A live Christmas tree or a cut tree? That is the question

The town’s final budget worksession on May 12 was solidified last Thursday but there was much discussion about the upcoming Christmas festivities in K-H Founders Park and the problem of bears getting into dumpsters – those that are bear proof and those that aren’t. Though commissioners agreed to allocate $30,000 for new Christmas decorations and lights – saying the current version of both are awful – it was the $20,000 allocated for a live 30-ft. Christmas tree that caused the most stir. “The $20,000 is for the tree and that gets it here,” said Town Manager Bob Frye. “The rest is for

Class of 2016 graduates Saturday, May 28 in HS gym


Fun for the whole family!
Tonight’s Highlands Town Board meeting has a full agenda. As always we will meet at the Conference Center at 7 pm.

The first item on the agenda will be a public hearing for a zoning change to the property next to the Old Helen’s Barn. The request is for a new hotel on the site.

A major item will be the presentation of the town budget for FYI 2016/’17. A public hearing for the adoption of the budget will be set for the June board meeting. The proposed budget totals $14.5 million. That figure includes all operations of town government including the enterprise utility funds.

There will be no ad valorem tax increase in the budget, although there are rate increases in water, sewer and sanitation. Water will go up $3 per month and sewer and sanitation will be up $1.50 each. The town has not increased rates on these utilities for several years, yet operating costs have risen. Auditors and regulators require the town to operate these utility services deficit free. Without rate increases these departments fall in the red this coming year.

Also, in water and sewer we are facing major capital expenditures. The new bleach system at the water plant will cost $580,000, and the new screening system for the sewer plant will be $135,000. In addition, we will spend this coming year $102,000 for the design and engineering services for the replacement of the Buck Horn Water tank. The actual construction of the tank is scheduled for the following year and will be around a half million dollars. I know some folks will criticize the increased rates. I believe the town should address these small increases now, rather than delay and face huge increases down the road, like was done several years ago with a 22% electrical rate increase.

Our reserves will remain strong for the coming year with both the general fund reserves and the enterprise reserves at around 30% each. The town has redirected $320,000 in electric reserve funds to expand Altitude Broadband. We take this utility service to the next level of operation in 2017 by expanding the fiber network. This expenditure is a loan that will be repaid.

The board will also review town park policies that have been in draft form for a number of months. The policies will address banners, signage and the use of Founders Park.

US Cellular will present a final draft of its proposed cell tower contract. The tower is to be located next to the fire station. I have received feedback that some believe the town gave US Cellular special consideration by locating on town property. To set the record straight, US Cellular deployed their engineers around town and decided what was the best location for the tower. They made a proposal to build it next to the fire station. The town would have considered proposals by other cell phone providers. US Cellular made the first and only one. They will be investing over $200,000 to locate their equipment on the tower that Highlands will own. It is a winning investment for both US Cellular, and Highlands.

See you tonight.

Lewicki graduates from Cal-Arts with MFA in Theater

On Friday, May 13, Megan Lewicki graduated from California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, CA. Started by Walt Disney and now ranked as America’s top college for students in the arts by Newsweek/The Daily Beast, CalArts has set the pace for educating professional artists since 1970. It offers rigorous undergraduate and graduate degree programs through six schools—Art, Critical Studies, Dance, Film/Video, Music, and Theater. CalArts has championed creative excellence, critical reflection, and the development of new forms and expressions. Basically if students can think it, the faculty and alumni will help them achieve it.

The graduation took place outside on the lawn of the university where parents and friends enjoyed picnics and live music performed by the students. Each graduate was given the opening refrain of Game of Thrones and wore a gown with a crown of flowers in her hair.

Megan was picked up by a management company and is pursuing her acting, writing and producing career.

Actor Don Cheadle, who graduated from CalArts in 1986, was the keynote speaker.

Weekend Weather

For real-time weather and the extended forecast go to www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Weather.
James Ray Wyatt, 74, of Highlands, NC, passed away Tuesday, May 17, 2016.

Born in Eddie, KY, he was the son of the late William Henry Wyatt and Goldie Neal Wyatt. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his first wife Carol Wyatt; second wife, Glenda Wyatt and ten brothers and sisters. James was a member of Blue Valley Baptist Church in Highlands, NC. He worked at the Buck Creek Recycling Center.

He is survived by his wife, Marcia Perkins; ten step-children, Roger Perkins, of Thetford, VT, Gloria Potwin of South Royalton, VT, Beverly Wheeler of Tunbridge, VT, Eddie Perkins of Chelsea, VT, Marcia Rogers of South Royalton, VT, Judy Pederson of Claremont, NH, Dennis Perkins of Highlands, NC, Angie Manley of Franklin, NC, Timmy Perkins of West Topsham, VT and Christine Perkins of Bayside, NY; two sisters, Jolene Cantrell of Tennessee and Patty Jean Swindle of Ohio; two brothers, Glenn Wyatt and Gary Neal Wyatt both of Florida. He is also survived by many grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.

No Services will be held.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Blue Valley Baptist Church, Highlands, NC 28741.

Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

Online condolences can be made at maconfuneralhome.com

Puchacz earns BA from UNC-Charlotte

Stephanie Denise Puchacz (right) graduated from the University of North Carolina in Charlotte December 2015 with a BA in Communication Studies. She works for United Rentals in Charlotte, NC.

Danielle Puchacz (Stephanie’s sister) was named to Newberry College’s Dean’s List for the Spring semester.

