town, and run by a friendly knowledgeable staff. Craft beer and wine available by the glass while you shop and dine.

B A K E R Y
Full service scratch bakery making rolls, baguettes, sandwich breads, pastries, birthday and wedding cakes, cookies and seasonal specialties.

B U T C H E R
We sell only 100% premium Angus beef, hand-cut in house. Stock up for the weekend every Thursday with with deep discounts on all steaks & ground beef. Then stop by the take-out case to complete your dinner w/ twice baked potatoes, fresh salads and more.

S P E C I A L T Y  C H E E S E S
Dozens of cheeses, tapenades, olives and specialty items including our made in-house crackers.

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Over 40 extra virgin olive oils and vinegars to choose from. All available to sample.

...AND MUCH MORE - VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT M F G R O . C O M

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**Thin Spaces and the Genius Loci of Highlands**

“There is in Celtic mythology the notion of ‘thin places’ in the universe where the visible and the invisible world come into their closest proximity. To seek such places is the vocation of the wise and the good — and for those that find them, the clearest communication between the temporal and eternal. Mountains and rivers are particularly favored as thin places marking invariably as they do, the horizontal and perpendicular frontiers. But perhaps the ultimate of these thin places in the human condition are the experiences people are likely to have as they encounter suffering, joy, and mystery.”

– Peter Gomes, Harvard theologian

As a young girl growing up in Highlands, I spent the majority of my time outside – climbing trees, building forts in the woods behind our house, playing in the yard, or swinging from an apple tree below Crane’s potato field. Swinging from the apple tree at this time of year was an absolute treat for us; as our hands gripped the long branch over the bank, and as the weight of our bodies shook the tree, pink and white blossoms would occasionally fall into our hair and onto the ground around us like a pastel, spring snow. For the brief moment we were airborne when our feet left the bank (and before we had jumped to the ground below), we were invincible. Free. We flew!

My sister, Anne, and I reasoned that if we had the proper attire and a high enough perch, we could fly for real. So, we tied on our Batman capes (no kidding), and jumped out of the tallest trees and off the tallest banks we could find. Deeply skinned, bruised, and grass-stained knees never once dissuaded us from trying again and again. To this day, in fact, there is a part of both us that still believes human flight is possible with a Batman cape and the sheer power of belief.

I found (and find) utter peace and connection to the world through Nature. Even as a young girl, I knew that the creeks, woods, mountaintops, trails, lakes and rivers in the Highlands area each possessed a certain magical and mysterious quality. It was something beyond the beauty of the place; our grand, old, soft, nurturing mountains held a secret for only blessed few. And you could hear it only if your heart and spirit were engaged and listening.

I quickly discovered that I could ask any number of questions to the towering pine and poplar trees and receive the guidance and answers I sought. I would pose my questions in a yes or no answer format, look up, and wait. Soon, the treetops would bend in the wind in the direction indicating their counsel. I had my answer! It was much later as an adult in the woods seeking answers, when I learned that my tree guidance method was merely my connecting with my own intuition – or was it?

In classical Roman religion, the concept of genius loci means the protective spirit of a place. I now know that what I felt as a child (and continue to feel as an adult) is the genius loci of Highlands. It is what in Celtic mythology is referred to as a “thin space” — a place where there is an ethereal blurring of edges where the spirit world touches the physical plane and each space is a bit of both. A place where we finally find our heart’s truth, who and what we truly long for, the stillness our souls seek, the connection to our past/present/future, and the songs that only we can sing.

A place where you can, in fact, fly — with both feet on the ground.

• Susie deVille, ME, ABR, SFR, is Owner/Broker-in-Charge of White Oak Realty Group. Her areas of expertise include real estate investments, niche marketing, social media, and strategic property positioning. An expert in entrepreneurship and anthropology, Susie applies her acumen in human behavior toward negotiating and advocating on behalf of her clients. White Oak Realty Group’s sales office is located at 125 South Fourth Street in the heart of the retail district in Highlands. For more information, visit WhiteOakRG.com or call (828) 526-8118.
The Highlands Police log entries from April 16. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

April 16
• At 5 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on NC 28 south.

