

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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PRIMARY 2020 Q & A: PART 5

Democrats line up for Meadows seat

By Brittney Lofthouse

When United States House of Representative Mark Meadows announced he would not be seeking re-election, the candidate

pool for District 11 quickly filled up – with five Democrats and 10 Republicans (originally there were 11 but Dillon Gentry has since bowed out) the March 3 primary

has no shortage of congressional candidates to chose from.

While District 11 has historically been a heavily Republican

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HS senior athletes recognized Friday night



Class of 2020 seniors from left Kedra McCall, Emma Weller, Dillon Schmitt, Taj Roman, Sayla Roman, Marilynn Valero, Bailey Schmitt, Patrick Woods, Jordan Powell, Brianna Norris, Jeslyn Head, Bill Miller, Pablo Jiminez were recognized following the the girls' games Friday, Feb. 14. – photo by Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News

SINCE THE HCA/MISSION MERGER: PART 2

Rape victims struggle to get services at HCA

By Brittney Lofthouse

For as long as REACH of Macon County has been in operation, the agency has worked with Angel Medical Hospital whenever a client needs services such as a forensic exam, more commonly known as a rape kit.

However, since HCA acquired Mission Health, victims of sexual assault have been unable to obtain those needed services locally, forcing REACH staff to find ways to get victims to Mission Hospital in Asheville – often times while up against the clock in order to collect evidence that may later be needed for prosecution.

Since the merger, the forensic nurse position is no longer staffed full-time at Angel Medical Center, which means rape victims have to be transported to Asheville just to receive the necessary exam.

“If Angel does the transport, the amount of time the victim must wait for an ambulance is un-

conscionable,” said Jennifer Turner-Lynn, Assistant Director of REACH of Macon County. “The last rape kit I did, I took them to Mission and we were there for 13 hours – this is just one of many examples.”

Turner-Lynn said that in addition to not being able to get the services her clients need, something else that has occurred since the merger are rape victims are being charged for services.

Turner-Lynn said REACH had never had a problem with a rape victim being billed for the use of the emergency room at Angel Medical Center and now victims are being billed for that at Mission. She said a client received a \$1,000 bill from the ER and the only service she received was getting a rape kit performed.

“We have always had such a great relationship with Angel and the staff there, but since HCA has

• See HCA page 5

‘2nd Amendment Sanctuary’ issue is topic at MC Commission meeting

By Brittney Lofthouse

Macon County Commissioners are still debating whether to follow other counties in North Carolina in passing a resolution proclaiming the county a Second

Amendment Sanctuary.

A group of residents, led by former Macon County Sheriff’s employee Donnie Holden, first approached the Macon County Board of Commissioners in Janu-

ary asking leaders to pass a resolution to “reaffirm” the board’s oath to uphold the constitution.

During the February board meeting, the group was back and

• See SANCTUARY page 7

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Tell me what you want in the budget

The February Highlands Town Board meeting is tonight at 7 pm at the Highlands Community Center. The center is next to the ball field. Let me review some of the agenda items.

First on the agenda will be a presentation by Sam Lupas on the status of the Dogwood Health Trust. Sam is a member of the Dogwood Board for this area. The Dogwood is in its initial stages of operation, and I look forward to Sam's update about this important Western Carolina foundation. The Dogwood was formed as a part of the HCA/Mission sale transaction. Its goal is to support and fund throughout the 18-county region health and wellness programs operated by community nonprofit organizations and government service departments.

The board will also hear requests from the Highlands Motoring Festival and the Coalition for Non-Native Invasive Plants. The Motoring Festival will be taking place in



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

June, and there are several routine items to approve. CNNIP will be making a request for continued support from the town. I just read a Carolina Press article concerning the growing spread of non-native invasive plant species throughout the forest of Western Carolina. If left unchecked, invasive species could change the entire ecology of the region.

The board will also review a draft of an RFP for hiring a consulting firm to guide the Highlands Planning Board through the development of a new comprehensive plan. The selection of a firm needs to be done asap in order to get the process underway by the start of the new fiscal year.

On the agenda is a presentation by the Greenway Trail Committee concerning a new trail entrance on Oak Street across from the Baptist Church. The trail has been under construction for several months.

There are several amendments to the UDO that our assistant planner, Michael Mathis, will present. These amendments will require a public hearing which will take place at the March meeting.