Mullarkey earns Gold Award

Congratulations to Micah Mullarkey (2017, NCSSM) who attained national recognition for excellent performance on the 2016 National Spanish Exam. Mullarkey, formerly a student at Blue Ridge Early College, earned a Premio de Oro (Gold Award, 95th percentile or higher).

“Attaining a medal or honorable mention for any student on the National Spanish Examinations is very prestigious,” said Kevin Cessna-Buscemi, National Director of the Exams, “because the exams are the largest of their kind in the United States with over 160,000 students participating in 2016.”

The National Spanish Examinations exist to recognize student achievement in the study of Spanish and to promote proficiency and stimulate further interest in the teaching and learning of Spanish.

Micah Mullarkey is originally from the Norton Community and is attending the North Carolina
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**Appetizers**
Cream cheese and maple bacon wrapped jalapenos
$10

Smoked trout dip served with crostinis
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Pork tenderloin stuffed with goat cheese, prosciutto ham and figs
$24

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**Bistro on Main**

is pleased to be offering great live music this Memorial Day weekend with performances by Norma Jean and Molly and Me. We are also offering a Prime Rib dinner special! Please visit our website for our hours of service.
Scholars honored at Academic Banquet

On May 19th at the Highlands First Presbyterian Church, Highlands School and Rotary Club acknowledged the achievements of Highlands School students at the Academic Reception. The students, 3rd grade through 12th grade, were awarded for achievements such as “A” Honor Roll, “AB” Honor Roll, Beta Club, and Marshals. The Valedictorian, Colin Weller, and Salutatorian, Daniel Cole Drummonds, were also awarded for their academic achievements.

...MILESTONE from page 3

School of Science and Math in Durham, NC. He completed Spanish 1-IV at BREC prior to his acceptance at NC-SSM. Senor Rick Plotts, his language teacher at Blue Ridge, is largely responsible for fostering in Micah a love for the Spanish Language and Latino Culture, as well as his self-study of Greek and Swedish Language.
Dear Fredster:

I am a loyal “Fredster” fan and was wondering if you are going to have a column this season. I would also like your opinion on President Obama’s transgender ruling imposed on the United States, particularly North Carolina. Please reply.

Yours truly,
Iva Wantmore

Dear Iva:

My column will be different this season. Strap yourself in and hang on tight. I’ll vary it with the following stuff, remembering that satire is and always has been my main gig. I’m going to throw in some old columns and yes, answer fans’ questions from time to time. Police stories will also be in the mix as will political satire. I’m feeling pretty out of control this season and may get fired before the season ends in November. Standby because you’re gonna want more, no pun intended!

Believe it or not I was elated when I learned that our beloved Attorney General gave her opinion on North Carolina public restroom laws. I’m certain this will bring out the more feminine side of me. Actually I’m feeling very girlish as I write.

As of this week, here’s how the rule works. You must use the bathroom of the sex on your birth certificate unless you’re feeling feminine at the time of your need. Does this mean everyone will need a birth certificate on them at all times? How about federal bathroom police? Is that in the mix? If so I want to apply. Fun, fun, fun as I love bathroom humor. Is our president great or what?

Sooooo, as I approached the public restroom on Main Street I looked around for the bathroom police. Not spotting any, I entered the ladies room and, POW, ran right smack dab into the most gorgeous smoking hot babe. She looked a little like Donald Trump’s current wife. We stared at each other for over a minute. Then she said, “I used to be a man but got a sex change. How ‘bout you?”

“Nah, not me,” I replied, “I was born a guy with over the top testosterone but was feeling girlish when I entered.”

“Well, I suggest you get the hell out before I call the bathroom police,” she said.

As I dashed for the exit I bumped into another gentleman (I think) who was just walking in. He blurted, “Just in case you’re the bathroom police, I was born a girl and can prove it with this birth certificate.”

Frustrated with all of this, I decided to return to my old habits and start wearing Depends again.

PS: I made this up.
BREAKFAST
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.

LUNCH
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.

DINNERS TO GO
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

WINE MARKET & CRAFT BEER
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.

BAKERY
Full service scratch bakery making rolls, baguettes, sandwich breads, pastries, birthday and wedding cakes, cookies and seasonal specialties.

BUTCHER
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.

SPECIALTY CHEESES
Dozens of cheeses, tapenades, olives and specialty items including our made in-house crackers.

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is also projected to reduce taxes by 4.4 billion dollars. This reduction has moved North Carolina’s business tax climate from 44th in the nation to 15th in the nation. North Carolina’s income tax is set at 5.499%. This is lower than both Georgia and South Carolina.

McCrory also plans to set up new programs that will allow veterans to be trained for the work force, to decrease the amount of unemployed veterans in North Carolina.

Bathroom Bill

The Question and Comment portion of the event was dominated by concern over the HB2 dubbed “The Bathroom Bill.” This bill has created numerous boycotts of North Carolina products and events which has affected the tourist industry in the state.

The audience expressed concerns saying losses are expected to be large during the upcoming tourist season.

Jack Austin, general manager of Old Edwards Hospitality Group, which has made Highlands a wedding destination over the last decade, expressed concern about the potential loss of revenue to the local economy.

“We welcome all weddings, even same sex weddings and with this bill we could easily lose that business which would be a loss to us but would mean a loss of tens of thousands of dollars to the local economy. This isn't just about losing a Bruce Springstein concert in Greenville, it's about a local merchant or restaurant owner losing, too. The economic impact is not good. We don’t want to discourage any kind of wedding.”