April 20
• At 5 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza.

April 20
• At 3 p.m., officers received a report of a larceny from a motor vehicle parked at the Asia House on Helen's Barn Ave. where the vehicle registration was taken.

April 22
• At 3:47 p.m., Jackson Robert Leitch, 17, of Cullowhee, NC, was arrested for larceny of property or goods valued at less than $1,000 and possessing stolen property. He was issued a $3,000 unsecured bond.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log from April 13.

April 13
• At 5:18 p.m., the dept. responded to an incident on Main Street where a pedestrian was hit by a vehicle. There were minor injuries.

April 14
• At 3:33 p.m., the dept. responded to a call from a residence on Cole Mountain Circle about a brush fire.

April 15
• At 1:35 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD on a brush fire.

April 17
• At 1:48 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Scaly Fire and Rescue on a brush fire.

April 18
• At 2:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.
• At 3:32 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

April 20
• At 1:07 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Highlands Plaza.
• At 3:34 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Highlands Plaza.
• At 4:13 p.m., the dept. stood by at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital for the MAMA helicopter.

April 23
• At 5:09 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west. There were no injuries.
HBF's 'Wildflower Whimsy' is May 6-7

The Highlands Biological Foundation will be celebrating this event with the 4th Annual Wildflower Whimsy on May 6th and 7th, an event to help support the mission of the Foundation, which is to foster research and education focused on the rich natural heritage of the southern Appalachians. The event will kickoff with a lecture given by Dr. Alan Weakley, followed by a wine reception, cocktail buffet, live music, and native plant auction on Friday night, with guided wildflower walks taking place on Saturday.

Alan Weakley will present Friday night’s lecture at 5:30pm, “Plant Genealogy: The Origins of our Southern Blue Ridge Flora.” Alan Weakley is a plant taxonomist, community ecologist, and conservationist specializing in the flora and vegetation types of the southeastern United States. He is also currently Director of the UNC Herbarium and an adjunct professor at UNC-Chapel Hill.

His lecture will focus on the wonderful and lush diversity of plants we see around Highlands, which has arrived here from diverse directions and backgrounds. Our improved knowledge of past geologic and climatic change, combined with our increasing ability to do genetic testing of the genealogy of plant species enables us to understand better when the plants we see here came to the party, and why they decided to stay. Join us Friday, May 6th to hear more from this dedicated researcher, taxonomist, and author. Tickets are on sale now at $75 for members and $100 for non-members. Visit www.highlandsbiological.org/wildflower-whimsy/ for more information and to register.

Winter Pool Schedule

Through May 26, 2016
LAP SWIM – ADULTS ONLY
Monday thru Friday
7 – 10 am, 6 lanes
AND Monday thru Thursday
5 – 6 pm, 1 or 2 lanes
Sharing pool with water aerobics @ 5:15 on
Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays
PUBLIC SWIM
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
3 – 5 pm
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
6 – 8 pm
Saturday 11 am – 6 pm
Sunday 1 – 5 pm
WATER AEROBICS
Monday-Friday
10:15 am
Monday - Thursday 5:15
(Sharing pool for public swim)
Saturday 11:15
(Sharing pool for public swim)
Fee: $4 per class or
$30 for 12 classes
POOL PARTIES
Pool available on
Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays
6 – 8 pm
Fee: $75 / $50 deposit required
$50 non-refundable deposit if party is
cancelled or no show less than 2 days
before
1st Wednesday of the month—
Kayak Clinic
2nd Wednesday of the month—
Youth Night
3rd Wednesday of the month—
Water-Volleyball
4th Wednesday of the month—
Senior Night
6:00 – 7:30 pm
Call us about membership fees

The Highlands Area Events

Ongoing
• Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team is open to all levels of swimmers ages 6-18. To sign up contact Coach Steve Hott at 828-421-

• Highlands Area Events

Every 3rd Tuesday
• The Macon County Poultry club in Franklin meets at 7 pm at the Cooperative extension office on Thomas Heights Road. For more information call 369-3916.