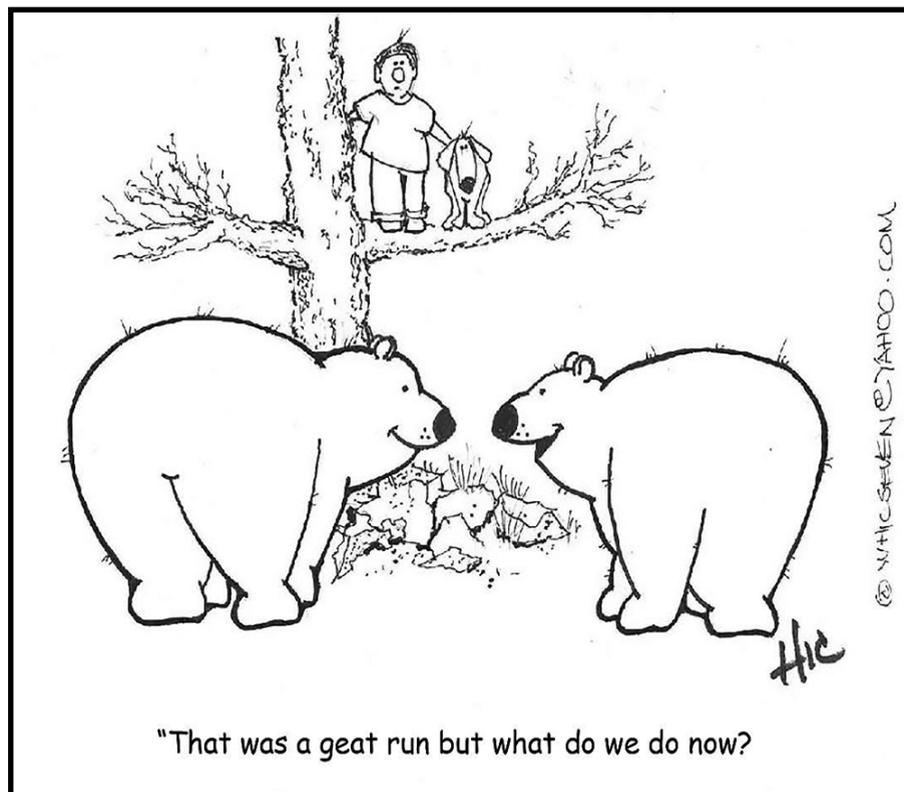
I had planned to resume the Community Coffee with the Mayor at the end of March, but the plan has changed. The first coffee will be on Friday, February 28, at 11 am. These community coffees are always held at the conference room at the Hudson Library. I appreciate the support the library board and staff provide in organizing these events.

I decided to have a coffee in February before the Town Retreat which is scheduled for March 5. The town retreat focuses on budget priorities and recommendations for the coming year. I will share my budget priorities and solicit citizen feedback at the coffee. I hope folks will come and share any budget priorities that they may have, whether they are a small or big-ticket item. Some of the smaller items may be funded as we end this fiscal year when unspent funds become available.

As always, I can be contacted at (828) 506-3138. Also, I welcome feedback and suggestions by email. My email address is: mayor@highlandscnc.org.

Hope to see you tonight.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• OBITUARIES •

Leonard Smith

Leonard Smith, a beloved Husband, took his last flight west on December 17th, 2019. Funeral arrangements as follows. Holy Spirit Catholic Church March 4th at 10 am 4465 Northside, Dr. Atlanta Ga.

Internment March 5th, 1 pm Georgia National Cemetery, Canton Ga.

• See OBITUARIES page 5

• WEATHER •

Thu, 20-Feb	Fri, 21-Feb	Sat, 22-Feb	Sun, 23-Feb
32°F 17°F	41°F 17°F	48°F 23°F	47°F 32°F
A little afternoon snow	Sunny and not as cold	Plenty of sunshine	A little afternoon rain
RealFeel® High 34° Low: 27°	RealFeel® High: 48° Low: 15°	RealFeel® High 54° Low: 17°	RealFeel® High 49° Low 22°

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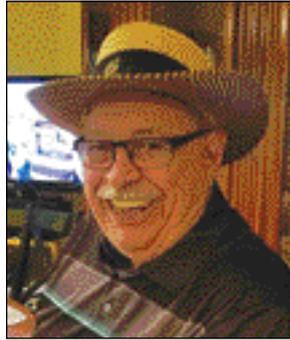
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...OBITUARIES continued from page 2

John Evan Norton



John Evan Norton, 75, of Roswell, GA, passed away on February 15, 2020 peacefully during the night.

John was born in May of 1944 to Agnes and Ray Norton, in Highlands, NC. He was the youngest of nine siblings: Herman Norton, Marion Higdon, Leona "Toni" Dupree, Edwin "Bud" Norton, Charlie Ray "Bo" Norton, and is survived by 2 sisters, Nancy McClain and Edna "Sis" Crisp and one brother, Robert "Bob" Norton. His stories of his childhood in the mountains are legendary, entertaining, and possibly accurate.

