

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., June 22, 2017

The Room Tax explained; not everything is equal

- Part Two -

With the upward turn in the economy and sales and occupancy tax proceeds rising substantially year-to-year, and this year the Total Eclipse event that could send all tax proceeds soaring, it's no

wonder there is renewed interest in the free, "no sweat off their brow" Occupancy Tax proceeds.

Occupancy Tax, is a tax all lodging establishments – campgrounds, hotels, motels, bed

& breakfasts and vacation rentals must add to their fees. It is collected across the state and even in some municipalities, like Franklin.

In Macon County by law, the 3% its establishments collect is given

back to the areas that collected it; in this case Highlands, and Franklin/Nantahala.

During the 2015-'16 fiscal year, Macon County collected

•See ROOM TAX page 6

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Rendition of the new PAC center by Architect Paul Schmitt.

New era for the performing arts begins

The secret is out: The Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center is expanding to accommodate all the performing arts organizations in Highlands.

"The new complex will take the performing arts to a new level in Highlands previously unimagined," said Rick Trevathan president of the PAC Board.

About two years ago at a

board retreat, members began dreaming of a larger theater to accommodate their concerts while keeping up with necessary updates to the existing facility.

Working with the current PAC resident groups -- The Highlands Cashiers Chamber Music Festival and the Highlands Cashiers Players, as well as the neighboring Highlands Playhouse – the board began to

explore the possibility of all of Highlands' performing arts groups being able to perform in one, premier facility.

Not surprisingly, everyone was for it. Architectural drawings were created and the necessary adjoining properties acquired.

The new complex will expand to the west onto the recently

•See ARTS page 10

Eco-awareness sculpture coming to 200 Main lawn

Old Edwards Hospitality Group will host an eco-art installation on the front lawn of its 200 Main hotel in downtown Highlands. This collaborative, temporary installation by artists Anna Norton and John Melvin called "How Many Trees?" will be constructed of used office paper collected from Old Edwards properties and other local businesses.

The installation will begin the first week of July and end with a natural and symbolic demise beginning with the first significant rainfall following its completion at the end of the month.

The monumental sculpture will celebrate Old Edwards' initiative to create a smaller environmental footprint through its own recycling/sustainability program, and also create awareness to inspire broader community-based action.

"Because Old Edwards is one of the largest organizations in Highlands, we believe we can — and should — help set stan-

dards that continually contribute to the quality our lives here and foster a sustainable community. In 2010, we embarked on substantial efforts to offset our carbon footprint and for those efforts Old Edwards Inn and Spa was awarded the first "NC Green Hospitality Award" issued by the North Carolina Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach," said Richard M. Delan-president and managing director of OEI. "We have since continued those efforts and in 2016 received the highest designation awarded by that organization. Today, we continue to look for ways to reduce our impact on the environment at all Old Edwards businesses, with the leadership of the Old Edwards "Green Team" headed up by Anna Norton and Zach Bowen. So when Anna came to us with the proposal for the "How Many Trees?" installation to help create awareness and inspire others, we jumped on the

•See SCULPTURE page 10

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Gearing up for the eclipse

We are two months away from darkness coming to Highlands. The Great American Solar Eclipse will move across America on August 21st, beginning in Oregon. The direct, ground zero path is somewhere between Scaly and Sky Valley, but Highlands will very much be in total darkness zone starting at 2:35 and 57 seconds in the afternoon and lasting for 2 minutes and 33 seconds. The town will experience varying levels of darkness that afternoon for about three hours.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

weekend where large crowds are expected in Highlands, Macon County and Western Carolina.

The big unknown is how many people will show up. The eclipse committee has estimates of 25,000. One website predicts the area could have as few as 8,000, or as many as 50,000. On a July 4th weekend about 10,000 to 15,000 people are on the plateau, but these folks stay in second homes, or with friends. Hotels are always full.

Emergency responders are concerned about a "day tripper" influx on eclipse day. Highlands has 1,000 public parking spaces and maybe 500 more private spaces. Our small and winding roads provide fragile access to Highlands. One or two accidents could cause gridlock throughout the plateau and beyond. Also, where will folks park, congregate, eat, and go to the bathroom?

Let's say 15,000 day-visitors descend on Highlands. If there is an average of three people per vehicle, that translates into 5,000 additional cars on the roads to an already high volume. This kind of scenario worries law enforcement and emergency personal, not to mention the mayor and town manager.

Eclipse areas like Franklin, Cashiers, Dillard, Clayton will also experience similar crowds and traffic volumes. A state of emergency would engulf the entire region. The professionals who attended the meeting are working to devise ways to meet potential fire, police and medical emergencies, here and throughout the county, but options may be limited.

Additional state troopers have been requested, and all police, fire and EMT resources will be on duty, but resources will be stretched. For instance, Mission Healthcare operates two medical helicopters for this region. On eclipse day, the helicopters may be on multiple calls so response delays could occur.

The eclipse committee and I will keep providing updates as we approach August 21st. My advice for now would be to "eclipse in place." That is, if you have a home or property where you can experience the eclipse, celebrate there. Traveling around the area on eclipse day may be problematic.

• HIC'S VIEW



• LETTERS •

'Mad Dog' Wooldridge

Dear Readers,

Hello, my name is Fred Wooldridge and I was a creative writer for this newspaper for the past twelve years. The title of my weekly column was "The Fredster" and a few close friends still call me that.

The purpose of this letter is to advise my readers...my fans, so to speak, the truth as to why I quit writing. I feel it's important for them to get the straight skinny and get it from the "horse's mouth."

Rumors are flying all over in Highlands as to why I quit so here's the truth. Number one, I did not get fired by the newspaper. Actually, I was never hired and wrote strictly because it was fun. I would like to think I was good for the newspaper. My big thing was to create an emotional response to what the reader read. My favorites were laughter, anger, fear and sadness.

The next rumor that wasn't true was I was too old and sick to write. Even though I am the victim of four small strokes (not T.M.I's) I can still bang out a 750 word column over my first cup of coffee in the morning although my last stroke cost me some motion in the last two fingers of my left hand but I am still good to go. Prior to that I was a ten-finger typist.

Being a creative writer was always fun. A lady once stopped me and said, "I love what you write. Last week you made me cry and this week you made me laugh."

• See LETTERS page 22

• WEEKEND WEATHER •

FRIDAY JUN 23	SATURDAY JUN 24	SUNDAY JUN 25
71°/62°	73°/55°	75°/53°

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Toll Free FAX: 866-212-8913

Phone: (828) 200-1371

Email:

HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki

Reporters: Merritt Shaw

Copy Editor: Glenda Bell

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Letter Policy:

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

• OBITUARIES •

Blanche Rosalee McCoy Owens

Blanche Rosalee McCoy Owens, 94, of Franklin passed away Friday, June 9, 2017. She was born in Jackson County to the late David Montgomery and Mabel Gregory McCoy.

She was married for 67 years to Euell Cordell "Buck" Owens, of Satolah, GA, who preceded her in death on January 20, 2009.

Mrs. Owens was a loving wife, mother and grandmother. She was a farmer and a lifelong member of Pine Grove Baptist Church where she was a Sunday school teacher.

Survivors include two daughters, Elaine Enloe (David) and Sandy Tippet all of Franklin; a son, Rev. Ronald Owens (Kathy) of Franklin; six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

In addition to her parents and husband she was preceded in death by two daughters, Patricia "Tootsie" Akin and Beverly Owens; a sister, Leola Holland and two brothers, Melvin Eugene McCoy and John Howard McCoy.

A graveside service was held Monday, June 12, 2017 at Sugarfork Baptist Church Cemetery with Rev. Greg Rogers officiating. Jeff Enloe, Mark Enloe, Zeb Enloe, Tim Houston, Josh Owens and Vince Boyce served as pallbearers.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory served the Owens family. Online condolences are available at bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Bennie Lee Owens Sr

Bennie Lee Owens Sr, age, 56 of Clayton, Ga., passed away June 10, 2017 at his residence with his loving family by his side. He was born November 15, 1960 the son of Edgar Jayco Owens and the late Martha Munger Owens.