Tuesday and Thursdays
• Zumba with Connie at the Rec Park
8:15 a.m. $5.
• Pickle ball is played from 11:30a to 1p

Wednesdays
• Open Duplicate Bridge at the Rec Park at 9 a.m. Be seated by 8:45.

1st Wednesdays
• Family Movies at the Hudson Library at 10:40 a.m. Open to the public.
• Weight Watchers support group meets every Thursday at 5 pm at Christ Church of the ValleyCall Lisa 828-506-3555.

3rd Wednesdays
• Recently released movies at Hudson Library at 3:30pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

Thursdays
• Storytime with Miss Deanna at Hudson Library at 10 a.m. $5.
• Open Duplicate Bridge at the Rec Park at 9 a.m. Be seated by 8:45.
• Family Movies at the Hudson Library at 3:30pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

Save the date- May 28, and we will see you at the baseball park on Highway 64 E, Corner of N 4th & Hickory.

Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale is May 28

Lenten Roses are just one of dozens of plant varieties you will find at the 34th annual Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale,
Saturday, May 28th, 9am – Noon.

These beauties bloom during the Lenten season, and seem to thrive here on our plateau. The plant sale is the only fundraiser held by the club; proceeds benefit local student scholarships, programs at Eckerd Living Center, Highlands School, and community beautification.

Save the date- May 28, and we will see you at the baseball park on Highway 64 E, Corner of N 4th & Hickory.
Spring Home Improvement

Add Your Personal Style to Your Home

(StatePoint) You may feel locked into the style you inherited when you purchased your house. But you have more power than you think to transform your reality home into your dream home.

To make a big style impact, consider these upgrades and projects:

**Stunning Curb Appeal**

Don’t settle for a drab or standard home exterior, particularly when it comes to your roof. A beautiful, colorful update will enhance your home's exterior design and boost curb appeal.

For long-term durability, consider a polymer slate or shake roofing product, like those from DaVinci Roofscape, which are offered in 50 standard colors and a variety of striking color blends.

However, picking the right exterior color scheme and style can be daunting without guidance, say experts.

“Many homeowners are afraid to shake things up with color because they don’t want to make a mistake,” says Kate Smith, a color trend forecaster with Sensational Color.

Luckily, free resources can provide guidance and tips on understanding your home’s exterior features and how to play off them with color accents. For example, Smith has written a free 36-page guide, “FRESH Color Schemes for Your Home Exterior.” The guide explores color options for seven different home styles and eases the process of choosing color palettes to complement your home exterior. To download the free guide, visit davinciroofscapes.com.

**An Interior Oasis**

An ancient tub, a leaky toilet -- these are bathroom

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Three Ways to Maximize Space in a Smaller Kitchen

(StatePoint) Too often, the kitchen is the first room of a home to suffer the consequences of tight living quarters. But there’s no need to forfeit big-scale cooking in a small-scale kitchen.

Ditch the compromises and maximize the space you do have to make your kitchen work for you, and all your culinary aspirations.

Cut the Fat

Do a top-to-bottom inventory of your kitchen implements to assess what you need and what you can discard or donate.

Sleek newer designs of certain appliances tend to take up less space than their clunky, older counterparts. They also offer more multi-functionality.

For example, ovens that contain a warming drawer that can be used for slow cooking, potentially eliminates the need for a standalone slow cooker. Blenders that come with food processor attachments can help you de-clutter your countertop.

A periodic audit of your kitchen can keep things running smoothly and efficiently.