After graduating from Highlands High School in 1962, he went on to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree in civil engineering at North Carolina State University. He was a lifelong proponent of Wolfpack basketball, football and folklore.

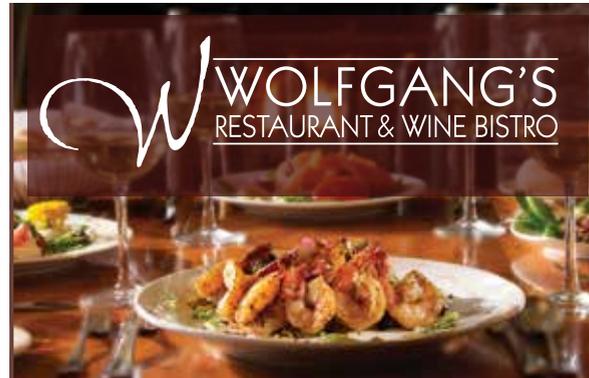
After graduation, he landed his first job as an engineer for Lockheed where he assisted in the design of the C-5A Galaxy Airlifter. He went on to work as an accomplished civil engineer at Lowe Engineering for 10 years. He then started Engineering and Inspection Systems, Inc. in Roswell, Georgia in 1980 and went on to contribute to the development of much of North Atlanta including Wildwood Office Park, The Bank of America Tower, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, North Point Mall and many other high profile business and residential developments. He worked as an Engineer and Land Surveyor until his passing.

John was a force of nature, he was a warm, friendly, caring individual. His kindness, love, and infectious sense of humor made friends of everyone he met. He was often found in the yard at his family home with his beloved extended family and a host of friends enjoying the outdoors and good music. He enjoyed many hours watching his beloved sports teams; reveling in the drama of the victories and frequent crushing defeats, since he was an Atlanta sports fan. His family meant more to him than

anything else in the world, something he often mentioned.

John is survived by his wife of 37 years, Darlene Freeland Norton. He gave amazing Christmas presents and was generous beyond reason. He loved her dearly, cherished, and cared for her. He was unendingly proud of his children Rebekah and Patrick, and stepchildren, Julie, Nancy, and Laura and always supported them. He was closely involved in the lives of his nine grandchildren who revered him as a role model and frequent math and science tutor.

In lieu of flowers, any donations can be directed to The V Foundation for Cancer Research. There will be a Celebration of Life at March 14, 2020 at 12pm to 4pm at Highlands Parks and Recreation Department at 600 North 4th street, Highlands, NC 28741



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...HCA continued from page 1

taken over, we have run into problem after problem," she said.

Part of the issue with community partnerships such as REACH, is that with HCA taking over, local agencies have lost their contacts at Angel Medical Center. Phone calls to Angel Medical Center go unanswered, and there has been little to no luck reaching anyone with HCA to address the problem.

Turner-Lynn said that another problem is the transportation for clients.

"We had a client who had a stroke while in our shelter and was taken to Angel. Because the situation was serious, they were transported to Mission Hospital by ambulance," she explained. "After they were treated and released, that client did not have a way to get back to Macon County. Prior to HCA, patients were returned back to their county of origin, but not anymore."

Turner-Lynn said that after multiple calls to Mission, REACH was told that for a fee of \$300, the hospital could arrange transportation back to Macon County.

"For people with no financial resources or family to call, that is unconscionable," she said.

The "Since the HCA/Mission Merger" series will continue next week with a more indepth look at transportation issues for rural patients being sent to Mission Health in Asheville instead of local providers.

To read part 1 of the series, go to www.highlandsinfo.com, click on Local News and open the Feb. 13 edition.

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•WORD MATTER•

Sanctuary Cities

John Adams famously said the United States is a nation of laws, not of men. The U.S. Constitution is the foundational document with regard to the establishment of laws. Article 1 Section 1 of the Constitution gives the U.S. Congress the power to establish laws. The U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) exists for the purpose of deciding whether or not a law conforms with the U.S. Constitution.

There is a hierarchy of law in the United States. It goes, more or less, like this: the U.S. Constitution, federal law, state law, county law, municipal law, and enabling regulations. A state law does NOT supersede a federal law, and on down the line. State constitutions lay out what local laws counties and municipalities may enact. Sometimes, and this is becoming more common, when municipalities and counties legislate something for themselves, activist state legislatures take up the issue and decide it for the entire state, rendering city and county laws moot.

There's a reason I'm going through all of this, I promise.

The Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, often referred to as the States' Rights amendment, relegates everything not directly addressed on the federal level to the states. Similarly, some state constitutions leave local issues, such as land use, to local regulation.

The point of all this can be found in a phenomenon known as "sanctuary cities." Sanctuary cities, regarding undocumented immigrants, elect not to enforce federal reporting and detention laws.

