Driving up ‘Sunset’ may soon sunset

At last Thursday's Annual Town Board Retreat held in Coleman Hall at the First Presbyterian Church, department heads met with commissioners to present their wish lists for Capital Needs Projects (CIP) for FY '18-'19.

Since capital projects are a big part of any municipal budget, presenting CIP lists is a jumping off place from which to begin formulating the upcoming budget.

With the condition of Sunset Rocks Road in the limelight these days, Public Works Director Lamar Nix presented four paving scenarios ranging from $132,000 to $204,000 which he said could be budgeted for FY '18-'19 or FY '19-'20, if the board wished to proceed in that direction.

The scenarios involved various layers of an ABC Crusher Run, base asphalt, top asphalt, washed stone and filter fabric with the price increasing with each layer.

In addition, if paved, he suggested speed bumps every 50 feet to slow vehicles down to protect pedestrians walking the road. He also noted that no where along the road is there or would there be a

Inconsiderate owners and wayward dogs are reason for amendments to Animal Ordinance

Unleashed dogs and dogs whose bodily functions go unchecked by owners is the reason the ANIMALS chapter in the town's Code of Ordinances is being amended.

Amendment suggestions were presented at the town’s annual retreat last Thursday by Police Chief Bill Harrell and the town’s Public Safety Committee.

Public Safety Committee members – Commissioners Donnie Calloway and Eric Pierson, as well as Mayor Pat Taylor have been discussing the problem of “poop in the park” and unleashed dogs in public gathering places since the latter part of last year. During the public comment session of a Town Board meeting, citizens urged commissioners to keep dogs out of the K-H Founders Park.

It was noted that people take their dogs to the park to do their business – some picking up the excrement and some not – and that unleashed dogs habitually use the park as their bathroom.

Commissioners didn’t want to keep dogs and their responsible owners out of the park but acknowledged something needed to be done. That initiated amendments to the Animal chapter concerning “excrement” and expanded where defecation is outlawed.

The amended ordinance also now includes a Leash Law and all previous misdemeanor punitive actions in the Animal section have been upgraded to civil penalties with a price tag of $250. However, as before, enforcement will be “complaint-driven.”

The amended ordinance – Responsibility to control dogs – now reads:

"No keeper of any dog shall cause or allow such dog to soil, defile or defecate on any public..."
Infrastructure was the topic of a recent National League of Cities newsletter article. Always a challenge for all municipalities, infrastructure is currently a major issue in Washington where congress and the administration are developing legislation to help states, counties and towns upgrade their infrastructure.

The article’s lead was that America’s infrastructure should be beautiful. An organization called “And Beauty for All,” the name playing off the last line of the pledge of allegiance, was also featured. The article authors maintain beauty is life enhancing, so a beautiful community infrastructure creates desirable places and spaces for the public to live, work and visit. Many of our nation’s founders, like Jefferson, embraced this concept of a public beauty.

A contemporary urban designer, Hermann Knoffacher, contends that beautiful, aesthetic infrastructure “stirs pro-environmental behavior.” People take pride and care of beautiful spaces, whether human-made or preserved natural spaces.

Of course, this article made me immediately think about Highlands, and the current situation and the challenges ahead. I connected these ideas about beauty to some discussions at last week’s town retreat and current projects.

First, there was the discussion at the retreat concerning the cross-tie retaining wall at the Playhouse. It’s in an ugly state of disrepair. Over the past few years the Town Board has budgeted to replace old cross-tie walls in the business district with beautiful, artistically crafted stone walls. The Playhouse wall is the last holdout. There are two factors that I hope the board will consider in appropriating funds in the coming budget to replace the wall. First, from a functional standpoint, the cross-tie wall is on the verge of collapse. Second, this cross-tie wall goes against the aesthetic unity that has been created by the new stone wall system. It simply now looks out of place. I hope to see it replaced as soon as possible.

Another example is our renovation initiatives of the recreation department. I was sitting in the kiddie section of the swimming pool with grandchildren this past cold, and cloudy Saturday afternoon. Between being hit in the head with water noodles, I looked up at the closed pool roof. Beautiful soft gray light was filtering in between the metal arches while we enjoyed the 80-degree pool water. Here again, the pool is a wonderful functional structure, but from the inside it is a beautiful place to be.