In addition to his father Bennie is survived by his loving wife, Frankie Dunlap Owens of the home; his three children, Bennie Lee Owens Jr. (Jeanna), Jessica Lynn Owens, Jennifer Renee Owens; four brothers, James Owens, Dennis Owens (Sandra), Gene Owens (Stacey), Johnny Owens (Marcy); three sisters, Sherrie Owens, Mary Owens, and Missy Owens (Brian); five grandchildren, Avery James Ridley, Kayleigh Jordan Hiott, Elijah Hunter Owens, Steven Isaiah Owens, and Noah Lee Owens and a number of nieces and nephews also survive.

Bennie was a lifelong resident of Rabun County; he was a member of Macedonia Baptist Church. He was a musician and loved playing Bluegrass music. He also was an avid outdoorsman, master craftsman and was a very avid Atlanta Braves fan.

He was a master craftsman with a Highlands construction company for many years, and worked on many buildings in Highlands.

Anne Patrick Major Doggett

Anne Patrick Major Doggett, 87, of Highlands passed away Wednesday, June 14, 2017. Born in Anderson, SC, she was the daughter of the late Charles Smith and Lucia Edwards Sullivan Major. Anne was preceded in death by her husband of 62 years Lewis Doggett, having met in Highlands as teenagers.

Anne attended Stephens College and was a graduate of the University of Mississippi. Her passions were writing, gardening and genealogy and she served on the board of the Highlands Biological Station; was a founding member of Highlands Writers Group and was an emeritus member of Laurel Garden Club of Highlands. She was a member of Episcopal Church of the Incarnation in Highlands.

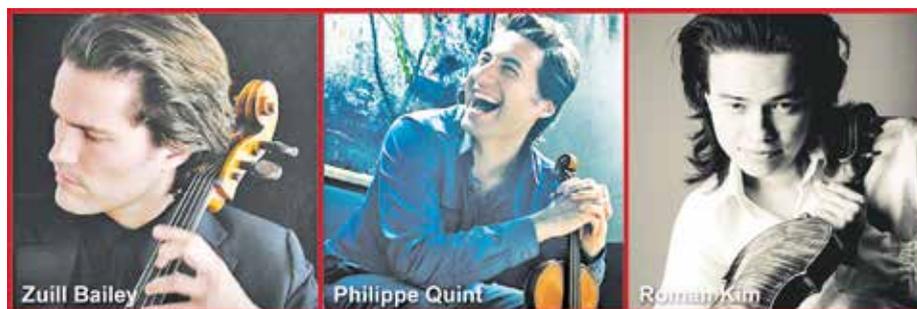
She is survived by three daughters,



Mary Elliott Doggett Williams (Robert "R.L.") of Lookout Mtn., TN, Alynder Patrick Doggett of Greenville, SC, Frances Major Doggett Mulkin (Joel White) of Birmingham, AL; three sons, Dr. Lewis Carpenter Doggett III (Cathy Allen) of Jacksonville, AL, Benjamin Tanner Doggett (Lisa Bailey) of Suwanee, GA and John Patrick Doggett (Elizabeth Hamilton) of Charlotte,

NC; two brothers, Charles Smith Major Jr. (Margaret Moon) and Joseph Edmund Major (Sally Herndon) and 11 grandchildren, Tyler Jane Mulkin, Joel White Mulkin, Jr. (Olivia Munoz), James Elliott Mulkin, Lindsay Anne Doggett, Lewis Carpenter Doggett, IV, Allender Sullivan Duhe Doggett, Ethan McGregor Doggett, Riley Sullivan Doggett, Cooper Reeves Doggett,

•See OBITUARIES page 7



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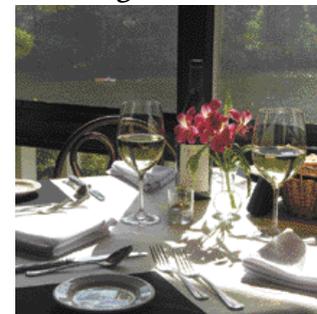


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THIS WEEK'S FEATURES

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...ROOM TAX from page 1

\$714,286.95 in room occupancy tax. Through April of this year, the county has collected \$657,439.99.

The majority of the room occupancy tax collected in Macon County is generated in Highlands. In 2015-'16, \$503,627.25 came back to Highlands compared to Franklin's and Nantahala's – \$165,890.22 came from Franklin and \$44,769.70 from Nantahala lodging facilities.

So far in 2017, Highlands has collected \$465,929.37 compared to Franklin's \$152,992.53 and Nantahala's \$38,518.09.

The 2017 figures represent part of fiscal year 2016-'17 proceeds. The county's chambers and their Tourism

Development Commissions (TDC) fiscal years are July 1 to June 30. The final count won't come in until August.

"The \$465,929.37 is the total funds distributed to Highlands from Macon County for the period July 2016 through April 2017. The last two months of May and June will not be received until after the start of the new fiscal year in July and August, respectively," said President of Highlands Chamber of Commerce Bob Kiltyka. "However, we are ahead of last year and we project a range for the full year FY 2016-'17 of \$560,000 to \$570,000 in Highlands Occupancy Tax proceeds."

North Carolina allows the room occupancy tax to be returned to the areas from which it is collected with the oversight of a TDC or Tourism Development Authority (TDA), as long as the funds are used for the promotion of travel and tourism for that area.

There are three entities responsible for the disbursement of funds for travel and tourism. The Franklin TDA which administers the town of Franklin's 3% occupancy tax money, separate from but in addition to the county's 3% occupancy. (The Franklin TDA is not in the scope of this story.) And the Highlands TDC and the Franklin/Nantahala TDC.

In August 2008, the Macon County Board of

Commissioners formed the TDCs to oversee the use and distribution of the occupancy tax proceeds. The contracts are updated every five years.

The Franklin/Nantahala TDC deals with occupancy tax monies that come in from lodging facilities in Nantahala, and in the Franklin, Millshoal, Ellijay, Smithbridge, Cartoogechay Cowee and Burnington townships.

The Highlands TDC deals with money from the Flats, Sugarfork, and Highlands townships.

This all came about because then Commissioner Bob Simpson had issues with the way the chambers were handling occupancy tax proceeds. Both were "acting" TDCs.

In particular, he had issues with the Highlands Chamber of Commerce.

Whether the Highlands Chamber was misusing funds is unclear because the language of the law stipulating that the occupancy funds be used only to "promote travel and tourism" is pretty broad and can be left up to interpretation. Nevertheless, the TDCs were formed and charged to oversee the monies.

As then Commissioner Simpson said, "when there is that much money at stake, people can do crazy things." And in Highlands' case, there are hundreds of thousands of dollars in the fund that is growing at an accelerated rate.

The official purpose of the TDCs is to advise the MC Board of Commissioners on travel and tourism within their respective districts and to work with but separately from their respective chambers.

Who makes up their boards is about the same except for the number of members – there are nine board members on the Franklin/Nantahala TDC and seven on the Highlands TDC. The chamber presidents sit on each board but are nonvoting members.

Each includes the county commissioner who lives in

•See ROOM TAX page 15



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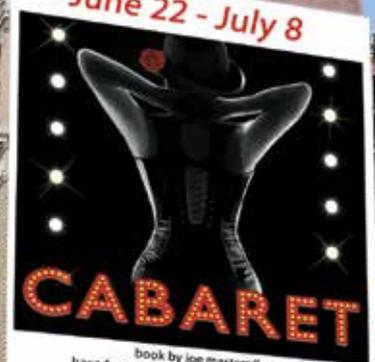
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...OBITUARIES continued from page 3

John Cabell Doggett and Emma Sullivan Doggett. In addition to her parents and husband she was preceded in death by a daughter, Lucia Sullivan Doggett.

A graveside service will be held Friday, June 23, 2017 at 2:00 pm at Highlands Memorial Park with Rev. Harry Lawrence and Rev. Rusty Goldsmith officiating. A reception will follow the service at Cabin Ben, 115 Cullasaja Drive, Highlands, NC.