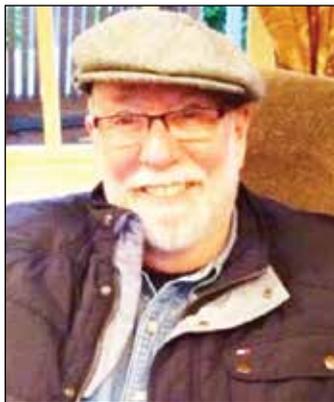
The only way the U.S. Constitution addresses immigration is with regard to the

process by which a non-citizen becomes "naturalized" and provided with citizenship. Implied in that provision, is that one who does not follow the process does not get to enjoy the benefits of citizenship. Hence, the challenges our nation faces with regard to undocumented immigrants.

A new approach to the idea of Sanctuary Cities is under debate regarding guns. Gun rights advocates are asking cities in places where states are passing what they view as restrictive legislation, to declare themselves sanctuary cities, ostensibly places where resident gun owners can feel free from enforcement of what they see as onerous regulation.

Gun rights groups, such as the National Rifle Association (NRA), vigorously fight virtually any infringement on what they view as a citizen's inalienable right to own guns. More often than not, they're successful. Additionally, a citizen's right to own guns is codified at the apex of that hierarchy of laws I mentioned earlier. It's the Second Amendment, and, despite protestations from people who fear any regulation of any kind will lead to confiscation of their guns, and, despite the ambiguous inclusion of that whole "well-regulated militia" clause, a citizen's right to own guns is what's referred to in constitutional circles as settled law.

You can't get any higher in the hierarchy of laws than the U.S. Constitution. Still, as we've discovered with the issues of abor-



Bud Katz

tion and gay marriage, even constitutionally addressed issues are subject to legal challenges, mostly unsuccessfully, by opposing constituencies.

Personally, I think sanctuary cities for undocumented immigrants is little more than a feel-good political maneuver that doesn't address real immigration issues and provides a false sense of security for immigrants. Fix the system and sanctuary cities would go away in a heartbeat.

Despite the fact that I support responsible, legal gun ownership, and the Second Amendment, sanctuary cities for gun owners is in my opinion, unnecessary. Much of the noise from gun control groups would go away if responsible, sensible gun owners would simply recognize that no right, even those enumerated in the Constitution,

is absolute. There are limits to free speech. There are limits to freedom of assembly. And, there are already limits to what kinds of weapons are appropriate for private ownership.

Most moves towards gun control flow from anger regarding the almost daily occurrence of mass shootings in America. Everyone wants to see something done about it, and part of what constitutes "something" includes enhanced background checks, red flag laws designed to keep guns out of the hands of unstable people, and a mechanism for tracking the movement of firearms in the secondary marketplace.

If gun owners honestly want to be part of the solution, conversations need to take place that will actually work towards that goal. Otherwise, gun regulation, in whatever form, will continue to be a distraction in our society. Sanctuary cities may offer the illusion of protecting the rights of gun owners but, frankly, won't do a thing to help reduce or stop mass shootings.

Citizens sound alarm about downed trees



Since cutting down trees in the commercial district is not allowed, citizens raised the alarm about a number of healthy trees and shrubbery removed from the Town Hall lot that backs up to Maple Street.

According to Town Manager Josh Ward, the trees and shrubbery were removed to clear the powerline rights-of-way for the fiber installation, which will be entering the old restroom facility in the lot. The building will be used as the fiber hub. All the fiber installed in town will enter into the building.

Ward said three new maples have been planted on the site adjacent to the police department to offset three of the larger trees that were removed.

"We will look at replanting additional trees after the project is completed," he said.

The Town Hall property is zoned G/I (government/institutional) and like the other commercial zones must adhere to the Tree Protection Ordinance. The exception is within powerline rights-of-way where the town decides to remove trees that could fall and tear down power lines or fiber lines or both in this case, said Ward.

– Kim Lewicki

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Crucial Questions for Buyers to Ask in 2020

Will the Presidential Election Impact Real Estate? Election years can be a tricky time for the market. During this time, both sides of the spectrum will be preaching conflicting statements about the economy – leading to confusion among potential buyers and sellers.

That's why many people tend to sit back and wait until the election is over before making any major real estate decisions. This isn't a new phenomenon, but with the market's current strength and mortgage rates at historic lows, putting off buying or selling could mean less of a reward as more time goes on.

Is a Recession Around the Corner?

When a media storm of recession talk hit the news in 2019, many people affiliated it with another housing market collapse. The fears aren't surprising, but they're also not accurate.

Economists are now reporting that if a recession occurs, it may not be until 2021 or even 2022. On top of that, the real estate market is not a likely driving factor for an economic downturn, and the four

recessions before 2008 saw little or no effect on the housing market.