The main building improvements also underscore how beauty and functionality go hand in hand. The renovated arts and crafts room has a new floor, cabinets and

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**Weather**

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<th>Friday 3/16</th>
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For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to • www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Weather.
**Letters**

Response to a Good Idea

Dear Editor,

This morning when I picked up the paper, I expected to see a multitude of letters supporting Sarah’s request in her letter-to-the-editor last week begging the town not to pave Sunset Rock Road.

She really hit the nail on the head. There are a lot of things Highlands needs but pavement on a hiking trail is not one of them. Imagine a two-lane road across from the Nature Center. Two lanes would be necessary since you would have two-way traffic. Then there is the requirement for parking all the cars. As a result, we will have to do away with many trees to make way for a parking area.

What was a nice but rutted wide shady trail is now a hot highway that requires walkers to make way for traffic.

Paving a road does not necessarily mean that erosion will stop. Water washes off the pavement and finds its way to the roadside where most of the shoulder of the road erodes down the hill. Often the road itself is undermined and begins to fall away. A French drain arrangement may help on the present trail or even planting something that would hold the dirt in place.

If the town of Highlands needs to spend money I have some suggestions:

Put in a crosswalk at the post office where the wheelchair entrance is; Put sidewalks on Spring Street where the sidewalks run out; See about slowing traffic on the Dillard Road near the Bryson’s and the post office entrances; And maybe we should see about fixing the PO door that opens when you look at it. The heating bill must be out of sight.

In closing, I ask for mercy for one of the last remaining natural trails in Highlands.

Glenda Bell

Highlands

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**Obituary**

Lisa T. Crowe

Lisa T. Crowe, 59, of Highlands, NC, died on February 23, 2018 at her home. She was the daughter of the late John and Virginia and Mae Tucker. Mimi had a heart of gold and a laughter that could make anyone smile. She was a friend to anyone that met her. She was a hard worker who loved to spend time with her family and friends. She enjoyed traveling and especially had a fondness for the beach. She also enjoyed living in the mountains surrounded by wildlife.

She is survived by her daughter, Heather Dalton (Paul) of Highlands; two very loved grandchildren Camren and Russell Dalton of Highlands; sister, Leslie Tucker of Glenville and many friends.

A Memorial Service will be held Saturday, March 17, at 11 a.m. at Grace Community Church with Rev. Steve Doerter and Jennifer Forrester officiating.

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

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**…Mayor continued from page 2**

counter tops, a new ceiling with energy efficient LED lights and a new coat of paint. I suspect folks will enjoy and use this transformed space. There are similar plans for the Community Building. A new floor and paint job are overdue.

As we develop a town comprehensive plan and upgrade infrastructure, let’s include issues related to beauty and art. They are not luxuries, but essential components for an aesthetic community that we all desire.
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MET Opera’s La Bohème is Saturday at PAC

The Highlands Performing Arts Center will screen the MET Opera’s production of Puccini’s La Bohème on Saturday, March 17 at 12:30pm. Beverly Wichman will lead a pre-opera discussion beginning at 12noon. The world’s most popular opera returns in Franco Zeffirelli’s classic production starring a cast of young stars, including Sonya Yoncheva as the fragile Mimi and Michael Fabiano as the poet Rodolfo. Marco Armiliato conducts. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org, at the door or by calling 828.526.9047

Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands
Commissioner Amy Patterson first brought up the eroded condition of the Sunset Rocks Road a couple of months ago at a Town Board meeting.

She wasn’t suggesting the road be paved, necessarily, but noted the need to do something due to erosion that each year creates deep ruts making the road impassable by low clearance vehicles. In addition, and most noted, was the fact that erosion was sending dirt and gravel down the mountain and into the Nature Center property and creek beds.

“Lamar has long told me that you can’t put gravel on top of granite and expect it to stay,” she said. “This is what we have been doing and it’s not working.”

Sunset Rocks Road is a private road which the town maintains because utility crews must be able to get to the power line cut and emergency vehicles must be able to get to the top.