Deborah Margaret Norman

Deborah Margaret Norman, 59, of Highlands passed away Wednesday, June 14, 2017. Born in Jackson County, she was the daughter of the late James W. Norman and the late Mary Frances Summer Potts and the late Louis Eugene Potts.



She was director of day-care at Newlife Baptist Daycare in Fayetteville, NC. Deborah dedicated her career to serving others with jobs in social work and hospice which were very special to her. She loved spending time with her grandchildren and loved to read. She loved her church and was a very faithful member of Shortoff Baptist Church where she sang in the choir and prepared the church bulletins.

Survivors include two daughters, Am-

Steven Wayne Nylund

Steven Wayne Nylund, 61, of Highlands passed away on Saturday, June 17, 2017. He was born in Boston, MA to the late Leonard E. and Helen Colby Nylund.

Mr. Nylund was a building contractor and was a Jehovah's Witness by faith.

Survivors include his wife Cindy Nylund of Highlands; daughter, Sierra Nylund of Highlands; son, Joshua Nylund (Elizabeth) of Atlanta, GA; grandchildren, Alysson Nylund and Kayden Nylund; sister, Lori Nylund of Franklin and brother, Bradford Nylund of Highlands.

A private service will be held at a later date.

John 'Jack' B. Freese

John "Jack" B. Freese was born April 2, 1927 in Boston, MA. He died May 3, 2017 in Winter Park, FL. He leaves his wife Nancy, four children and nine grandchildren. Jack worked at Cashiers Plastics from 1978-2000. A celebration of his life will be at the Episcopal Church of Incarnation on Monday, June 26 at 11 am.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Highlands Historical Society; The Land Stewards, the Highlands Biological Station or the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation in Highlands, NC.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Doggett family. Online condolences may be made at bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

ber Dawn Morrow of Asheville and Ashley Elizabeth Chavis of Highlands; one son, James Kevin Chavis of Hope Mills, NC and three grandchildren, Jacob Moralis and Jayden Manning both of Highlands and Chloe Chavis of Hope Mills.

A funeral service was held Tuesday, June 20, 2017 at Short-off Baptist Church with Rev. Andy Cloer officiating. Burial followed in Highlands Memorial Park. Pallbearers were James Chavis, Lester Norris, John Dotson, Doyle Calloway, Buddy Miller, Danny Chastain, Jonathan Miller and Benjamin Miller.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory served the Norman family. Online condolences may be made at bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

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~ Peter Drucker

I'll admit that I have a very high tolerance for risk and uncertainty. Clients can sense that about me almost within minutes of meeting me, and those possessing an entrepreneurial fire and/or dream in their bellies pepper me with questions about starting a business in Highlands.

Most have never owned their own business or have been solopreneurs, but have a long-held fantasy of being the captain of their own destiny.

Coupled with their love for Highlands, the prospect of having a business in our idyllic setting can sometimes cloud judgment

as to what will work (or won't) financially, as well as what will fit their strengths and interests over the long term.

Many have asked me to outline exactly what I believe the principles for business success in Highlands to be, as well as point out the pitfalls. Information on launching an enterprise is ubiquitous online, but there are a few pointers that most how-to articles miss:

1) When you leave your job/former community, remember



Susie deVille
Owner/BIC
White Oak Realty Group

you are taking with you. Review carefully (and in great detail) why your current job is not fulfilling to you. When you look at the list, what do you see? If the negatives are things like you don't like a long commute in traffic, or you aren't able to have your voice/insights/ideas heard in your company, or you crave the ability

to give customers an outstanding experience and your current position forces you to minimize interaction, then your transition to the entrepreneurial life in the area of soul satisfaction will go more smoothly.

If, however, you review your list and see things like you'd get so much more work done if you didn't have to "deal" with customers, or you live for Friday so you can have two days off and not think about work until Monday, or it seems that no one ever works as hard as you and you feel resentful and angry because of it, well, I do believe you will find owning your business to be supremely challenging.

Owning a business magnifies the highs and lows – be very clear on what the lows are for you and know going in if those are things you can mitigate/tolerate/change entirely.

2) If you have market fit, you can make a ton of mistakes and still be successful. The vision/fantasy in your head about the business you want to launch may not necessarily be what the market wants. Understanding precisely what your ideal customer seeks in terms of products, services, and experiences is of highest importance. You may have a gut instinct on a winning idea, and that is terrific! Ensure that you test your assumptions long before you sign a lease or buy inventory. Check in with the

people in the community. Interview other business owners, potential customers, service providers, and local business experts. The beauty of taking the time to do this not only helps refine your business idea and inch you closer to market fit, it begins the marketing process for you long before you open your doors.

3) Watch your overhead and remember you are in a seasonal resort community. One of my most savvy investors said to me once, "You make money when you buy the property" (meaning if you buy a property right, you are just about always guaranteed a win when you sell).

Similarly, many mistakes and gaffs are easy to recover from when you have kept your overhead low. If you are basing your monthly expenses on July and August revenue, come January, things may be bleak. Highlands certainly has become much more of a year-round community, but there are still dips in activity during winter months. Create a very lean, super tight budget and stick to it. Bank the extra summer and fall cash for reserves when the community is quiet.

4) Maintain a "build the plane while you fly it" mentality. Even with all the planning and preparation in the world, there are still a number of surprises that come your way. Be prepared to be agile in responding to such surprises and course correct continually. Sometime success is only a 2 cm adjustment away – look for it.

5) Service, service, service. If making customers wildly happy and delighted with having been taken care of by you is not your first priority, you will have little runway for your young enterprise to hit escape velocity. Make it easy to find you, a joy to do business with you, and consider each client interaction to be one you can make memorable.

I believe the barriers to entry to entrepreneurship are the lowest they have ever been at any time in

our history. Costs for establishing an online presence, purchasing equipment, and creating a strong brand identity are a fraction of what they were even just five years ago.

Granted, rent in the Highlands community can be high, but look for creative solutions such as negotiating a lease with sliding rent to give you time to establish a foothold, and/or consider buying a building that offers steady rental income from residential space or other commercial space you are not using.

The excitement and fun of establishing an enterprise in any community carries a joy that makes the heart sing and brain buzz.

When you couple that excitement with the prospect of living and working in Highlands, the combination is potent and intoxicating. That intuitive hit you have that Highlands would be just the place to bring your business baby to life is most likely right on target. Do some homework first and have lots of conversations. Be clear on the kind of life you want to live and design those elements right into your business plan. Keep your customer top of mind and stay in touch with them all year 'round. I'll look forward to toasting to your success!

• 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.



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Broadview Acres 3bd/2ba with great rental history. Vaulted ceilings, gas fireplace and new carpet. Relax in the bright sun room or bbq on the open deck. \$399,900 MLS #85526



Only minutes to Main St., this 3bd/3ba home in desirable Mirrormont area has been updated with all the bells and whistles. \$595,000 MLS #86293



2012 remodel with an enlarged master suite, porte cochere and a double carport. Rustic mtn feel with wood walls, floors. 3br/3ba, great mtn views, and located in town. The partial basement could become a workshop. \$697,000 MLS# 84941



Great lot in prestigious, gated Ravenel. Long summit views spanning from town to Short-off to Whiteside and beyond. This easy laying homesite is the perfect place to build the home of your dreams right in town within a easy walk to everything. \$799,000 MLS #85383



2bd/2ba very private condo, offered fully furnished. Vaulted ceilings, screened porch and open back deck with views. \$243,000 MLS #85769



Great 3bd/2ba sits high above 13th fairway at Highlands Falls CC. \$549,000 MLS #86238



Wonderful Arts & Crafts style home with lots of character! 4bd/4.5ba in Falling Waters. Large open kitchen, covered decks on 2 sides plus a spacious screened porch. \$849,000 MLS #86261



Stunning 4bd/3.5ba in Cullasaja Club with gulf and mtn views. Granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. Plenty of indoor and outdoor entertaining spaces with 2 outdoor fireplaces. This is a must see. \$1,450,000 MLS #85571



One owner and very little use on over 5 subdividable acres makes this home highly sought after. 3 bd/3.5ba offering complete privacy. Gourmet kitchen, floor to ceiling fireplace in greatroom, master suite, 2 guest suites and many other high end finishes throughout. \$1,050,000 MLS #86239



Great building lot with Over 400 feet of Lake Sequoyah frontage in upscale neighborhood with gated access near Highlands Country Club. \$1,220,000 MLS #85285



Soaring tongue and groove cathedral ceilings with 2 story stone fireplace. Large 4bd/4ba in Trimont Mountain Estates. \$699,000 MLS #86288



3bd/2ba Highlands Mtn Club condo. Remodeled top to bottom with granite in kitchen, marble baths, wood floors. Move-in ready! \$275,000 MLS #86242



Close to Highlands Country Club and close to town. This lovely home on Dog Mountain has 3 bedrooms/3 baths with spacious master bedroom on main. Open floor plan upstairs. Gas log stone fireplace in living room. Lower level family room has wood burning stone fireplace with two additional bedrooms each with full baths. Features 2 covered decks to enjoy the beautiful mountain views and a private spring fed trout pond. \$350,500 MLS# 83824.