Space Efficient Appliances

New appliance options designed for compact kitchens can help ensure that limited space is not a deterrent for those passionate about cooking. For example, Verona Appliances offer upscale, space-efficient ranges at 24 and 30 inches with both gas and electric options.

These ranges include features like space-saving drawers for pots and pans, multi-function ovens featuring a closed-door broil, European convection fan, heavy-duty racks and a broiler pan, and multi-functional warming drawers with settings suitable forproofing dough and slow cooking.

For more information, visit veronaappliances.com.

For a stylish, sophisticated option, consider the 24 inch Nostalgie Gas Range from ILVE, which comes fully equipped with the benefits of the brand’s larger ranges, but is small enough to fit into virtually any kitchen with a gas connection. Four high power BTU burners, a full width warming drawer and multi-function oven with convection bake and broil and a defrost mode can make cooking compactly a cinch.

And powerful compact cooking can also extend to cooktops. For instance, ILVE also offers a 15 inch Gas Griddle Cooktop that works with accessories like a steam • See KITCHEN page 16
Spring Home Improvement

A New Remodeling Trend is Adding Resale Value to Homes

(StatePoint) Whether you’re looking to sell your house or just want to make a smart update that’s worth your time and money, consider a design trend that is both attractive and proven to add value to your home: manufactured stone.

“Manufactured stone is exploding in popularity, in both exteriors and interiors,” says Phil Wengerd, vice president of Market Strategies for ProVia, a leading manufacturer of home building products.

The numbers agree. Manufactured stone veneer projects offer a 92.9 percent cost recovery, according to Remodeling Magazine’s Cost vs. Value Report, a detailed comparison of the average cost of remodeling projects with the value those projects retain at resale in 100 US markets.

If you’re looking to make a home upgrade using manufactured stone, Wengerd says to consider the following trends:

• Popular style: While homeowners once attempted to emulate materials available in the local natural environment, the elegant look of dry stack stone now dominates nationwide. The material features the look of smaller stones, providing an elegant natural look that’s versatile in both exterior and interior applications.

• Exotic colors: Color blends continue to feature earth shades, however, more reds, purples and burgundies are being mixed in to complement colors in carpet, walls or window treatments. To respond to the demand, brands like ProVia’s manufactured stone are adding new stone color options.

• Versatile project ideas: As technology has made manufactured stone more accessible to the masses, today it’s showing up on more than just a home’s exterior. In interior applications, stone adds a dramatic frame for kitchen stoves and islands, and is used around bathtubs to create a spa-like retreat. It’s also a popular choice for masonry surface application in finished basements or for stone fireplaces. Exterior stone accents, like an outdoor kitchen, deliver plenty of wow-factor without the wallet cringe that a traditional stone-laying job would entail.

For style and color inspiration, as well as free resources, such as a visualizer design tool and videos on installing manufactured stone veneer, visit provia.com/stone.

Recapture home equity by seeking out projects and upgrades like manufactured stone, with a proven ability to add value.
Spring Home Improvement

5 Tips for Prospective Homebuyers

(StatePoint) If you’re serious about homeownership in the near future, getting prepared is crucial. Consider these five tips:

• Get your financial house in order: Good credit is key to getting a mortgage at a reasonable interest rate. If it’s been more than a year, find out what your credit score is. You can improve your credit by paying your bills on time, working with a no-fees housing counselor, and beefing up your credit literacy. Free online resources can help, such as Freddie Mac’s CreditSmart online training.

• Figure out how much you can afford. What do you earn? What do you spend? How much do you have in savings? Answering these questions will help you learn whether you are financially ready for homeownership. Make a budget and use free online tools and calculators to determine how much you can afford and the amount you have for a downpayment. If you're short, reduce optional expenses and set up a monthly, automatic deposit into your savings account.