Since Ravenel Ridge Road is another way to access the top of Sunset and possibly even the power line cut, commissioners, Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart and Nix all discussed investigating that possibility in lieu of paving Sunset Rocks Road.

Commissioner Patterson, who has been visiting Highlands and hiking Sunset Rocks Road since she was five-years-old encouraged the board to figure out a way to curtail erosion and destruction of the road without paving it.

“We were always able to go up there in an old Jeep. It’s a half-mile from nowhere right in the middle of town which is nice,” she said. “Why are we considering spending $100,000 to pave it so people can drive? We should be encouraging people to walk. There are people – lots of people – who walk it every day. If we pave it people driving it will detract from the experience of walking Sunset. We would basically be taking a hike away from people.”

Mayor Pat Taylor noted that there were a lot of roads in town that need attention, not just Sunset.

“It should be a walking venue without pavement,” he said.

Commissioner John Dotson said over the last couple months, he has gone from believing paving was the way to go to the “complete opposite.”

“I say we take the gravel off, put up a gate at the bottom and return it to nature,” he said. “I don’t want to take it away from people who like to hike and commune with nature versus those who drive up, take a...
... DOGS continued from page 1

lic property, or upon any street, sidewalk, public way, play area; unless such keeper immediately removes and disposes of all fecal matter deposited by such dog by collecting the feces and placing it in a paper or plastic bag or other container, and thereafter removing such bag or container and disposing of the same in a manner as otherwise permitted by law. Still in is the section about Highlands Ball Park on Hickory Street where at no time can a dog be in the park for any reason, leashed or not, so obviously defecation in that park continues to be outlawed.

The new Leash Law, if adopted, will be enforced throughout the town’s commercial and business district – “contiguous business zones and government/institutional zones emanating from Main Street, but also including Memorial Park, the Ball Field, and The Bascom. The Dog Park at the Rec Center is excluded. All pet-specific rules regarding the Highlands Plateau Greenway must be adhered to while on the Greenways trail.

Dogs are allowed on the Greenway unleashed as long as they are under the control of their owners.

The Leash Law reads: Every person owning, or having possession, charge, care, custody or control of any dog shall keep such dog exclusively upon the keeper’s real property, or upon the real property of any other owner or lawful occupant, with permission within any contiguously nonresidential zoned parcel to Main Street and within the Highlands Municipal Cemetery. These
Tax Implications on the Sale of Your Home

By Jody Lovell
Highlands Sotheby’s Intersnational Realty

If you sold your home in 2017 or are thinking of selling this year, you will want to make sure you take advantage of the tax deductions, exemptions and write-offs available to you. Here is a list of what is available to you plus a summary of the new tax code provisions. Please check with your CPA to make sure that these general rules apply to you:

1. Selling Costs. You can deduct any costs associated with selling your home including legal fees, escrow costs, advertising costs, and real estate commissions. This could include home staging fees according to some accountants.

2. Home Improvements and Repairs. Any home improvements that you did within 90 days of the closing can be deducted as expenses. This includes painting the house, repairing the roof or replacing a water heater, or anything that remains useful past a year.

3. Property Taxes. You can deduct the amount of property taxes paid during your home ownership. The new tax code still allows this deduction but the deduction is capped at $10,000. You may be able to avoid this cap if you prepaid your 2018 taxes.

4. Mortgage Interest. As with outstanding mortgage debt. Those deductions, exemptions and write-offs associated with your home mortgage up to the original $1 million can still be taken.

5. Moving Expenses. If you sold your home in 2017 to move for a job change, you can deduct those expenses. The new tax code eliminates this deduction for most of us going forward. Members of the armed forces on active duty can still take this deduction.

6. Capital Gains. This one is not a deduction (it is an exclusion), but it is still important. As a reminder, capital gains are your profits from selling your home -- whatever cash remains after paying off your expenses, plus any outstanding mortgage debt. Those profits are taxed as income. However, you can still exclude up to $250,000 if you are single and $500,000 if you are married. You must have lived in the home at least two out of the last five years. This was a much debated provision in the new tax code, but it has survived for now.