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...SCULPTURE continued from page 1

opportunity to make it happen”
Town businesses are invited to participate in the project through donation of used office paper.

Designed by artist John Melvin, the sculpture's shape is inspired by organic forms, macroscopic and microscopic. Time-lapse videos, which characterize the work of artist Anna Norton, will capture the evolution and interaction of the sculpture within its environment.

An open framework armature of freshly cut pliable branches will support the structure's skin—several layers of paper mâché — both of which will be temporarily supported, during the final stages of construction, by 20 to 30 three-foot-diameter balloons. It will be sized to human-scale, and visitors will be able to enter the space, crouching through a low opening due to the non-traditional architecture.

Once completed, this delicate structure of thin paper mâché layers will be translucent. The installation will be situated on the front lawn of 200 Main underneath the partial canopy, allowing dappled light to play upon the surface.



This light will be captured through time-lapse images from sunrise to sunset during the structure's lifespan, capturing the variety of light and weather conditions that occur. The resulting images will then be made into video vignettes revealing the changes constantly occurring around us all.

Visitors are invited to come experience the construction process as well as the fleeting existence of the completed sculpture, which will last until the weather takes its toll. An updated timeline of the sculpture's projected com-

pletion date will be available online at www.AnnaGNorton.com/HowManyTrees

Some of the other eco-improvements made by OEI include:

- Establishing a sustainable farm bringing organic and local food to guests.
- Installing Icynene insulation which has reduced energy bills by 50%.
- Replacing all incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs.
- Implementing an optional towel and linen re-use program for guests.
- Participating in the Global Soap Project to help those in need and
- Conducting an Energy Assessment with the help of Waste Reduction Partners.

The public is encouraged to witness the evolution of “The How Many Trees” sculpture and process.

...ARTS continued from page 1

acquired property on Chestnut Street and to the southeast on newly acquired property behind the building adjacent to the existing parking.

It will take \$10 million to complete the facility and once the money is secured, construction will begin. The existing PAC building will remain intact so programming can continue simultaneously with construction. According to Architect Paul Schmitt it will likely take 1 ½ years to complete once they break ground.

According to President of the PAC Board Rick Trevathan, the project has already hit the 70% mark.

“A generous anonymous donor pledged to match up to \$5 million of the \$10 million projected cost, and underwriting is already at 70%, but the PAC board is adamant to only begin construction once the project is 100% funded which includes a 1.5 million endowment.

The 22,200 sq. ft. facility will include a state-of-the-art theater with a fly system, a cat-walk for lighting and sound and seating for 320-350 people. It will also house a black box theater with

seating for 75-100. This intimate theater will be the venue for the Highlands Playhouse movies as well as rehearsal space, a lecture hall, and a venue for smaller live theater productions.

Schmitt said the venues within the facility will be connected to each other and to the existing PAC building so patrons can move freely from one area to another. The connecting lobby space will be available for parties and meetings.

“Basically, this is a dream come true and is something we feel will be the icing on the cake for the performing arts in Highlands. We are thrilled with the input from our resident art groups and the Playhouse which are all excited at the possibilities,” said Trevathan.

The PAC board is confident the additional 30% will come — maybe even this summer.

“We feel that Highlands is a very generous community and we are hoping when the residents of Highlands see what we have planned, generous donors will come forward and we can begin,” Trevathan said.

Cindy Trevathan, who is on

•See ARTS page 15

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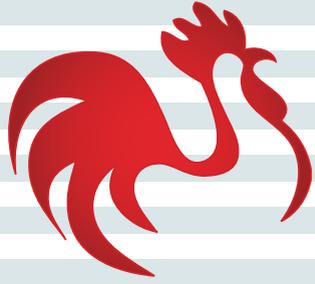
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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

Ongoing

• Movies at the Highlands Playhouse: Friday - Tuesday: 2, 5, and 8 pm. Sundays 2 & 5 only.

• Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team is open to all levels of swimmers ages 6-18. Contact Coach Steve Hott at 828-421-2121.

• The Nature Center will be open Tuesday-Saturdays from 10am-5pm and from 12pm-5pm on Sundays. The Nature Center is closed on Mondays.

• The Glenville Area Historical Society Museum is open every Thursday, Friday and Saturday 11 AM to 3 PM until October 14. The Museum that traces the history of Glenville from it's founding to present day through wall displays and items of historical value, is located at 4735 Highway 107 in Glenville. For information call 828 743-1658, email historicalsocietyglenvillearea.org or go to www.glenvillecommunity.com

Mondays, July 3, and Aug. 7

• Botanical Garden Tour. 10:30 am - 11:30 am • Free. All ages. At the Highlands Botanical Garden. Learn to identify and remove non-native invasive species from your garden and the surrounding forest.

Mon., June 5, 12, 19, 26 (4 sessions)

• Thinking Bridge: Play of the Hand (intermediate), 9:30-11:30 Cost \$80/\$90 Instructor: Duane Meeter. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

First Mondays

• Shortoff Baptist Church non-denominational Men's Meeting at 7 pm

Mondays

• At the Rec Park, High Cardio Zumba Fitness with Certified Instructor Tiffany Austin at 5:25 p.m.

Mon. & Thurs.

• The Joy Program at HUMC from 11:30a to 1:30p. Includes a free lunch and a variety of programs and games. All seniors are welcome. For more info, call Tricia Smith at 828-338-8167.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30-9:30am. Contact Janet Avery at 828-200-7508 for more information.

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.

Mon.-Fri.

• Lap Swim Monday-Friday 7am-10am 6 lanes and Monday-Thursday 5pm-6pm 1 or 2 lanes. Sharing pool with Water Aerobics @ 5:15.

• Water Aerobics Monday-Friday 10:15am-11:15am and Monday-Thursday 5:15pm-6pm (sharing pool with lap swimmers) and Saturday mornings from 11:15-noon.

Tuesdays

• FREE Community Table Dinner at the Community Bldg. at 6p.

• The Humanist Discussion Group

meets every Tuesday morning from 10:30-11:30a in the Meeting Room in the back of Hudson Library,

First Tuesdays

• The monthly family support group for those with family members, friends, or loved ones living with the challenge of mental illness meets at 7 p.m. at Memorial United Methodist Church, 4668 Old Murphy Road, Franklin. For info call 369-7385.

2nd and 4th Tuesdays

• OccupyWNC meets at the 7PM in the Sneak E. Squirrel Community Room (1314 Main St., Sylva. Visit www.occupywnc.org or call 828.331.1524

Third Tuesday

• The Macon County Poultry Club meets at the NC Cooperative extension office located at 193 Thomas Heights Rd., Franklin on the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Meetings are open to the public. Call 828-369-3916.

Tuesday and Thursdays

• Zumba with Connie at the Rec Park 8:15 a.m. \$5.

• Pickle ball from 11:30a to 1p in the gym at the Rec Park.