Austin went on to say that regardless of how individuals might feel, the people who are visiting this part of the state -- Highlands and Cashiers -- feel differently.

“They come from big cities, they’re a younger clientele, and they’ve got more progressive attitudes.”

HB2 passed within 12 hours of being filed and, was, in Austin's opinion, “not well thought out,” he said.

Some members of the audience actually said Governor McCrory ought to repeal the bill and apologize.

Education

While there has been some controversy over Governor McCrory’s stance on education, Riddle discussed what the Governor hopes to improve – for one, McCrory plans to raise the average teacher salary to $55,000.

Linda Quick, board member of Summit Charter School, immediately disputed this statement declaring that as a result of the small budget granted by the state, the school is forced “to go back to the community and raise the money so that we can keep the Governor’s promise,” she said.

While Riddle had no response to this concern, she did announce that there has been a 50% increase in charter school enrollment — likely due to the huge increase in charter and private school vouchers.

Riddle then discussed how North Carolina’s education is improving. The Fourth Grade reading scores are increasing, which the Governor feels is helping contribute to the increase in graduation rate, which is now at 85%.

According to Riddle, the Governor has also invested 980 million dollars in the advancement of North Carolina’s university system. There will also be an opening of a new branch of Western North Carolina University’s School of Science and Math in the old Broughton Hospital building in order to make the campus more available to students who live in remote areas.

Roads

Regarding roads in the state, Riddle

**See GOVERNOR page 27**

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Venture off the beaten path for a few hours and explore the biological diversity of the Highlands Plateau with the Highlands Biological Foundation. On Friday, June 3rd, we will be heading out with fern expert Tom Goforth to learn more about the wide diversity of fern species native to Highlands, from identification to habitat requirements to the basics of propagation. Ferns and friends will be from 10am to 2pm and cost $15 for members and $35 for non-members.

On June 10th we will be hiking to Whiterock along one of the most beautiful sections of the Bartram Trail, one packed with stunning wildflowers, endless vistas, and a fascinating geologic history. This hike will also be from 10am-2pm and $15 for members, $35 for non-members.

Right now we are enjoying the cool, but (mostly) sunny weather of spring, but towards the end of June, temperatures begin to rise, especially when you travel further down the plateau. Want the perfect way to stay cool and learn more about the history of the Cherokee and the Bartram trail? Float down the Little Tennessee river with your friends from the Highlands Biological Station on June 17th from 10am-2pm. Kayaks and canoes will be available, along with instruction from an experienced guide. This foray will cost $40 for members and $50 for non-members.

These trips are all hands-on, interactive experiences that are best enjoyed with close-toed shoes and clothes that are okay to get dirty. Please be sure to bring a bag lunch and water. For more information, visit www.highlandsbiological.org/forays/.
at 9 p.m. Ages are 6 to adult, and the cost is $5 per person. Advanced registration is required. Call Patrick Brannon at 526-4123 to register.

Sat., May 28
"Run for the Park 5K begins at 9 a.m. Walkers welcome! Call Skip Taylor at 526-4280, or email stmas4280@gmail.com.

• Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale at the ballfield 9a to noon.

• At the Historical Society Village an Open House. Well Strung will be playing bluegrass music from 10 to 2 pm and light refreshments will be served. HHS is located on Highway 64 just before the Rec Park entrance.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 6-mile hike, elevation change 600 ft, to Park Creek – Park Ridge, along the Nantahala River. Azaleas may be blooming. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 9 a.m., drive 35 miles round trip. Call leader Mary Stone, 369-7352, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs please.

Sun., May 29
• At Cliffsdie Lake, Michael Skinner with Balsam Mountain Trust and live raptors at 11 a.m.

Tues., May 31
• Village Nature Lecture Series. Dig deeper and learn more about our natural and cultural heritage at these free family friendly programs, at The Village Green Commons in Cashiers. Programs begin at 5:30 PM, rain or shine. No reservations required. Masters of the Sky Meet the Raptors and Discover What Makes Them Unique with Michael Skinner.

Thurs., June 2
• Rotary Bingo supporting the Free Dental Clinic at the Community Building at 6:30 p.m.

Fri., June 3
• Friday Foray with the Highlands Biological Station. Venture off the beaten path for a few hours and explore the biological diversity of the Highlands Plateau with the Highlands Biological Foundation. On Friday, June 3rd, we will be heading out with fern expert Tom Goforth to learn more about the wide diversity of fern species native to Highlands, from identification to habitat requirements to the basics of propagation. Ferns and friends will be from 10am to 2pm and cost $15 for members and $35 for non-members. For more information, visit www.highlandsbiological.org/forays/.

Sat., June 4
• On National Trail Day, the Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 8-mile hike, elevation change 1100 ft., on the Appalachian Trail from Deep Gap to Raven Rock Overlook for beautiful view of Shooting Creek. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 8:30 am, drive 40 miles round trip. Call leaders Bill and Sharon Van Horn, 369-1983, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs.

Sun., June 5
• At the Episcopal Church, "Inquirers Class.” Adults 9-10 a.m. and youth following the 10:30 a.m. service.