With unit sales up 15% and volume up 28% on the Highlands/Cashiers Multiple Listing Service so far this year, look for an active and strong real estate market in 2018. We look forward to assisting you with purchasing or selling your home.

Jody and Wood Lovell own Highlands Sotheby’s International Realty, a top producing firm on the Plateau for the last eighteen years. With three offices-one in downtown Highlands at the corner of Highway 64 and Main Street, one at the entrance to Callasaja Club and one in Cashiers across from Cornucopia--their thirty brokers are ready to help you with any of your real estate needs. Call 828.526.4104 to get started with the fun process of buying or selling here on the Plateau.

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provisions shall also include the enforcement of all pet-specific Highlands Plateau Greenway regulations located within the Recreation Park/ Mill Creek Greenway Area. However, such dog may be off the keeper’s real property if it is within a vehicle, or is under the immediate physical control of a competent person, and is physically restrained and sufficiently controlled by leash, chain, or harness, held in the hand of such person. This provision shall not apply to the Highlands Dog Park, which as used in this section shall mean the area enclosed by fencing and owned by the Town, which is located within the Highlands Recreation Park on Foreman Road in Highlands, North Carolina, and which is designated as “The Highlands Dog Park.”

There are exceptions for service animals trained to provide assistance to persons impaired by sight, hearing, mobility, or other impairment.

Before the amended Animal ordinance is adopted by the Town Board, it will be sent to the Planning Board for recommendations.

– Kim Lewicki

HCP’s ‘Directors Debut’

The Highlands Cashiers Players will present a dinner theatre with four light-hearted one-act plays at the Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street Thursday through Saturday, March 15-17 and March 22-24. This is their first production for the 2018-19 season. The plays will be performed between courses of dinner served downstairs. Wine will be available at a cash bar. The Dinner Theater will start seating at 6:30. Reservations are required. Tickets may be purchased by calling the box office at 526 8084 or on line at highlandscashiersplayers.org.
Moving to Highlands with my family, little more than two months ago, has been quite an adventure. As the new rector at The Church of the Incarnation I have been spending a lot of time “getting up to speed,” so to speak. Like starting any new job, this process has included learning the customs of this particular place, getting familiarized with the budget, learning how the copy machine works, and all the other inner-office items one needs to figure out in the first few months on the job. And of course, I have also been learning a lot of new names, meeting a lot of new people, and bit by bit, getting to hear stories of how God is working in their lives. I feel truly blessed to be involved in this kind of work - work which, by its very nature, draws one close to others.

In addition to “getting up to speed” with my ministry at Incarnation, I also have a lot to learn about Highlands - a lot to learn about the town, the community, and its history. But I also have a lot to learn about the beauty and splendor of these mountains - about the streams, trails, bugs, animals, and waterfalls of Western North Carolina. And my sense is that putting on the hiking boots and getting outside is really the best way to learn about God’s creation.

Over these first few months I have committed myself to this “work” of exploration and discovery. Rain or shine, I have spent my sabbaths - my days of rest - on the trails and in the rivers. What an absolutely breathtaking part of the planet! What a gift to be surrounded by such beauty and splendor!

One of the things I often ask people is where they feel closest to God. Where they sense a presence greater than themselves and where they feel most truly alive. I wonder how you would answer this question. If you are like most people, nature will probably be somewhere on your list. If you are like most, you might answer it with a list of places: the mountains, the rivers, the beaches. For myself and where I feel most truly alive. I wonder how you would answer this question. If you are like most people, nature will probably be somewhere on your list. If you are like most, you might answer it with a list of places: the mountains, the rivers, the beaches. For myself, I would have to include the woods, the streams, the creeks, where I feel closest to God. Where I sense a presence greater than myself. Where I feel most truly alive.

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Proverbs 3:5

God’s Good Earth

Rev. W. Bentley Manning
Episcopal Church of the Incarnation
This week Highlands girls soccer played Murphy for their first game of the season. They lost 10-3 but are ready for their next game. The Highlands golf and track teams have also begun their season. Above HS Girls Soccer; front row from left: Avery Wofford, Ryan Talbert, Kim Feria, Alyson Dayton, Grace Crowe, Betty Garcia, Maddie Lloyd, Analyse Crook, and Amy Council. Back row from left: Trinity Dendy, Ellen Diehl, Jamie King, Chela Green, Gracie Forrester, Sayla Roman, Kedra McCall, Olivia Lewis, Zaia Rodriguez and Madi Drummonds.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

...SUNSET continued from page 6

look for a few minutes and then drive off again.”