• Exercise Class with Tina Rogers are held Tuesday and Thursday at 5:15p.m.

1st Wednesdays

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

3rd Wednesdays

• Recently released movies at Hudson Library at 2pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

Thursdays

• Storytime with Miss Deanna at Hudson Library 10:40 am. Open to the public.

• Weight Watchers support group meets every Thursday at 5 pm at Christ Church of the Valley. Call Lisa 828-506-3555.

• Indivisible Highlands, a non-partisan activist group meets weekly at the Hudson Library at 5p. For more information call 770-823-0601

A 'Once in a Generation' Exhibition

Once in a generation, there are extraordinary exhibits that capture the mind and spirit and are of such significance that they are remembered forever.

The Bascom is proud to present such an exhibit this summer. *"The Poetry & Pottery of Dave Drake."* Dave Drake was born into the condition of Slavery about the year 1800, in the Edgefield District of South Carolina. Not only was he trained by Abner Landrum and others at Pottersville

on how to make alkaline-glazed stoneware, he learned how to read and write! Dave used these skills, normally forbidden to slaves, to communicate to the free and enslaved world around him his philosophy, his prose and his point of view on love, patriotism, commerce and religion. The pottery and poetry that is Dave's legacy is a rare and unique window into the life of a mid-nineteenth century African American craftsman, who lived most of his life in bondage. The verses are also referred to as couplets or poems, inscribed by Dave, in his hand, on his soft clay jars, at a time in which it was novel and eventually dangerous to do so. His vessels stand as sentinels to the abuses of privilege and the fettered ability to express ideas no matter the form it



takes, artistic or otherwise. Even though we may not completely understand all their meanings, the fact that Dave wrote these verses communicate to us today glimpses of what his life was like which is the powerful story this exhibition will tell.

The Bascom invites you to come and walk among his grand pottery and prose as we will have eight of Dave's famous poem pots, the most on exhibit in one place since 1998, at The Bascom June

24-September 10, 2017. On loan from private collectors and museums, this is an exhibit not to be missed. While you are on The Bascom campus, be sure and visit the Dave Drake Studio Barn. Named for Dave Drake by an anonymous donor, you will be able to see potters working today utilizing some of the same techniques used by Dave Drake himself. Support for this extraordinary exhibit was provided by Platinum sponsors Jack and Lucy Kuhne and Diamond sponsors Ginger Kennedy and Kevin Naylor, Delta Air Lines and The Chaparral Foundation.

More information about the Bascom's exhibitions and educational programs can be found on the website, www.thebascom.org.

Annual Patriotic Concert is July 4



First Presbyterian Church of Highlands will present its annual patriotic concert at 8:00pm on Tuesday, July 4. The free concert will last one hour, ensuring plenty of time to watch the town fireworks display. Featured will be the Highlands Men's Chorus under the direction of Dr. Michael Lancaster. Lancaster serves as Director of Worship/Music at Highlands First Presbyterian Church and also as Conductor of the Asheville Symphony Chorus. The group will be accompanied by Marquita Someliana-Lauer. Also featured will be Larry Black, trumpeter and Angie Jenkins, organist. Come dressed as you are. In the event the fireworks display is cancelled due to rain, the concert will still take place. The church is located at the corner of Main and Fifth Streets. Handicapped accessible entrances are located on Church Street and on Fifth Street.

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

• NAMI Support Group for individuals dealing with mental illness and the family members of individuals dealing with these challenges from 7 – 8:15 pm. at First United Methodist Church Out Reach Center on West Main Street beside Bryant's Funnel Home. Call Donita for more info (828) 526-9510.

2nd Thursdays

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

3rd Thursdays

• Kidney Smart Classes in Franklin: from 4:30-6pm, Angel Medical Center, Video Conference Room, 3rd Floor, 120 Riverview St. Contact Majestic 828-369-9474

Thurs., & Sat.

• Zumba with Mary K. Barbour at the Rec Park from 11a to noon. For more information, call 828.342.2498.

Fridays

• Live music in Town Square from 6-8 p.m.

Fridays & Saturdays

• Art's at the Lodge. Live Music 4-8 p.m.. Cocktails in Art's or on the lawn at the Lodge. On Spring Street.

Saturdays

* Farmers Marketplace in K-H Founders Park from 8a-12:30p.

• At The Bascom, Pottery Sale in the barn from 10a to 5p.

• Scrabble at Hudson Library from 1-4 p.m. Bring board if possible. All are welcome.

• The Bascom Knitters on the Terrace at The Bascom from 10 am until noon or downstairs in The Bascom Library room.

• Music in K-H Founders Park 6-8 p.m. Bring a picnic!

Mon. & Wed. June 26, 28

• At The Bascom, Beginning Drawing Workshop, 1-4 Cost \$95/\$110 Instructor: Freddie Flynt. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

Thur., June 22

• iPad PRO, 10:30-3:30 Cost \$75/\$85 Instructor: Nigel Sixsmith. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

• The Carter Presidency, 2:00-4:00 Cost \$25/\$35 Presenter: Joseph Crespino. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

• At the Nature Center, Feelin' Froggy! 6 - Adult, 8:30-9:30 pm. \$3. Registration is required. Bring a flashlight. For info, call 526-2221

Fri., June 23

• Globalization's Threat and Promise, 2:00-4:00 Cost \$25/\$35 Presenter: Dr. Diane Alleva Cáceres. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

Sat., June 24

• Curtis Smalling, Dir. of Conservation, NC Audubon, will lead a walk along Rich Gap Road, Highlands. Meet at Founders Park at 7:30; loaner binoculars will be available. Roadside birding: easy and little walking.

• At The Bascom, Family Day, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cherokee stories & dance, youga, woodturning, sphero robots, selfie photo booth, raffle, empty bowls pottery, popcorn,

face jugs pottery, print making, nature trail activities, knitting, storybook giveaway, music by Zorki, and El Azteca food.

• One Day Watercolor Workshop, 10:00-3:30 Cost \$75/\$85 Instructor: Susan Lingg. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com.

Sat., June 24

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 5-mile, moderate-to-strenuous hike, elevation change 600 ft., to Windy Falls on the Horse Pasture River, starting in Gorges State Park. The last ¼ of the hike follows a rocky, steep old logging road. Meet at Ca-

• See EVENTS page 14

See 'Seldom Scene' Sat., June 24 at PAC



The Highlands Performing Arts Center presents the ultimate in bluegrass with Seldom Scene on Saturday, June 24 at 8pm. What does it take for a bluegrass band to remain popular for more than four decades? For the Seldom Scene, it's taken not only talented musicians, a signature sound, and a solid repertoire, but also a sheer sense of fun. Recently the longtime pillars of the bluegrass world debuted a new cd with the aptly titled LONG TIME.....SELDOM SCENE. The newly recorded collection features fresh interpretations of the 16 oft-requested tunes. It's a family reunion in all the best ways.

Over 40 years since they began playing together at weekly jam sessions in Ben Eldridge's Bethesda, Maryland basement, The Seldom Scene have become one of the single greatest contributors to the progression of bluegrass while setting a new standard and attracting new audiences to the genre. The Seldom Scene have performed at the White House many times, and continue to tour year-round. The Seldom Scene founding members are Ben Eldridge (banjo), Lou Reid (mandolin/vocals), Dudley Connell (guitar/vocals), Ronnie Simpkins (bass/vocals), and Fred Travers (dobro/vocals).

This concert is SOLD OUT, but there is a waiting list, so if you want to come, call 828.526.9047 to get on the waiting list. Tickets are available for all PAC events online: www.highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047. 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands

Village Square Art & Craft Show is this weekend in K-H Founders Park



If you are shopping for something special, perhaps something handmade in the mountains, plan to attend the Village Square Art and Craft Show on Saturday and Sunday. The show is open from 10 to 5 both days at beautiful Kelsey-Hutchinson "Founders" Park on Pine St. The Rotary Club of Highlands Mountaintop sponsors the show, and part of the proceeds will benefit the park.