• Explore your mortgage options. Don't assume you don't have enough for a down payment or won't qualify for a mortgage without 20 percent down. In fact, about 40 percent of today’s homebuyers are making down payments that are less than 10 percent and a recent study found that 87 percent of U.S. homes would qualify for down payment help. Find out if you’re eligible for any local or state down payment assistance programs. Remember, some options may be as low as three percent. But keep in mind that if you're not putting at least 20 percent down, you'll pay extra each month for mortgage insurance. Contact several mortgage lenders to shop around and get the best deal.

• Get pre-approved for financing. It's highly recommended that you work with your lender to get pre-approved before you begin house hunting. Pre-approval will tell you how much home you can afford and can help you move faster and with greater confidence in competitive markets.

• Rely on professionals. The typical homebuyer will look at 10 homes over a 10-week period so finding and working with the right team is critical. Housing counselors, realtors and lenders all play an important role in the home buying process. These professionals have the expertise to advise you every step of the way.

For more tips and resources, visit myhome.freddiemac.com.

With some firm financial resolve, you can make your dream of homeownership possible.
Sundays through May 29
• Change Your Money, Change your Life. Applying God’s word to your money...This 9-week class will show you how to get rid of debt, manage your money, spend and save wisely and more. 3pm-5pm at the Highlands Rec. Park. To sign up go to: www.daveramsey.com/fpu/classes/1017675. For more information contact Emily Chastain at eh.chastain86@gmail.com/fpu/classes/1017675. For more information contact Emily Chastain at eh.chastain86@gmail.com/fpu/classes/1017675.

Thurs., April 28
• A Stella & Dot Relay for Life of Franklin, NC fundraiser Thursday at 6 p.m. at Thai Paradise, 3078 Georgia Road hosted by Valerie Norton and Amanda Shaw. 100% of the commission will go to a cause that has touched all of us! Join in for a casual evening trying on the new spring and summer collection. Please invite your friends! The more the merrier. Can’t make it? You can shop online by following this link: http://www.stelladot.com/ts/z6ff6
• Wolvergangs and ...on the Verandah are participating in Dine Out for Life. 20% of gross proceeds will go toward Western North Carolina AIDS Project.
• Fri., April 29
  • Community Coffee with Mayor Pat Taylor in the Hudson Library meeting room this week from 10 to 11 a.m. Updates on Projects and the Budget.
  • The High Mountain Squares will host their “Mad Hatter’s Dance”, Friday night, at the Macon County Community Building, GA.
• Sat., April 30
  • At PAC, The Met Live via satellite at 12:45 p.m.
  • Sun., May 1
  • The Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School Gap Singers will be singing during the 11 a.m. worship service at Highlands First Presbyterian Church on Sunday. The group is directed by Mirna Valerio. Everyone is cordially invited to attend the service.
  • Thurs., May 5
  • Chestnut Hill Retirement Center Wellness Fair 10a to noon, at the clubhouse on Clubhouse Terail. Have your blood pressure checked, get a hand massage and a snack. After stay for a free lunch in the dining room. Dr. Sue Aery, DC, MS will speak briefly on Cellular Health and Whole Food Nutrition. For lunch please RSVP by 4 p.m., Thurs. May 2. Call 828-526-5251.

2016 ‘Run for the Park 5K’ is set for May 28

Spring is finally here and it’s a great time to start getting ready for the second annual Run For The Park 5K, set for Saturday, May 28.

Mountaintop Rotary and the Highlands Roadrunners Club are again sponsoring a run/walk this spring to raise money for Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park and local athletic scholarships. While the bulk of the proceeds this year will go toward completion of Phase II of the park, $1,000 will go to the Highlands Roadrunners Club to provide two scholarships to graduates of Highlands School who continue running or participating in other athletics at the collegiate level.

The race begins at 9 a.m. at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park at the corners of Pine and Fifth Streets and will follow a certified 3.1-mile course. It is the same course utilized last year for the Run For The Park and by the Highlands Twilight Rock and Roll 5K for the last several years. The Twilight Rock and Roll 5K is scheduled for Aug. 20 this year.