Since the town still needs to maintain the road for EMS accessibility and the power line, commissioners instructed Nix to come back with a way to stabilize the erosion, while removing the gravel and to investigate possible access for town and emergency vehicles from Ravenel Road instead.

Though no final decisions were made, it’s looking like a locked gate will be put up at the bottom of the road – a $1,000 investment – to prevent vehicles and to encourage walkers.

– Kim Lewicki
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**The Highlands Police log entries from March 1. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

**March 1**
- At 1 p.m., officers were called about a trespassing and burglary without a forced entry of a house on US 64 east. The party entered the house and stayed inside. March 5
- At 8:45 a.m., Billy Richard Rhodes II, 36, of Highlands, was arrested on two misdemeanor counts of assault on a female and one misdemeanor count of assault on another person in the presence of a minor. He was taken to the Macon County Detention center and held without bond.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log from Feb. 28**

- **Feb. 28**
  - At 10:37 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Western Rhodes Drive.
- **March 2**
  - At 5:04 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 east.
- **March 4**
  - At 2:41 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Elm Drive.
- **March 6**
  - At 6:06 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to N. 4th Street.
- **March 7**
  - At 8:14 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 east.
- **March 9**
  - At 6:14 p.m., the dept. was called to investigate smoke on US 64 west.
- **March 11**
  - At 9:13 p.m., the dept. responded to a chimney fire at a residence on Shortoff Road.
- **March 12**
  - At 5:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Main Street.

---

**Stem Family Night at Highlands School**
**March 22 6-8 p.m.**

Science Fair, Book Fair and PTO Meeting

STEM activities include Slime, Straw Rockets, Sphero Robots, Hovercrafts, Binary Bangles, Sound Sandwiches, Garden in a Glove, Engineering Design Challenges.

---

**Western-style Square Dancing next Monday**

Swing into Spring with High Mountain Squares Monday, March 19 6:30-8:30p in Coleman Hall of First Presbyterian Church. (Enter from Church Street.)

For additional information, call 828-787-2324, 706-746-5426 or 828-332-0001.

---

**Benefit for the Hicks Family**
**Saturday, March 17 • 5 p.m.**

at the Highlands Community Building

Smoked Chicken Dinner

Live Music and Auctions to Follow

$8 / Plate ~ $5 for 12 and under

Charlie Hicks passed away December 5, 2017 after a very sudden and brief illness.

The suddenness of his death has caused medical bills and loss of income.
HELP WANTED
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HIGHLANDS is seeking an Administrator Assistant. It will be for 30 hours a week and salary will be based on experience. Strong computer experience is required. Please call 828-526-4153 to set up an appointment for an interview. (3/29)

INTERVIEWING FOR PART-TIME, YEAR AROUND, AUDIO/VISUAL TECHNICIAN for Highlands United Methodist Church. Sundays and special events. Call 828-526-3376 or stop by church for an Application. (st. 3/1)

HIGHLANDS INN & HIGHLANDS INN LODGE now accepting applications and interviewing for all positions. Front Desk, Housekeeping, Night Audit, Breakfast Host & cook. Full time and part time available. Call 526-5899 for appointment or stop by 96 log cabin lane for application. Resumes or questions may be emailed to sales@highlandsinnlodge.com. (st. 3/1)

SKYLINE LODGE – housekeeping staff, front desk clerks, maintenance workers wanted for 2018 Season. We offer training. Call 828-526-2121 for an application. Background checks done. (st. 2/22)

INTERVIEWING FOR FULL-TIME YEAR AROUND SECURITY POSITION for a private community in Highlands. Shift is 3 pm to 11 pm M-F. Full benefits. Call 828-526-4161 or 706-982-5526. (st. 2/1)