The shows hold high standards, so shoppers will find good quality art and crafts made regionally and by local artisans. They will no doubt be pleased by the large selection of fine art paintings and photography, metalwork, aromatherapy, books and clothes for children, pottery of different styles, unusual jewelry, leather bags, and more.

Live music, featuring singer-songwriter Jim Lord on Saturday and the Mountain High Dulcimer Club on Sunday, will be in the pavilion.

Rotary member Dr. John Baumrucker and other volunteers will be manning a food booth, and Fressers Eatery will provide eats and drinks both in the park and in the Village Square.

Even if you aren't in the market for anything in particular, just come for the music, food and fun. Admission is free, and the show goes on rain or shine.

For information contact show coordinator Cynthia Strain at (828) 787-2021. Check out our facebook page for updates and more information on our vendors.

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

shiers Recreation Park at 10 am, drive 40 miles round trip. Call Mike and Susan Kettes. 828-743-1079, for reservations.

Mon., June 26

• Aery Chiropractic & Acupuncture. Free Health Lecture Series from 6-7 p.m. Upstairs - 2655 Dillard Road. This week: Lisa Henry, Reflexology

Tue.-Fri., Jun 27- 30

• At The Bascom, Summer Camp: Session 3 - Painting. 9a-noon and 1-4p. Fingers, brushes and more will be used to create fun and colorful works of art with paint. To register call 526-4949.

Tue., June 27

• "Hello Mister": A Birding Tour Adventure in Indonesia" by Romney Bathurst at 7 PM in the rear meeting room of the Hudson Library in Highlands, 554 Main St.

• Growing Succulents in Highlands, 10:00-12:00 Cost \$40/\$50 Instructor: Gail Bell. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

• The Richest City In All The World, 2:00-4:00 Cost \$25/\$35 Presenter: William Rawlings. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

• Village Nature Series: Fire On the

Mountain - The smoke and science of fire ecology (Speaker TBD) Co-hosted by Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and The Village Green. 5:30 PM, rain or shine. For more information contact the land trust at 526-1111 or info.hitrust@earthlink.net.

Tues.-Fri., June 27 - 30

• Wildlife Warriors, Highlands Nature Center • 828-526-2623. Ages 10 - 13 • 10 am - 4 pm daily. Cost \$145 per child Campers will learn about different conservation topics through hands-on activities. They will have the opportunity to design investigations of their own and work through the challenges of data collection. Campers will also learn the importance of leadership and teamwork in the conservation field!

Wed., June 28

• Of Microbes and Men: 21st Century Genetic Engineering, 2:00-4:00 Cost \$25/\$35 Presenter: Robert T. Youker. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

Thur., June 29

• ISLAM: Secularism and the Nation State in Turkey, 2:00-4:00 Cost \$25/\$35 Presenter: Eren Tasar. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

• "Fire on the Mountain" Come along

for a trip to Wayah Bald in Franklin where we will witness the damage that was done from the wildfires last fall and talk a little bit about fire ecology on this easy to moderate hike. Co-hosted by Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and The Village Green. Reservations required. \$35 donation for new friends includes the guided hike, lunch on the trail and a one year membership to Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, \$10 for HCLT members. To reserve: info.hitrust@earthlink.net or 526-1111.

• At the Nature Center, Nocturnal Nature - 6 - Adult • 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm • \$3 Nocturnal have some pretty amazing adaptations to help them survive. Come out to Highlands Biological Station to learn about some of our nocturnal residents as we walk through the Botanical Garden. Advanced registration is required as space is limited. Please bring a flashlight. For info, call 526-2221

Fri., June 30

• Russian and the Middle East, 10a-12 Cost \$25/\$35 Presenter: Eren Tasar. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

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Hot topics in the world of international politics will be discussed at the Center for Life Enrichment. On June 29 and June 30, CLE is offering the opportunity to gain unique understanding regarding two countries currently prominent in today's news events: Turkey and Russia.

Lectures on these two dates will be presented by Dr. Eren Tasar. On Thursday, June 29 Dr. Tasar

will elaborate on Turkey, one of America's most important allies, with a lecture entitled Islam: Secularism and the Nation State in Turkey, Time: 2:00-4:00. Then, the following Friday, Dr. Tasar will focus on Russia, with a presentation called Russia and the Middle East, Time: 10:00-12:00.

Aside from having a Harvard Ph.D. and an assistant professorship at UNC Chapel Hill, Dr. Tasar is uniquely qualified to discuss Turkey and Russia in that he was born of Turkish parents and has lived in both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Dr. Tasar has also authored a book published just this year by Oxford University press entitled Soviet and Muslim: The



Dr. Eren Tasar

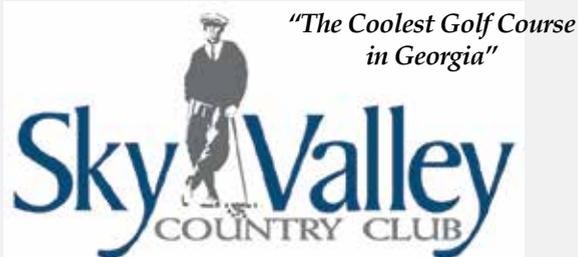
Institutionalism of Islam in Central Asia

The country of Turkey is a current events item of keen interest to many people since the attempted military coup in that country in 2016, as well the role it plays as America's ally in the turbulent Islamic politics of the region.

Of course, no political topic has more relevance than the current

situation with Russia. Dr. Tasar will touch upon Russia's present involvement in the Syrian Conflict, and will examine Russia's historical role in the politics of the Middle East.

The Center for Life Enrichment is pleased to have Dr. Tasar present to provide information and enlightenment on two subjects that could not be more pertinent or relevant in today's news and political events. Cost for lectures is \$25 for members and \$35 for nonmembers, walk-ins are welcome. For more information or to register for these lectures please call 526-8811 or visit www.clehighlands.com



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...ARTS continued from page 10

the building committee said the PAC Board is firm about wanting the project fully funded before beginning construction.

"We are nervous about starting without having it all. We don't want debt and we want an endowment," she said.

However, with money in the PAC capital fund, she said grading consistent with the project and expanding the parking lot in the back could begin.

"This would ease some of our parking issues right now," she said.

Schmitt said the reason programming in the current PAC building can continue during constructing is because the bulk of the new project is adjacent to and behind the current building. There is a chance the H-C Players programming could be impacted during the winter but they could use The Playhouse which doesn't use the venue in the winter.

"If we build the back parking lot in advance, we can shut down the parking

to the side of the building for the new construction which means we can start on the required fire wall on the west side of the current PAC building," he said.

Mary Adair Trumbly, executive director of PAC said she doesn't know who is more excited her board or her tech staff.

"This is a what you call a dead-hung theater and every show we do we have to pull the chairs up and put the scaffolding up to change the lighting. It's acoustically near perfect but the lighting is just a bear," she said. "We will have a cat-walk and a fly system that will be automatic."

Schmitt said in addition to the venues there will be office spaces upstairs and down as well as balcony seating and the lobby will be large enough to accommodate parties and meetings.

As to what will happen to The Highlands Playhouse building, Mayor Pat Taylor said "It is speculation at this point."

– Kim Lewicki

HCCMF Week 3 highlights



The 36th annual Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival opens this week with a special presentation at WCU's Bardo Arts Center in Cullowhee. Sunday, June 25 the festival's Anna and Hays Mershon Artistic Director William Ransom, and George Brown, Dean of Western's College of Fine and Performing Arts, will be performing, Enoch Arden: A Melodrama.

Along with the festival's regular concert series, there are several other special programs, Feasts, and Salons scheduled throughout the season.

On June 30, the Eroica Trio will be on stage at the Highlands Performing Arts Center at 6PM, for the first of the regular concert series. The Eroica Trio, Sara Sant'Ambrogio, Erika Nickrenz, and Sara Parkins are familiar faces to music lovers on The Plateau. This sought after trio continuously thrills audiences with their flawless technical virtuosity, boundless enthusiasm, and elegance. They will be playing selections from Bach, Schumann, and Dvorak and are joined by Kate Ransom on violin and Yinzi Kong on viola.