• At Highlands Sotheby’s International Realty, inaugural event, Sundays at Sotheby’s, from 1-4 p.m. The Director of Ceramics, Frank Vickery, and the Ceramic Artist in Residence 2015-2017, Samantha Oliver, from The Bascom will share their talent, inspiration and their works. The first Sunday of each month, we will feature various artists at Highlands Sotheby’s International Realty, 114 N 4th Street.

Mon., June 6
• The Plateau Fly Fishing Club will meet at the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Library in Cashiers, NC at 6 p.m. After the presentation a raffle will be held.

Thurs-Sun., June 9-12
• At K-H Founders Park, Highlands Motor Festival.

Fri., June 10
• SOAR Charity Pasta Dinner at the Highlands Civic Center from 5-7 p.m. $10 per person.

• Friday Foray with the Highlands Biological Station. Hike to Whiterock along one of the most beautiful sections of the Bartram Trail, one packed with stunning wildflowers, endless vistas, and a fascinating geologic history. This hike will also be from 10am-2pm and $15 for members, $35 for non-members. For more information, visit www.highlandsbiological.org/forays/

Sat., June 11
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 8.5 mile hike, elevation change 800 ft., to Noland Creek in Smoky Mtn. Nat’l Park. Meet at Bi-Lo parking lot in Franklin at 9:00 am, car-pooling to Bryson City, then on Lakeview Rd., “road-to-nowhere” where trail begins at the Bridge. Meet at Bi — Lo parking lot in Franklin at 9:00 am. Call leaders Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs.

Sun., June 12
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy-to-moderate 2-mile hike to Cliffsdie Lake Park, climbing 400 ft. to gazebo on Clifftop Vista, then descending to walk around the lake. Meet at Bi — Lo parking lot in Franklin at 2:00 pm, drive 30 miles round trip. Call leader Jean Hunicutt, 524-5234, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs.

Fri., June 17
• Friday Foray with the Highlands Biological Station. Float down the Little Tennesssee river from 10am-2pm. Kayaks and canoes will be available, along with instruction from an experienced guide. This foray will cost $40 for members and $50 for non-members. For more information, visit www.highlandsbiological.org/forays/.

Fri. & Sat., June 17-18
• At PAC, Retro Rock: Travis LeDoyt. The best young Elvis. Call 828-526-9047 for tickets.

Sat. & Sun., June 18 & 19:
• Highlands Village Square Art & Craft Festival.

See EVENTS page 12
• See EVENTS page 13

Show. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. New location at Highlands (Bryson’s) Plaza on Hwy. 106. Regional art & crafts, live music. Sponsored by Macon County Art Assn. FREE! For info call (828) 787-2021.

Sat., June 18
• At HUMC, tea and crumpets with Mary Kay Andrews, shares the story from her latest book, “The Weekenders.” She is known for her mysteries, as well as her novels. This fun-filled afternoon is a fundraiser for the Highlands United Methodist Church’s new Faith & Fellowship Center. Tickets are $20. Call 828-526-3376 or 828-526-2746.

• At CLE, POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GLOBAL MARKETS 10a to noon.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a very strenuous 9-mile hike, elevation change 3800 ft., to Gregory Bald from Sam’s Gap in Smoky Mtn. Park, through Cades Cove, one of the most natural garden spots in the Park. Meet at Dillsboro Huddle House at 8:00 am, drive 130 miles round trip. Call leader Don O’Neal, 586-5723, for reservations. Able visitors welcome, no dogs.

• Shrimp Boil fundraiser to benefit Kelsey-Hutchinson Park on the plaza in the park at 6 p.m. Proceeds will help complete the Monument Garden, the Sitting Fountain and the Historic Fireplace. $50 ticket includes the Low Country Boil Dinner and 3 drinks including wine and beer. $5 wine and beer tickets available at the plaza. Live music by Goldie & The Screamers.

Sun., June 19
• At PAC, WCU presents Shakespeare at 5 p.m. Performance is $20 Fish n Chips dinner is $50. For tickets call 526-9060.

Tues., June 21
• Guided adventures led by experts in their field. Reservations required. $35 donation for new friends includes the guided hike, lunch on the trail and a one year membership to HCLT, $10 for HCLT members. Contact Julie at julie.hitrust@earthlink.net or 526-1111. Balsam Mountain Preserve Expedition- Our visit will include a hike through the renowned landscape that some call a living laboratory for scientific research and exploration as well as a visit to their on-site nature center to meet the wildlife that reside there.

Wed., June 22
• At CLE, BEES, PLEASE: Native Bee Diversity in Your Garden and Beyond, 2-4 p.m.

Thurs., June 23
• At CLE, HIGHLIGHTS OF NC MUSEUM OF ART. 10a to noon.

Sun., June 25
• The LIFE-Saving ministry is having its 4th Annual Bloemsma Barn Event. Mountain Faith Band from Sylva will be performing in Franklin’s 1st ever Amphitheater Style Concert. They were SemiFinalists on America’s Got Talent this past season. Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center has two free medical clinics serving WNC and upper NE GA.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will hold a Hike Leader Workshop for those interested in leading hikes. Lunch will be provided after the workshop and then a hike. Meet at the NHC Club House on Carl Sla...
...EVENTS continued from page 12

gle Rd. at 10:00 am. Contact Mary Stone, 369-7352, or mary23stone@yahoo.com, for reservations or information.
• At PAC, Guy Bavli, Master of the Mind at 8 p.m. Call 828-526-9047 for tickets.