Participants can register on line at www.active.com or www.webscorer.com, or by mailing in forms available at the front desk of the Highlands Recreation Park, the Hudson Library, the Cashiers Glenville Recreation Center, Highlands Decorating Center, or The Highlander Newspaper. Race day registration begins at 7:45 a.m. under the breezeway of the new park entrance and restrooms. The entry fee for those that pre-register is $30 for adults, $20 for students (13 and older) and $10 for those 12 and under. Race-day registration is $35 for adults, $25 for students, and $15 for those 12 and under.

In addition to trophies for first place female and male overall winners and master winners (over 40), awards will be presented to first-, second-, and third-place male and female winners in each five-year age group (15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75 and over). All youngsters under age 15 will receive a participation medal. The first 120 runners and walkers who register will receive a race T-shirt.

Water, sports drinks and fruit will be available for all runners and walkers at the finish line. Awards will be presented on the pavilion stage, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

For more information, contact Skip Taylor at 526-4280, or email stmas4280@gmail.com.
features to bid farewell to forever. Your bathroom should be more than just a functional space; it should be an oasis from busy, stressful days.

Whether you are looking for custom bathroom elements or a spa-like whirlpool system, seek out a collection, rather than a la carte replacements, to achieve a coordinated look. For example, the Affordable Style Designer Series suites from Mansfield Plumbing, come in a variety of unified traditional and modern designs.

If you want a bit more from your bathroom, consider new products, such as the MicroDerm Therapeutic Bath, which silently infuses millions of oxygen-rich microbubbles into bathwater to relax, clean and exfoliate skin.

A Touch of Elegance
Give your interior spaces privacy and elegance by rethinking windows. In key rooms, consider replacing standard windows with privacy windows.

Decorative glass windows add character to a space because they become the view. They serve as their own artwork for the room with the added benefit of providing privacy in the home.

Those from Hy-Lite include square, geometric and oval shaped windows in both fixed and operable styles and in various sizes, so they can be used as a focal point in a room or to create a striking accent wall of windows. Create an eye-catching space in the kitchen with acrylic block windows, or complement your home's architectural style with one of the fashionable silk-screened windows featured in their Home Designer Collection.

If you're unsatisfied with your house, consider making key upgrades and replacements that will add elegance, beauty and a touch of your own personality.

cooker, bain marie warming basin, cutting board and griddle top dome to cook eclectically and with flair in a tight space. More information can be found at ilveappliances.com.

Creative Storage
Your conventional storage options will only get you so far in a compact kitchen. Stretch your concept of storage to open up a world of new possibilities.

Wall-mounted magnetic units can be a great place to store knives, pots and pans, freeing up limited cabinet space. Corkboard added to the backs of pantry and cupboard doors is ideal for hanging light utensils, recipes and notes. Shelving can be built under kitchen tables and kitchen islands. The possibilities are endless.

For happier cooking, give your compact kitchen a functional makeover.
BOYS GOLF UPDATE:
The boys finished 3rd in the 2-day Smoky Mountain Conference Tournament this week.

Round one was held at Cherokee Golf Course in Murphy and round two was held at Sapphire National.

Swain was the overall winner with a tournament total of 691, Murphy was 2nd with an overall score of 703, Highlands 3rd with a tournament total of 719 and Hayesville 4th with a tournament total of 746.

The top four teams advance to regionals May 2nd at The Ridges course in Hayesville.

The top teams and individuals from the regionals will advance to the state championships held in Pinehurst the following week.

As for individual honors, Highlands's seniors Austin Nichols, Kyle Gabbard and Johnny Lupoli received all-conference by being in the top 6 individual scorers.

The regional match is next week. More to come.

...RIFLES continued from page 9

Founders Park Skip Taylor and Nick Bazan asked and were granted permission to use some of the $50,000 donated to the park by Macon County for extending pavers and sidewalks around the park.