Jazz Master pianist, Gary Motley and his Trio, are featured the same weekend and will be joined by Will Scruggs, a saxophonist, singer, and bandleader based in Atlanta. Motley is a pianist, composer, arranger, and educator and has received numerous awards throughout his career.

As in previous seasons, concerts are held Friday and Sunday in Highlands at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street, then again on Saturday and Monday at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library.

Tickets may be purchased for the entire season and for individual concerts as well as for Feasts, Salons, and specific special events. To learn more please visit them online at h-cmusicfestival.org or call their offices at (828) 526-9060.

...ROOM TAX from pg 6

the district, one member from the chamber board of directors, two owner/operators of lodging facilities – one from an establishment with more than 10 rooms and one from an establishment with less than 10 rooms; one at-large person appointed by the county commission; and in Franklin four people who have a stake in the tourism business – in Highlands that number is two.

They all serve staggered three-year terms. Meetings must be at least quarterly or as frequently as deemed necessary by the TDC boards. Interestingly, the Highlands TDC board meets quarterly; the Franklin/Nantahala TDC, that deals with substantially less money than the Highlands TDC, meets the third Thursday of every month.

The Highlands TDC is currently out of compliance with the county's TDC regulations regarding the make-up of its board because

there are two chamber of commerce board members on the TDC board; only one is allowed.

Currently, the members of the Highlands TDC are: MC Commissioner Jim Tate, who represents the Highlands District, Rick Siegel, previous owner of 4 ½ Street Inn; Tucker Chambers of Chambers Realty & Vacation Rentals; Chris Alley, owner of Colonial Pines Bed & Breakfast; Joe Green of Wolfgang's Restaurant; Jack Austin Chamber of Commerce Board member and Manager of Old Edwards Inn & Hospitality Group; and builder Bill Futral and Chamber of Commerce Board member and President of the chamber Bob Kielytyka who is a non-voting member.

According to documents provided by County Attorney Chester Jones, the TDC is an advisory board to the MC County Commission whose purpose is to promote

•See ROOM TAX page 16

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...ROOM TAX continued from page 15

the development of travel and tourism in Macon County. By Feb. 1 of each year, the TDC is to consider project requests for the upcoming fiscal year beginning July

1 and is to make a recommendation to the county budget officer on the extent of occupancy tax revenues needed.

Each TDC is supposed to have two committees: Marketing that prepares and submits for approval an annual program to advertise and promote travel and tourism; and

a Budget and Finance committee that recommends for review and approval the proposed annual budget regarding the use of the occupancy taxes by the TDC.

An annual report is supposed to be presented to the Board of Commissioners and all minutes, books and records can be inspected by the TDC or the public. in accordance with the NC Public

Records Act.

Since the job of overseeing and distributing the occupancy funds was becoming big business and overlapping with chamber duties, the county entered into contracts with each chamber of commerce to serve as independent contractors to operate under the guidance of the TDC and to assist the TDCs in promoting travel and tourism. Each chamber receives a monthly amount from the county not to exceed the amount of the occupancy tax collected during the preceding month, less administrative expenses of the county.

Specifically, the Franklin/Nantahala Chamber provides space, staffing and performs office work and maintenance for a the visitor information center and works for the TDC to promote travel and tourism.

"The TDC makes all decisions for advertising, promotion, and grant requests. The Franklin Chamber is basically the 'agency' that carries out all the work - creating ads, brochures, stories, taking calls for tourism requests and advertising promotion opportunities," said Franklin/Nantahala Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Linda Harbuck. "I serve as secretary for the TDC but as a non-voting member. I prepare the financial reports and make sure all bills are paid and handled correctly, keep minutes of the meetings, receive grant requests and ad opportunities, and prepare agendas. My staff assists me with preparing ads and articles, bookkeeping and all other

duties that are necessary."

According Harbuck the 2016-'17 occupancy tax total so far is \$215,210.45 with grants/project support/chamber support for that fiscal year totaling \$92,018.54. Each year the occupancy tax account opens with remaining balances from the previous year.

The county's contract with the Highlands Chamber of Commerce reads: "The county shall not be liable to the chamber for any expenses paid or incurred by the Chamber. The Chamber shall supply at its sole expense, all equipment, tools, materials, and or supplies necessary to provide the following services: visitor center operators, tourism and travel promotion, marketing and communications. The Chamber is to present the TDC a semi-annual report each January and July as to progress regarding travel and tourism. Furthermore, it must present the TDC a semi-annual report each January and July as to its progress regarding travel and tourism."

According to Kieltyka, for the fiscal year 2016-'17 that ended June 30, 2017 the chamber received \$138,144 - approximately 25% of Highlands Occupancy Tax revenues - to offset Visitor Center operations' budget expenses. Monthly payments are made to the chamber's operating account and Visitor Center operating expenses are than paid from the chambers' operating account.

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•See ROOM TAX page 18



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 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.
 \$26.95 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. \$35.95 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
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...ROOM TAX continued from page 16

the Franklin TDC and Highlands is the Highlands TDC doesn't appear to be instructing the Highlands chamber; it appears it's the other way around.

For instance, TDC members (who aren't chamber of commerce board members) say they knew nothing about the impending changes at the chamber regarding

the elimination of the Visitor Center Director position and the formation of the two new positions that will be partly funded with occupancy tax proceeds.

The Highlands Chamber of Commerce recently reorganized and eliminated the Visitor Center Director position in lieu of two new positions. The new positions –

Director/Volunteer Coordinator and Marketing Director. Kielytky said the salaries for the new positions haven't been determined yet and the amount of occupancy tax proceeds that may be used to fund the positions will be determined by the percentage of their time dedicated to tourism-related duties.

Kielytky's salary is currently paid equally by Chamber of Commerce funds and occupancy tax proceeds.

"I stipulate that far more of my time is taken up by tourism work than chamber business. Tourism is Highlands' primary economic driver and a core mission of the chamber.

So, aside from the chambers themselves who is eligible to receive occupancy tax money?

Each TDC has a grant system set up whereby eligible organizations who can prove they promote travel and tourism to their respective areas, can apply for money to pay for advertising.

In Highlands grants are only accepted for advertising beyond the 50-mile mark because it is presumed that such advertising would bring people to the area.

Kielytky says the Highlands TDC considers about seven advertising grant requests per year. However, the TDC receives requests after they are vetted by the chamber board so members say they don't know how many requests the chamber initially gets each year. According to members, requests are generally in the \$3,000 range.

But Kielytky says the Highlands TDC sees every advertising grant request that comes through the Chamber.

"The TDC vote is the deciding vote. In the current fiscal year, we have received seven grant requests, which is pretty typical. Some organizations do submit applications annually," he said. "In an effort to promote this grant program better, the Chamber has dedicated a Chamber Board member who recently established a policy of opening up the application period twice during the year – beginning in January and again in June. The application periods will be advertised locally."

Some recent examples of grant requests are from the the Highlands Chamber of Commerce, the Lipscomb Performing Arts Center, the Highlands Arts & Craft Show, the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival, the Highlands-Cashiers Players (which requested a grant for the first time in 2016), and the Highlands Motoring Festival.

Organizations requesting grants must hit certain marks.

The organization must be a legally recognized Highlands-based non-profit group or sub-committee of the chamber; the impact of the granting of the request on the Highlands economy must be explained; an estimate of the number of expected visitors to the event/project must be provided; who will be receiving and dispersing the funds

and more.

And finally, all advertising partnerships are subject to the review of the Highlands Tourism Development Commission.

Mary Adair Trumbly, executive director of the Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center (PAC) said she applies for an advertising grant every year.

"However, there are no guarantees and amounts differ yearly," she said.

Likewise, says Nancy Gould-Aaron, executive director of the Highlands-Cashier Chamber Music Festival

"We have received a grant from the chamber upon our request and submission for one, however, it is not a guarantee that we will receive one each year. We are required to submit a written request with specific guidelines each year. The amount varies depending on our request and the chamber's approval - we do not always get the requested amount."