Tues., June 28
• Village Nature Series. Dig deeper and learn more about our natural and cultural heritage at these free family friendly programs, the final Tuesday of the month from May through September at The Village Green Commons in Cashiers. Programs begin at 5:30 PM, rain or shine. No reservations required, everyone welcome. If Fossils Could Talk- Discover the History of the Earth Through Fossils and Local Geology with Dr. Frank Forcino.

Sun., July 3
• At Cliffside Lake, Michael Skinner with Balsam Mountain Trust and live raptors at 11 a.m.

Tues., July 5
• Guided adventures led by experts in their field. Reservations required. $35 donation for new friends includes the guided hike, lunch on the trail and a one year membership to HCLT, $10 for HCLT members. Contact Julie at julie.hitrust@earthlink.net or 526-1111. A Walk through Time, Sargent to Sunset,Visit the historic Sargent property, HCLT’s first conservation easement and home to a number of rare plants then trek up to Sunset Rock, one of HCLT’s oldest owned properties.

Sat., July 9
• Highlands Plateau Greenway’s Highlands Art Tour hike begin at 9:30 a.m. at K-H Founders Park. You will walk Main Street to the Bascom Art Gallery for a tour and then see the Bascom trail to Oak Lane back through the Rec Park to the Highlands Historical Society and Kelsey Hutchinson – Founders Park. Your leader will be Sally Taylor of the Bascom. To sign up please call Hillrie Quinn at 828 526-2385 or email hillriemquin@gmail.com. Sign up early.$25 and will include the hikes, lunch and a year’s membership in the Highlands Plateau Greenway.
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Celebrate the Unofficial start to Summer!
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Jody Lovell is allowing me to highjack her article this week so I can tell you that, as president of the Highlands-Cashiers Board of REALTORS®, I was privileged to attend the National Association of REALTOR'S® Mid-Year Legislative Meetings in Washington, DC earlier this month to represent the Highlands-Cashiers area.

The most amazing thing I discovered is that REALTORS®, no matter where they are from, are more alike than different. We face the same challenges; enjoy the same victories when we find just the right property for our clients and work hard each and every day to ensure our clients understand the CURRENT real estate market in their area. REALTORS® are the Voice of Real Estate.

You may be hearing that there is an inventory shortage if you are listening to the news. That is not the case in the Highlands-Cashiers area. It is still very much a Buyers’ Market here. In fact, we really have too much inventory. We would like to offer some advice to our sellers in preparation for the coming season to help them get ready to SELL!

It all comes down to three things: price, location and condition. It is critical to price your home based on current sales information. It doesn't matter how much you paid for it. It doesn't matter how much you have put into it, how much you have to get out of it or how much your neighbor thinks it should sell for!

Be sure your REALTOR® gives you at least three solid comparable properties from the past 6-12 months as close to yours as possible. It isn't always easy to do this, but I can't stress enough how important it is to be IN or even ahead of the curve.

• See INVESTING page 19
...INVESTING continued from page 18

CURRENT market. It doesn’t matter what it might have sold for a few years ago.

Second, location; if you have a home on the plateau, you have it covered!

The third factor is condition. If you want top dollar, your home MUST be in top condition. Does it need to be painted? Are there any repairs to be made? How does the yard look? Does it need landscaping? Does your home need to be staged? Do we need to tuck away all those family photos so that the buyer can see themselves as the owner?

Consult your REALTOR® to find out what he or she thinks is the best approach to get your home in top condition for selling. They do know what’s best and what will work, so you are ready to accept that offer without having to do these things after you get it and can sell quickly.

If you are selling this season, I hope you will find these tips helpful. Happy Selling! Don’t forget to use a REALTOR®!

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Long range mountain views! Located on 1.20+- acres at the end of a quiet, private road. 2 bedrooms 3 baths with extra sleeping quarters. Offered at $495,000. mls #83791

One-level 4BR/3BA home. Vaulted living room with wood burning fireplace, separate dining room, large eat-in kitchen. Covered front porch, wood and tile flooring. Also updated 2BR/1BA guest cottage with fireplace. Two barns over 110 years old and other out buildings. All on 2.58 acres with creeks and a level playing yard. Offered at $495,000. mls #83714

This charming cottage is on .60+- acre with spring water and large shade trees. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, additional workshop and storage or studio. Good condition and ready for a new owner. Offered at $199,900. mls #83676

Move in condition with this post and beam home. 3 bedrooms, 4 1/2 baths plus an art studio and family room. The greatroom opens to a huge screened porch with a private setting off Garnet Rock Trail and convenient to all HFCC the amenities. Offered at $565,000. mls #83704

This home is on almost 3 acres. This 4 BR 4.5 bath home, has 2 bonus rooms. Beautiful hardwood, real marble and granite. Offered at $1,485,000. mls #83724

Spacious home on 1.16 acre. Large kitchen, separate dining room, LR with rock fireplace, master suite on main. Two guest suites and loft area on UL. LL den/family room with rock fireplace and two additional rooms. Covered decks on each level. Furnishings available. Offered at $625,000. MLS #83512

Great log cabin with rock fireplace. Open great room, dining room, kitchen, hardwood floors and split floor plan. Large open back deck with winter view of Rabun Bald Mountain and front covered. One-car garage, wheel chair accessibility, all on one level. 17-acre community Lake Osage. Offered at $299,000. mls #83801