In a separate request they asked the town for $12,000 to purchase tables and chairs, umbrellas and planters.

Town Manager Bob Frye suggested the town consider this allocation during upcoming budget talks – the first is Thursday, April 28 from 3-5 in the Community Building.

If OK'd the funds would be allocated after July 1, 2016 which begins the 2016-2017 budget year.

Landscape Architect Hank Ross, who has designed the park, asked that the money be allocated before the season starts rather than in the middle of the summer.

Closed Session
The board came out of closed session and went back into open session at which time it unanimously voted to adopt a new position description for a Financial Director. The board also decided to advertise the position starting June 1.

– Kim Lewicki
By Pastor Steve Kerhoulas, Christ Church of the Valley

Many politicians fail the truth test. Surprise! Staffers must remind the candidates about what they previously said, which wasn’t true, so the next time they are asked the same question they can retell the same lie. Which brings us to a principle:

“If you don’t know the truth, you will believe the lie”.

Case in point. When Israel was divided into the Northern and Southern kingdoms, the north had 10 tribes and the south only two. In order to prevent unification the king of the north placed golden calves close to his border. He told the people that these were the gods that delivered you from slavery so instead of traveling south they stayed in the north thus preventing a reuniting of the splintered kingdom. Lies! And the sad thing is people believed the lie and worshipped the idols. Crazy right? Golden calves were the reason the Jews were delivered from bondage? Nonsense! Just plain stupidity!

The fact is we have become a nation of uninformed people who swallow the lie.

OK so what to do? I vote for a truth revolution. Let’s stop supporting those whom we know are not truth tellers. What a concept!

So many Americans vote for those running that they know are liars. How insane.

A truth revolution will begin when we stop supporting liars with our votes, no matter what party they represent. Hey, here’s an idea, let’s stop sending liars to Washington. When you are considering a candidate why not apply the truth test. Probably sounds silly to some of you, especially those who always vote for the party and not the candidate. I’m challenging you to consider something. Should they have a record of “terminological inexactitudes” don’t support her or him. We live in a nation of liars who will tell us what they know is a lie because we have become so dumb we can’t tell the difference. Honesty hurts. We have become so used to lies we think they are true. It’s time to hold our feet to the fire before we end up with more of the same.
Rabun Gap Nacoochee Headmaster Dr. Anthony Sgro introduced Highlands Seniors and presented the fascinating history of the school to members of the Highlands Rotary Club recently.

In his introduction of Dr. Sgro, Rotarian Rick Travathan noted that, in addition to the seven graduating seniors who live in Highlands, many Rotarians have had children who have graduated from Rabun Gap.

Additionally, Rotarian Stell Huie, Trustee Emeritus was honored for his years of service on the Rabun Gap Board.

Andrew Ritchie and his wife Addie founded Rabun Gap Industrial School, as it was originally named, in 1905.

Ritchie was the first person from Rabun County to graduate from college. He worked his way through school, attending several colleges and eventually graduating from Harvard University. In the course of his education he became intrigued with the philosophy of educating high school students at boarding schools.

His mission at Rabun Gap was “to provide an educational option for children in our region regardless of their ability to pay.”
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The Rotary Club of Highlands held a Club Assembly on Tuesday, April 19th. The Students of the Month were announced by Nicole Lui. Aiden Dendy, Seth Staffelbach, and McKayla Hensley were honored. Carl Norman was introduced as a new Rotarian to the club. Donations were made to the Highlands Cashiers Players to assist in their computer system upgrade; Leadership Highlands 2016 Class for their Class Project and to the Dana Farber Marathon Challenge for Cancer Research in memory of Evie Byrnes. Brian Egler ran the Boston Marathon last Monday for this cause. Bob Henritze announced that the Rotary Club of Highlands will host an Exchange Student from Brazil for the next school year.
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