AT DUTCHMANS: Full-Time Sales Associate (year-round). REQUIREMENTS: Retail experience a must; need to be able to work weekends and holidays; ability to work in a fast-paced sales-based environment; may include long periods of time standing, positive and friendly attitude, computer skills, interest in interior design. PREFERRED: 2+ years retail or customer service experience, POS experience. (st. 2/1)

NOW HIRING SECURITY OFFICERS – In the Franklin, Highlands & Cashiers area. *Clean background. Clean driving record.* Must be 21 years of age. Please apply at: NC Works 23 Macon Ave, Franklin, NC 828-369-9534 or call 864-888-0518 for more info. (2/15)

CYPRUS INTERNATIONAL CUISINE. Hiring All Positions. Please Contact Dan At Cypress332@gmail.com Or Visit Us At 332 Main St. Highland NC (st. 1/1)

MOUNTAIN FRESH GROCERY has full and part-time positions available. Competitive wages in all positions. Please come in person to 521 east Main Street in Highlands to apply or call 828-526-2400.

- Food Server, Cashier and Barista (includes tips)
- Dishwasher
- Positions in the ice cream dept.
- Pizza
- Experienced Breakfast Cook

ITEMS FOR SALE
SEASONED FIREWOOD FOR SALE. Call 828-369-7754. (st. 2/1)

FIREWOOD FOR SALE. Seasoned hardwood. Call Matt at 828-482-2214. Please leave message. (st. 10/5)

SERVICES
DO YOU HAVE POT HOLES NEED WATER DIVERTED CRACKS REPAIRED? Call Daniel at DC Coatings Asphalt patching maintenance and repair at 828-421-7405 (st. 3/11)


HEALTHY COOKING CLASSES IN YOUR HOME. Learn simple techniques & recipes to make fresh foods taste delicious, as you save money and improve your health! Call Medea Galligan, MS Nutrition, Health Coach at 828-989-9144 and leave your name & number to schedule your class.

HIGH COUNTRY PHOTO/KEVIN VINSON: scanning photos, slides & negatives to CD or DVD for easier viewing. Video transfer to DVD. Everything done in house. Leave message at 828-526-5208. (st. 3/11)


MOLD AND MUSTY SMELL IN YOUR HOME? Call for free inspection. 828-743-0900.

REAL ESTATE/BIZ FOR SALE
HOMES FOR SALE: 3 Bd 2 &1/2Ba home includes 1Bd 1Ba cottage 2 miles from downtown Highlands. By owner 803-315-0715. (st. 2/22)

3.20 ACRES UNRESTRICTED. Power underground, borders National forest, 190 degree view. 10 min to Main Street. 3 septic fields, 1 well 7 g.p.m. 2 house foundations established and approved by county inspectors. 2Bed/2Bath Clayton home livable while building. Spring rights and more land available. For beautiful sunsets contact gracefamilia@yahoo.com. (st. 9/21)

1.21 ACRES FOR SALE BY OWNER - OTTO, NC - $28,000. Lot 12 Quail Haven Road. Otto, NC. Price not firm...open for negotiation. Please email if interested to ddmash15@aol.com or call/text to 239-980-0531. If no answer please leave a message. (st. 7/20)

RENTALS

VACATION RENTAL: 3Bd 2&1/2 Ba home $2400 monthly 1Bd 1Ba cottage $1200 monthly. All utilities included, fully furnished. 803-315-0715 2 miles from downtown Highlands. (st. 2/22)

ROOM FOR RENT, Scaly Mountain home.$500/month. Pets Negotiable. (610)955-9356. (st. 3/15)

TWO SMALL OFFICE SPACES
for rent near the Bascom, or combine for 800 square feet. 828-526-5558. (3/15-3/29)

2 BED PLUS OFFICE, 2 bath. Next to hospital. Year rent. $1100/mth includes utilities. Call 828-200-1064 (or leave message). (st. 1/11)

WANTED
LONG TERM RENTAL, CLOSE TO TOWN. Native Highlander. Very honest and dependable couple. No pets. Open to all options. Please call or text Sandra @ 828-482-2261 (or leave a message). (st. 2/8)

Classifieds
$6/10 words; 20 cents each additional word.
$2/highlight; $5 for graphic