Spectacular views. Great room with massive stone fireplace, screened porch, custom kitchen, main level master with ensuite bath, split plan with den-office/bedroom, Upper level guest suite. Lower level living. Two-car carport. Water feature with garden area. Offered at $1,495,000. mls #83691

In Highlands CC on 2.4 acres this 3 bedroom 3 1/2 has a library office and room above the 2-car garage. Custom kitchen with stainless and granite. Living and dining with Carolina room and mountain view. Master on main with custom bath, 2 bedrooms up with baths and great storage. Offered at $1,850,000. mls #83898

On Lake Sequoyah this home has 3 bed rooms and 3 baths with and additional room for guests. Very open plan floods the greatroom with light. Master on main with 2-car garage, lower level with family and guest rooms. Great low maintenance yard, Offered at $699,000. mls #83932

Great room has cathedral ceiling with fireplace. Master suite has ensuite bath. Stainless kitchen has granite counter tops and is near screened dining porch with mountain view. Room above garage with bath and wet bar. Offered at $569,000. mls #83804

Stunning waterfall and fully renovated 4 bedroom 3 bath that sits on 1.75 acres and abuts USFS lands. New kitchen with eat-in breakfast room, formal dining room or den, large open living room with cathedral ceilings. 3 fireplaces, new deck. Offered at $649,500. mls #83894

On the Atlanta side of Highlands. Master and guest bedrooms on main, living room, kitchen, and dining in greatroom design. Lower level has recreation room, laundry and guestroom/storage. Large deck overlooks mountain vista. Offered at $165,000. mls #83759

This 4 bedroom, 4.5 bath has mountain view of Whiteside, Bearpen and more. Main level has custom kitchen and wood floors with vaulted ceilings. Large covered porch, screened porch and patio, too. Terrace level has a guest suite with additional living room. 2-car garage. Offered at $945,000. mls #83356

3 bedroom, 2 bath close-to-town charmer. Open floor plan and remodeled kitchen with stainless appliances. The living area with fireplace. Screened porch with hot tub and deck with an outdoor fireplace. Offered at $239,000. mls #83686
and the group shared the same sentiment – that it’s hard to teach students the procedures and roles of government when the Senators are currently ignoring their responsibilities.

DeVille and the other educators attended a mock hearing held by Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee to demonstrate the importance of having the full complement of nine justices on the Supreme Court.

“Most striking to me was the testimony of Judge Timothy Lewis. He made a point of informing the committee that even though he had strong disagreements with Judge Garland, he deserves to be confirmed because (a) that was President Bush’s choice and (b) he was eminently qualified,” said DeVille.

The educators also met with President Obama’s senior adviser Valerie Jarrett at the White House. “It’s not only about Judge Garland,” Jarrett said. “It’s about the future of our country and making sure our students have a system they can trust and even-
**CORRECTION**

In last week’s issue we said this shot by Elizabeth Hess was taken at HFCC. It was taken at hole 8 on the Highlands Country Club course where Hess was playing golf with her mother-in-law Barbara Gares. We regret the error and are happy to set the record straight.

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**3 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath home in Highlands Falls Country Club Community. Raised ceilings in the upstairs living areas, a 3 car garage plus golf cart storage and the possibility of a great golf course view make this a fantastic opportunity. A wonderful wrap-around glassed/screened covered porch is perfect for entertaining.**

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Commissioner John Dotson, contesting the allocation of $20,000 for a Christmas tree, said, “We could buy one for $5,000 every year.” He pointed out that there were lots of trees at Christmas tree farms that are too big to sell, which the owners would probably like to get rid of.

“I know they are waiting for the White House to call but that’s just not going to happen,” he said.

But a live tree has long been in the plans for K-H Founders Park and Commissioner Brian Stiehler said though he agreed allocating $20,000 for a tree was a lot of money, he would like a live tree.

He said a live tree would mean a 90-inch root ball and he was sure that he could find one here in Highlands, one a property owner might like to get rid of, especially if his or her name was associated with the tree in the park.

Mayor Pat Taylor reminded the board that erecting a cut tree each year would mean constructing a concrete pad and involve guy wires – probably not the look or feel the Founders Park Coalition was thinking of when it planned a Christmas tree for the park.

For budgeting purposes the $50,000 was left in the Rec Park budget for 2016-17 but it could change.

**Dumpsters**

For a few years now, the town has allocated $30,000 a year to replace old, rusted and weak dumpsters with bear proof dumpsters and bear proof lids.

The trouble is they don’t always keep bears out. Why? Because of people said Mayor Taylor.

“We are getting a lot of complaints about garbage in the streets so maybe we need to consider a punitive approach,” he said.

According to Town Manager Frye, the problem is the dumpsters aren’t being secured properly. “They’re not being used correctly,” he said. “By not doing anything about it we are rewarding inappropriate behavior. We can put bear proof lids on every dumpster in town, but if they aren’t being used properly then they won’t work.”

Nothing monetarily was decided upon concerning dumpsters and their use, but the issue isn’t dead.

**Utility Increases**

Commissioners also discussed the increase in the minimum charge for water, sewer and garbage pickup.

All three are enterprise funds, which means they are supposed to be self-sustaining with all expenses paid for with each respective fund. That hasn’t been the case – capital expenses have been typically paid out of the General Fund Balance or the Electric Fund Balance.

The minimum monthly charge for water will go up $3 from $32 a month to $35; sewer will go up $1.50 from $32 to $33.50; and garbage pick-up with go up $1.50 from $18.50 to $20 per month. This will put the funds, which are currently in the red in the black, but just barely.