What If I Buy a Home and Prices Depreciate?

It's the greatest fear when buying a home. Many prospective buyers may be holding off on their search because of uncertainty tied to the upcoming presidential election and recession rumors.

Thankfully, the market is strong and big hitters like Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae and NAR predict home values to continue to appreciate through 2021.

Buying now is a sounds investment, and buyers should take advantage of the current low mortgage rates because waiting to purchase a home could mean paying more.

Should I Take Advantage of Interest Rates Now or Wait?

Essentially this comes down to one



Lynn Kimball
BHHS Meadows Mountain
Realty
828-421-8193
Lynn@bhhsmmr.com

thing: why take the chance?

Interest rates are currently at historic lows, and buyers may be unaware of their increased buying power. Although the mortgage rates are projected to hold steady around 3.8%, certain factors could change this.

If a buyer holds off on their home search and mortgage rates do rise, they will end up paying more for the same house.

Bottom Line.

Buying a home sooner rather than later could lead to substantial savings and long-term financial growth for you and your family.

The most important job a real estate agent has is to educate and reassure clients they are making powerful and confident de-

isions.

“When getting help with money, whether it's insurance, real estate or investments, you should always look for someone with the heart of a teacher, not the heart of a salesman.” – Dave Ramsey

• Lynn Kimball has over 45 years of real estate experience, with over 35 years serving the Highlands Cashiers area. She has gained Emeritus Status with the National Association of Realtors and previously served as a Director and Vice President for the Highlands Cashiers Board of Realtors. Whether you are interested in searching properties or comprehensive information about our area, you are invited to visit her user friendly website at www.signatureproperties-nc.com. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices BHHS Meadows Mountain Realty has three locations: 488 Main Street in Highlands, 132 Hwy 107S in Cashiers or visit Lynn at her 2334 Cashiers Road location in Highlands across from Highlands Falls Country Club. Lynn Kimball may be reached at 828-421-8193 or by email at Lynn@bhhsmmr.com

...SANCTUARY continued from page 1

armed with a petition with just over 1,000 signatures supporting the measure.

The proposed resolution states, “The Macon County Board of Commissioners express its intent for Macon County to stand as a Constitutional Rights Protection County for Second Amendment Rights by opposing any efforts by any entity to restrict these rights. Opposition will include any means available under the U.S. Constitution and the laws of North Carolina including the withholding of funds, direction of county employees, legal action and other means as deemed necessary and legal.”

The “sanctuary” movement began last year in Illinois and quickly spread to numerous states, including California, Colorado, New Mexico, Florida and most recently, North Carolina.

Gun owners are asking their local governments to consider resolutions, promoted heavily by Second Amendment groups, which vary from county to county, but most declare the intention of local officials to oppose any “unconstitutional restrictions” on the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. In the last two months,

more than 100 counties, cities and towns in Virginia alone have approved such resolutions.

A group opposing the resolution attended the meeting dressed in black and wore American flag ribbons on their shirts. Susan Ervin addressed the board on behalf of the group and stated that while those in attendance opposed a Second Amendment resolution, they did not oppose gun ownership, but rather support responsible gun control.

“The proposed ‘sanctuary’ does not make us feel safer,” she said. “There is virtually no chance and very little preference for banning guns in this country and reasonable controls do not mean that onerous restrictions come next.”

Macon County Commissioners have stated that they aren't sure of the need for a resolution when it is purely symbolic and simply states they will continue to do what they promised to do when taking office, however because the issue is driven by residents of Macon County, they said they will spend the month reviewing the proposed resolutions and vote on the matter in March.



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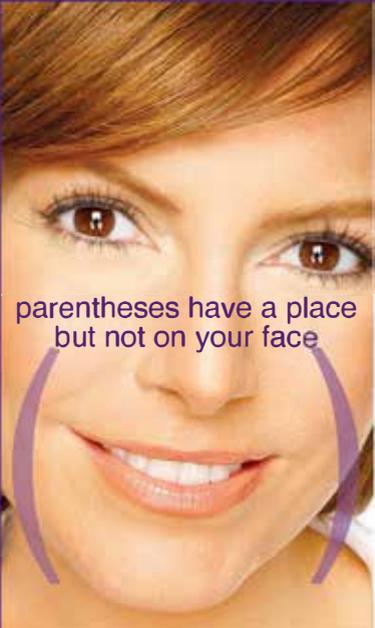
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...PRIMARY 2020 continued from page 1

district, according to new district maps approved by state judges in December, NC-11 now contains the entirety of Buncombe County's large Democratic voter base, giving the five Democratic hopefuls a better shot than they have had in previous elections to reclaim the House seat.