Cynthia Strain, the promoter of the Village Arts & Craft show said the first grant she got was for \$2,400 in advertising in 2013, the year the Macon County Art Assn. became the non-profit sponsor. Another year she got \$2,500, and then \$1,000 in 2015.

The Highlands Rotary Club has taken over the event and it asked for and received \$2,000 to promote this year's event.

"The \$2,000 has gone a long way, and we have been able to advertise in areas that would have been unaffordable without the grant – Asheville, Atlanta, Tennessee, regional magazines, and several internet sites to name a few," said Strain.

In addition, during the 2016-'17 fiscal year, the Highlands TDC OK'd a grant requested by the Chamber of Commerce in the vicinity of \$78,000 to promote the Highlands Food & Wine Festival, according to TDC members.

In hopes of securing another grant to promote the November 2017 Highlands Food & Wine Festival Kielytky said a report will be presented to chamber of commerce members and to the Highlands TDC.

There were 33M+ media impressions on Highlands, 229,000+ people were reached, there were 17,000+ post engagements, 24,000+ views of videos posted about the event, people ranging in age from 25-75+ attended with average household incomes of \$200K+ and guests traveled from GA, SC, NC, FL, TX, TN, AL, LA, CO.

Kielytky said Eleven Events, LLC, the events production company that was contracted in 2016 and again in 2017 to organize, develop and execute the Highlands Food & Wine weekend, was paid for from accumulated chamber reserves – not from occupancy tax money.

Likewise, The Ewart Group that facilitated the strategic planning process which included both the chamber and the



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My wife attended church last Sunday (and yes, I already know it's a good idea for the Pastor's wife to go to church!) But more was involved. It was her first time in church since May 21. Upon her second visit to the ER, she was admitted to the hospital for four days. Diagnoses? Pneumonia, bronchitis, UTI and e-coli. Subsequent to her discharge we returned to the hospital every day for the next five days for IV antibiotic infusions. Now she is slowly on the mend. Many of you prayed. Thank you. The Lord is answering.

It so happens that the day I am writing this article, Monday, June 19, coincides with my thirty-fifth wedding anniversary with my first wife, Gwynne. And, again, many of you prayed for her in her illness. She has now been in heaven for fifteen years. To put it most simply: God does heal some. He doesn't heal all. And everyone will die unless Jesus returns first.

What about you? What if Jesus were to ask you the question: "Can I heal you?" What would your answer be? What would you specify? One of the greatest men in church history asked the Lord to heal him. He did this three times. Each time Jesus denied his request for healing. But with the denial came a promise that the grace of God would be sufficient. The man was Paul and he records his story in 2 Corinthians 12. Our Lord never...no...never...gives us anything which isn't for our good. In fact, for our very best. Somehow in the perfect mind of God, His grace was better for Paul than healing.

The same is true for us. God will never make a mistake with you. I hope you will pray for healing. I hope you will look to the Lord Jesus as your Healer. Then, I hope you will trust Him for His matchless answer.

Again, thank you for praying for Kaye.. She encouraged me to write this article.

...ROOM TAX from page 18

visitor center's future operations was paid from chamber operating funds with no occupancy tax proceeds used – "even though their work included strategic planning for both organizations," he said.

So where did all the Highlands occupancy tax money go? Exact allocations were not forthcoming, and it turns out some of it isn't spent but rather saved.

After Highlands occupancy tax money was used to offset chamber tourism-related functions, salaries and grants, the balance from FY 2015-16 was \$340,627.25.

"That money was used for marketing and advertising and items related to marketing and advertising "to promote travel and tourism in the county," as required by the controlling legislation," said Kieiltyka. "These are expensed directly out of the Visitor Center budget."

• See ROOM TAX page 22

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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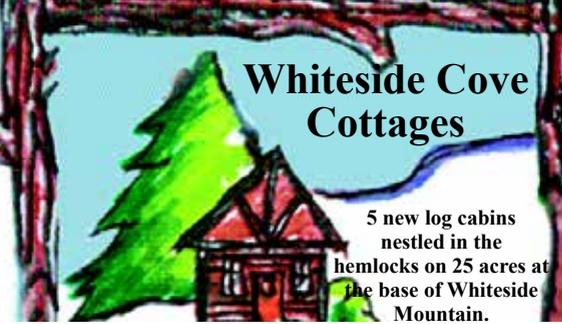
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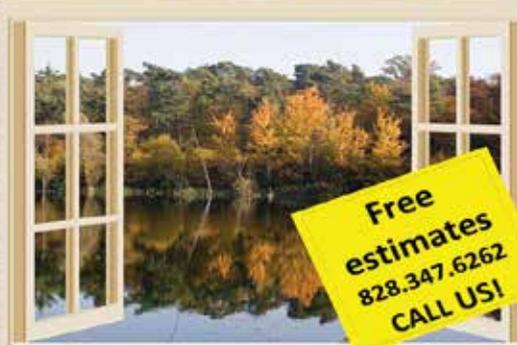
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• POLICE REPORT •

The Highlands Police log entries from June 5. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

June 5

• At 10 a.m., officers responded to a call of an unattended death in an apartment on Horse Cove Road.

• At 11:34 a.m., officers responded to a call of a simple physical assault at a residence on Upper Lake Road.

June 6

• At 3:30 p.m., officers responded to a call of a simple assault at a residence on Ravenel Ridge Road.

June 9

• At 10:49 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Webbmont Road in-

volving wreckless driving and a suspected DWI.

• At 12:45 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 east.

June 10

• At 10:53 p.m., officers responded to a call of a noise complaint at Cyprus Restaurant.

June 13

• At 4:55 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on NC 106.

June 17

• At 8:30 p.m., officers responded to a call of a breaking and entering with larceny from a residence on Mirror Lake Road where \$12,000 in jewelry was stolen.

• At 2:15 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 west.

...LETTERS continued from page 2

In my many columns, I often referred to my wife, Maddy, as my "Li'l missus." She was anything but a "Li'l missus." Maddy, my wife, worked for J. Edger Hoover's FBI for ten years. We were a true law enforcement family.

Then, during this past winter, I felt like I wanted to take a year off and not write. DONE! I didn't even have to notify the newspaper because they never asked so I never told them.

Finally, I would like to explain the title of this letter. I worked for the Miami Beach Police Department for twenty-eight years. Most of my career was spent abusing criminals. Back then, being cruel to criminals was accepted behavior by the citizenry. I loved what I did. I simply made it clear to criminals it would be healthier for them to live in another town. Police don't solve crime; we merely displace it. Parents of raped teenage girls loved me.

The policemen I worked with named me "Mad Dog" but never to my face. I retired as chief of the detective division (a Major) and will tell you I loved every minute of it. I truly feel I was born to be a cop. End of story!

Fred Wooldridge
Highlands

...ROOM TAX continued from page 19

Kieltyka also said a sufficient occupancy tax reserve is maintained for carryover into the new fiscal year which also helps cash flow through the winter months when marketing revenues are less.

In addition, in 2015-'16 the chamber requested, and the TDC OK'd, a "substantial grant" to rebrand the Visitor Center slogan but the exact figure was not forthcoming. Kieltyka said the new brand 'Highlands/4118 The Height of Happiness' is now used in all advertising campaigns.

The occupancy tax allocation for rebranding falls into that gray "promoting travel and tourism" area.

"The steady increase in Highlands

share of the Macon County Occupancy Tax is proof positive of the vitality of Highlands growing hospitality industry and the Chamber of Commerce's success in applying the occupancy tax funds effectively in promoting travel and tourism to Highlands and all of Macon County," said Kieltyka.

With proceeds increasing yet unspent year-to-year, and municipalities shouldering the burden of the impact to their infrastructure, it's no wonder towns in North Carolina like Highlands are scrambling for a piece of the pie.

-Kim Lewicki

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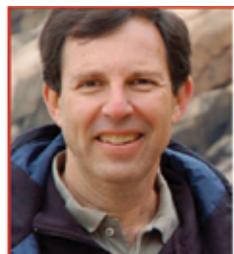
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