Commissioner Amy Patterson wondered if the increase was enough given that the funds are supposed to be self-sustainable and oil, fuel and tipping prices at the dump are likely to increase at some point.

“Instead of dribble drabs each year, should we consider more? We’ll be ahead for now, but for how long – the departments are supposed to pay for themselves,” she said.

But Commissioner Dotson said he preferred assessing financial needs in the enterprise departments each year. “This shows taxpayers we are reassessing each year and not just taking the money,” he said.

**Balancing the Budget**

Budget expenditures for 2016-17 are more than revenues even though scores of items didn’t make the final budget. Expenditures are estimated to be $14,520,640 and to...
‘Never does the storm of the troubled heart receive its chance to be heard’

I am writing this article from scratch. I don’t have an outline. I don’t know exactly where I’m going. I’m not sure where I will wind up. I haven’t thought it through...but the above phrase somewhat haunts me. It bothers me. Ironically however, and nonetheless, I resonate with it. It connects. I think I understand it. I think I identify. Don’t you? Haven’t you been there? A stormy, troubled heart? And yet to whom do you go?

Of course, the right answer is “the Christian.” But, oh how often we Christians are loathe to listen! Have you ever thought about it? That is, one of the reasons we love the Lord Jesus is because He listens. Furthermore, He listens honestly. It’s not enough to speak honestly. One must learn to hear honestly. And honestly, not every Christian has it all together. Not every Christian lives in victory. Not every Christian knows the Bible. And much of the time they would like to tell that to other Christians in hopes of gaining insight and help. It’s even possible that sometimes a storm-tossed Christian may find a better hearing from someone in a bar than from someone in a church. Long time “Churchers” tend to respond with “come up to where I am” rather than getting down to where others are. Life is not tidy for some Christians. All the ends are not neatly tucked in. Their lives are one of storms and trouble.

How then do they receive a chance to be heard?

1) By those people who read the Bible. There we find murderers, adulterers, persecutors...and more all being sought and used by God. The Bible is in color...not black and white!

2) By those who are honest with themselves. Even spirit filled Christians struggle. Ignoring the struggle doesn’t eliminate it. Jesus helps those who are honest. I don’t know how He can help those who aren’t. 3) By those who ask the Father to give them a heart like His. That will do it. I promise. Jesus sees all and is surprised by none.

Each church I know of has people with stormy, troubled hearts. You can help calm the waters. Slow down. Listen between the lines. Be a healer. Be available to Jesus. Through you He will always listen.
Methamphetamine trafficker sentenced to 12.5 years in prison

ASHEVILLE, N.C. – Joel Elias Gonzalez, 53, formerly of Franklin, N.C. was sentenced yesterday to 151 months in prison followed by five years of supervised release for trafficking large quantities of crystal methamphetamine, announced Jill Westmoreland Rose, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. Gonzalez pleaded guilty in February 2016 to one count of distribution of methamphetamine (crystal meth) in the Franklin, N.C. area and the Rabun County, Georgia area. Court records indicate that Gonzalez purchased the crystal meth from a source of supply in and around Atlanta, Georgia. According to court records, Gonzalez was responsible for trafficking approximately 1.3 kilograms of crystal meth.

Gonzalez is in federal custody and will be transferred to custody of the Bureau of Prisons upon designation of a federal facility. Federal sentences are served without the possibility of parole. In making today’s announcement, U.S. Attorney Rose noted that multiple agencies worked together to bring this prolific crystal methamphetamine trafficker to justice and thanked the DEA, the ATF, the Macon County Sheriff’s Office, the Jackson County Sheriff’s Office for investigating this case.

Assistant United States Attorney Thomas Kent of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Asheville handled the prosecution.

According to filed court documents and statements made in court, from in or about June of 2015, Gonzalez was responsible for trafficking large amounts of crystal methamphetamine (crystal meth) in the Franklin, N.C. area and the Rabun County, Georgia area. Court records indicate that Gonzalez purchased the crystal meth from a source of supply in and around Atlanta, Georgia.

Gonzalez is in federal custody and will be transferred to custody of the Bureau of Prisons upon designation of a federal facility. Federal sentences are served without the possibility of parole. In making today’s announcement, U.S. Attorney Rose noted that multiple agencies worked together to bring this prolific crystal methamphetamine trafficker to justice and thanked the DEA, the ATF, the Macon County Sheriff’s Office, the Jackson County Sheriff’s Office for investigating this case.

Assistant United States Attorney Thomas Kent of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Asheville handled the prosecution.
Butterflies are important to our ecosystem, and if the Mountain Garden Club has anything to do with it, there will be plenty of butterflies to go around.

The Monarch butterfly (in the caterpillar stage) only eats from the Milkweed plant (available at Saturday’s plant sale), then the adult butterflies dine on dahlias, lobelias, Joe Pye weed, lupines, and other plants which can be found at Saturday’s plant sale. It’s a win, win, win situation, and all you have to do is come, buy and plant.

Although the plant sale is famous for their lush hostas, ferns, butterfly loving plants, etc., also available are vicious trowels and shovels, dahlia tubers and plants with expert advice, fairy garden plants, and note cards with nature images captured by club members.

Garden club members will be on board to help you choose, the Hummers from Highlands school will be on hand, as well as our scholarship students.