Retired U.S. Air Force Major Steve Woodsmall once again running for the Democratic nomination after coming in second to Phillip Price in the 2018 primary.

Price, who only filed to run after Meadows' announced his retirement, will also once again seek election.

Gina Collias, an attorney and real estate professional had previously run for the District 10 Republican nomination against Patrick McHenry, but will now be running as a Democrat for District 11.

Moe Davis, a former chief prosecutor at Guantanamo Bay and Michael O'Shea, a political

newcomer, are also running for the open seat.

Gina Collias

Gina has been married for 29 years to her high school sweetheart. They are the proud parents of three children, twins – one who attends the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and one who is a UNC-CH graduate, as well as a son, who attends high school in Asheville near their family home in Fairview, Buncombe County. Gina is a pro-choice, pro-civil rights, pro-education, and pro-environment advocate. She has spoken at the Woman's March, appeared at union conferences and believes all Americans should have decent health care.

Collias is an attorney and businesswoman. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her law degree from Mercer University. According to Gina, she is the only democratic District 11 candidate who has consistently been involved in her community as a volunteer and community leader. From leading an effort to build a playground where 2,000 people volunteered – to spearheading economic development and serving on many community boards for the Chamber of Commerce and YMCA - Gina has always served her community.

"I am running because there needs to be change and it has to start with regular people like you and me," said Collias. "I have been inspired to run by many people and by some very significant events -- such as my involvement in 2016 Electoral College investigations – but what it really comes down to is trying to right a ship I believe is heading in the wrong direction. I will be a fighter for WNC, but I also believe in treating all people with respect and engaging in civil discourse. I believe we must try and find common ground. Working on infrastructure – repairing our roads, bridges and rural internet is a good place to start. It's also a good way to bring jobs to WNC. I'm running because I believe

government can improve people's lives. I want to represent you and your values in Congress."

Do you live within District 11? Do you think it is important to live within the District you are trying to represent?

"I live in Fairview, Buncombe County," said Collias. "I also lived in Kings Mountain and Charlotte. Yes, I believe it is important to live in the District you are trying to represent. I also think it is important to have spent your life living in the state where you are running. I am proud to be from North Carolina, to have been reared here, to have met my high school sweetheart here and to have reared my children here. I believe that having spent my life here has allowed me to better understand our unique needs and priorities."

What do you see as being the biggest issue facing District 11 and how would you address it if elected?

"We face so many challenges in WNC. The climate crisis threatens our economic future, the beauty of our mountains and our very existence. It is not fake news and must be addressed. We must also make WNC more affordable, by addressing wages/jobs and making healthcare affordable. Congress must show its support for the working man and woman. We must raise the minimum wage from an unconscionable \$7.25 per hour to a living wage. We need to increase the funding for education, so that our children have better schools and have a better chance to succeed. We should be funding, promoting, and encouraging job training, Community colleges and the trades. I also think we need to create a WPA-type program that would rebuild our infrastructure (including broadband internet) and bring teachers and healthcare workers to underserved areas. Lastly, we need Medicaid expansion and affordable healthcare, so we don't have to choose between seeing a doctor or paying the rent. These are some of the issues I will work for and fight for."

What are your thoughts on the Impeachment process?

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...PRIMARY 2020 continued from page 8

"It was certainly concerning when a number of the "jury" of Senators publicly stated they had come to a decision/verdict before the trial began," said Collias. "As concerning was the fact that Leader McConnell had publicly stated he is working with the White House on the defense of the President. This was supposed to be a fact-finding endeavor with an impartial jury. Before the trial, Senators swore an oath that they "will do impartial justice according to the Constitution and laws, so help me God." For those seeking truth, showing impartiality, reviewing documents and hearing a reasonable number of witnesses would seem not an option, but an obligation. In the end, I was very disappointed the impeachment process and believe the American people deserved to hear all the evidence."

For residents of Macon County, it's status quo for leaders to forget about our small community. If elected to Congress, how do you plan to be a voice for the entire district, even the small western-most counties like Macon?

"Well, I guess I never considered Macon or the other western-most counties "small." After spending a significant amount of time in far-western counties I can say -- the mountains are bigger, the roads are steeper and the phone and internet connectivity hasn't improved from when I came here as a child (OK, that was pre-Siri). I intend to spend a lot of time in far-western counties after I am elected and I'm going to do more than talk about phone and internet service. A lack of connectivity can deter employers looking to relocate and prevent those wishing to work from home to do so. It will also make it difficult for many of our neighbors to stay in WNC. More importantly, however, it denies our children the necessary educational resources that are made available to children and families across the country. We need to fight for our share of the Universal Service Fund, find the right wireless services and create effective incentives for private investment. We need to be heard and I will be your megaphone. I know it's difficult making ends meet, no matter what number the stock market is at. And, it's just wrong that we worry about what will happen if our spouse, parents or kids get sick. I have spent more time in the far-western counties than any candidate. I won't forget. I'll pick up the phone when you call. I'll come to give you progress reports on what is important to you. I'll listen and I'll work for you."

What is your stance on marijuana legalization?

"I am in favor of the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes," said Collias. "First and foremost, it has been shown to give relief to many Americans, including those suffering with chronic pain and for those in the final stages of life. Certainly, it is a better alternative than opioids, which have ravaged WNC. Like working toward universal healthcare for all Americans, if there are ways, we can help our neighbors live a better, healthier life or enable them to be in less pain, we should act. In addition, by taxing medical marijuana, we could also see significant tax income for our state. I would be in favor of earmarking that money for education or to help our rural hospitals and rural healthcare needs."

Any other issues or information you would like your voters to know?

"While I respect the other candidates, I bring unique skills, experience and values that will enable us to bring NC11 back to Blue," said Collias. "I have experience as an attorney and worked to expose Electoral College abuses. Additionally, while progressive on social issues, I am fiscally responsible and -- as a more moderate candidate -- can appeal to our many unaffiliated voters. I believe in building bridges, bridging differences and finding common ground with those I may not agree with on policy issues. I also believe in listening, treating all people with respect and having civil discourse. There is no candidate that has traveled more, listened more and campaigned harder for your vote and your trust. I want to represent you and your values and become the first Congresswoman in WNC."

Moe Davis

Davis was born, raised and educated in North Carolina. His hometown is Shelby and his family had a farm in Rutherford County between Newhouse and Hollis where his dad was born and raised. He is a graduate of Appalachian State and the North Carolina Central University School of Law. He spent the first 25 years of his life in North Carolina before joining the Air Force. While in the Air Force, he earned two Masters of Laws, one from the Army JAG School in Charlottesville, VA, and another from the National Law Center at George Washington University in DC. He and his wife bought property in Asheville two years ago and started construction on a house a year ago. The couple moved to Asheville last May and are currently renting in the

Chunns Cove area while their house is being finished. They hope to move into their new house in April. Davis has a daughter, who is grown. She has a degree in nursing and lives in the DC area where she works for a medical technology firm. Davis is a disabled veteran and uses the Asheville VA Medical Center for his medical care, which is the same VA hospital his dad used a half century ago.

Davis is a retired Air Force Colonel with 25 years of service. He is best known for serving as the Chief Prosecutor for the terrorism trials at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, from September 2005 to October 2007. He resigned the post when he was ordered to use evidence that was obtained by torture. He spent his last year on active duty as the Director of the Air Force Judiciary where he supervised 265 people around the world and was responsible for oversight of the Air Force criminal justice system. Davis was a Senior Specialist in National Security for the 111th Congress and head of the

• See PRIMARY 2020 page 14

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Highlands Hurricanes compete at CAT Invitational

By Kristy McCall
Plateau Daily News

Plateau area swimmers on the Highlands Hurricanes swim team (HHST) competed in the Clemson Aquatics Team (CAT) Invitational for the second year in a row at Clemson University on Jan. 17-20.

Hurricane Head Coach Steve Hott said the team swam well.

"All 13 swimmers who participated had at least one PR (personal record)," said Hott. "This is a mid-season meet, and we came in tired (deliberately) as we are preparing for other end of season championship meets."

Hott added the maximum number of events an individual swimmer could enter at the CAT invitational was seven. The Hurricanes racked up a total of 52 Personal Records (PRs.)

Both Blake Kenter and Justin Powell had seven PRs. Chase Kenter had little competition and won seven events and set one PR. Mark Gross had six PRs. Elias McKim and Timmy McDowell had five PRs. Jelehna and Aniah McKim, Peyton Kaylor, and Max Jestin had four PRs. Layla Babac had three PRs in six swims. Zander Coward had two PRs in six swims. Elise Remery had two PRs in three swims.

Hott said that with so many PRs it was difficult to choose the most impressive swim.

"There were so many outstanding swims in those 52 PRs it is hard to pick the most outstanding, but here are five that stand out," said Hott. "Max Jestin dropped 14 seconds off his 50-yard free time and 22 seconds off his 100-yard free time. Peyton Kaylor dropped 22 seconds off his 100-yard breaststroke time and 42 seconds off of his 200-yard freestyle time. Timmy McDowell dropped 40 seconds off his 500-yard free time."

Assistant Coach Jordan Kenter said that the Hurricanes are working hard and doing well in all aspects of larger competitions like this one at Clemson.