The 34th annual Mountain Garden Club plant sale, at the corner of Hickory and Hwy. 64 East (Cashiers Road) on the ball field begins precisely at 9 am and ends at noon. Proceeds benefit local college bound students, Eckerd Living Center gardens, Highlands School butterfly garden club and Hummers group, as well as other civic organizations. You’ll be glad you came.
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Although you will notice the treatment’s tightening effects immediately, the more significant improvement will occur gradually over a period of several weeks as the new collagen forms.

MicroPhototherapy
With the healing power of light and heat energy this treatment works deep beneath the surface of the skin to give a younger healthier looking appearance. Soothing pulses of heat work with light to lessen sun spots, even out skin tone and smooth the texture of your skin with virtually no down time or discomfort.

Celluma Panel’s phototherapy device, uses wavelengths of light produced by light emitting diodes (LEDs) to treat multiple conditions – Anti-aging and Acne.

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The phototherapy device, reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, while improving skin texture, quality and smoothness. Using wavelengths that are scientifically proven to stimulate fibroblasts to increase collagen and elastin, Celluma's low-level light therapy is a safe, effective and convenient way to achieve a healthy, youthful glow in a natural, non-toxic, non-invasive manner.

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At the May 17th Rotary Club of Highlands meeting, Mary Adair Leslie reviewed the history and mission of the PAC, as it is commonly known, and gave highlights of the 2016 season. The PAC was incorporated as a 501c3 not-for-profit in 1999. Its mission is to provide the Highlands Community with a first-class, low cost, state of the art facility for nonprofit organizations within the community to use as a venue for the performing arts. The PAC has two resident organizations: the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival and the Highlands Cashiers Players. Each entity has its own board of directors and they fundraise separately.

The PAC has a membership program and presents a series of performances in the “shoulder” months when other groups are not using the theater. In 2016, the PAC will present Retro Rock singer Travis LeDoyt – The Young Elvis -- on June 17 & 18; Mentalist Guy Bavli on June 25; Bluegrass Band Balsam Range on September 17; the Comedy Group Capital Steps, September 24; The Phat (Phantom) Pack GALA (a performance by three Broadway stars all of whom have performed in Phantom of the Opera followed by a gala dinner at Highlands Falls Country Club) on October 1; 10 time International Bluegrass Music Association’s Fiddle Performer of the Year Michael Cleveland and The Flamekeeper on October 29 and Retro Rock group The Drifters on November 25.

Additionally, the PAC hosts the PAC Youth Theatre Group, and presents live feeds from the Metropolitan Opera, the National Theatre of London and the Bolshoi Ballet during the winter months.

For more information about membership or for tickets, go to www.highlandspac.org or call 828/526-9047.
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FULL AND PART-TIME POSITIONS available at Nancy's Fancies. Saturdays a must. Come by 322 Main Street, Highlands. (st. 4/28)

PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT First Presbyterian Church of Highlands is accepting applications for a part-time Administrative Assistant. Knowledge of Publisher and Microsoft Office a requirement. Please contact Jennifer at 828-526-3175. (st. 4/28)

SKYLINE LODGE IS HIRING WAITSTAFF. Experience an asset but not required. Download applications at skylinelodge.com. 828-526-2121. (st. 4/28)

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SCALY MOUNTAIN NURSERY & LANDSCAPING is now hiring for landscape division. Call 828-526-9269 or Matt at 828-371-2474. (st. 3/17)

POTPOURRI STORES IN HIGHLANDS looking for part to full time sales people. Must be able to work weekends, retail experience with women's clothing and accessories preferred. Eyewear sales experience a plus. Stop by Potpourri 2 to apply or email your resume to potpourri-highlands@yahoo.com (st. 3/10)

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME POSITIONS available at Mountain Fresh Grocery, Grill, Deli, Bakery and Pizza departments. 828-526-2400 or email jobs828@gmail.com

WOLFGANGS RESTAURANT is looking for experienced waitstaff and bartender. Please call Jacque at 828-526-3807. (st. 1/21)

THE HIGHLANDS BBQ CO. is seeking Servers, Hosts, Bartenders and Line Cooks. If Interested, please call 828-200-1500 or Send a Resume to Highlands BBQCompany@gmail.com

SALES ASSOCIATE FOR HIGH END CLOTHING STORE IN HIGHLANDS, NC full time “with benefits. part time and seasonal. Must be available to work weekends. Retail clothing sales experience preferred. Please call 828-200-0928 (st. 4/30)

RESIDENTIAL FOR RENT ONE BEDROOM/ONE BATH. All utilities included. Call for details. 828-371-0829. (st. 5/19)

LOTS/LAND/FOR SALE PROPERTY FOR SALE ON FOREMAN ROAD, 1.79 acres. $250,000. Any reasonable offers will be considered. Call 828-526-5011. (st. 4/28)

WOODED LOT W/ STREAM FOR SALE – MIRROMONT AREA. Berit Ln., 1.45 acres, 4-BR septic permit, walk-to-town, Priced to sell. 770-861-4249. (st. 7/23)

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THE HIGHLANDS INN LODGE now hiring Front desk and housekeeping personnel. Stop by for application at 96 Log cabin lake or email sales@highlandssinn-lodge.com. (st. 5/26)

PART TIME HELP NEEDED AT BUSY RETAIL STORE. Customer service skills and computer knowledge are a plus. Contact Colleen at 828-482-0286. (st. 5/19)

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