"There are lots of different ways to define success in a meet, it's not just about first place ribbons," said Kenter. "Having swimmers who cut time, achieve a new time standard, complete a race for a first time, or do not get disqualified in a difficult race could all be defined as evidence of success. That being said, the Hurricanes performed very well across the entire spectrum in elevated USA Swimming competition in Clemson. Every swimmer had at

least one best time, and several swimmers achieved new time standards and qualified for bigger events."

Kenter added that regarding race performance, Chase Kenter led the way with 1st place finishes in all of his races and achieved a new time standard in his 50-yard breaststroke.

"He (Chase) had one best time (50-yard breaststroke), but all of his swims were close to his best times," he said. "Aniah McKim performed well with a 2nd and three 4th-place finishes as well as having four personal best times and achieving two-time standard improvements. Blake Kenter and Justin Powell both had Junior Olympic qualifying swims at the meet. Mark Gross had four-time standard improvements. Peyton Kaylor completed the difficult 100-yard butterfly for the first time and Max Jestin dropped 14 seconds in his 50-yard freestyle, 22 seconds in his 100-yard freestyle and 7 seconds in his 50-yard breaststroke. Peyton also had the biggest single race improvement when he dropped over 42 seconds in his 200-yard freestyle race. Timmy McDowell also dropped over 40 seconds off his 500-yard free style time."

Kenter said this meet is proof of HHST's commitment to train and prepare for competitions.

"Overall the team did very well; everyone's hard work is really paying off," Kenter said.

Hott said it was fun taking HHST to compete in Clemson.

"I was one of the head assistant coaches/assistant coaches for CAT in the late 70s and early 80s while I was a student at Clemson University," he said. "This was when CAT had just started. The Fike Recreation Center pool is one of the four pools that I have spent more time at than any others: two of them are in Pennsylvania and one is in N.C. It is indeed fun to take a team there and see how CAT has grown and have the Hurricanes race in that facility."

HHST will be participating in the N.C. State Championships in Greensboro Feb. 15-16.

At this time, only Chase Kenter has qualified for N.C. State Championships. The top swimmers will travel to Charlotte for the Tar Heel State meet in March.

The Hurricanes plan to host a home invitational meet in April before taking most of May off. Summer season will begin the Tuesday after Memorial Day.

Left: Head Coach Steve Hott tallies up the scores.

Below: Hurricane Chase Kenter at the CAT Invitational.

Bottom: Justin and Jackie Powell, and Asst. Coach Jordan Kenter at the CAT Invitational.

- Photos by Kristy McCall



• REFLECTIONS FROM LORD BANJO •

Tinker's Arrival

Many years ago, when my parents still had Fuzzy a.k.a. The Best Dog Ever, Mum decided they needed a second dog. This was back in the days when you didn't search online for dogs. You read the ads in the paper.

The Shelter volunteers ran a newspaper ad the day after Christmas listing Tinker as a death row dog. Can you imagine my soft-hearted Mum reading that? She called right away and heard all about Max the Ball Dog, as the volunteers called Tinker. They sent Mum a photo of Max -- soon to be known as Tinker—with a ball in her mouth.

That did it. It wasn't long before Fuzzy became the best boy dog ever, and Tinker, the best girl dog. Fuzzy had gone to Doggie Heaven by the time I arrived, but Tinker was still in her prime and for sure top dog. We two could have

been twins, except I was 20 pounds heavier. Mum and Dad adopted me thinking I'd be Tinker's twin in behavior too, but were they ever surprised!

Tinker was quite the athlete. She was wild for balls of all sizes, and sticks and branches, too. I never saw the attraction of chasing balls or dragging branches around the yard. I was secretly pleased she kept Dad entertained because we Royal Dogs have no interest in toys of any kind — not balls, chewies, nor sticks, much less huge branches. She made it easy for me to relax and smile at her antics. Sure, Dad called me lazy, but that was fine by me because — thankfully



The Royal Pooch
Lord Banjo

-- he gave up trying to get me to chase balls.

When Tinker went to Doggie Heaven, we all missed her. I missed having a companion to walk and relax with, and Puddin' missed having two dogs to play with. You should have seen Puddin' when she was a kitten; she got a big kick out of chasing our wagging tails, and then she'd suddenly conk out and snooze against our tummies.

Nowadays, it's just me and Puddin'. I'm not the best boy dog or the best girl dog, but I'm claiming the title of best-ever Royal Pooch. In fact, I'm the only Royal Pooch Mum and Dad have ever had.

The truth is I don't have to be called the best anything as long as the Royal Parents, my Royal Critter Sitters, and my loyal fans continue to shower me with love — and belly rubs. I may be Royal, but I've always been easy going, and lovable, and handsome, and ... um, rut ro, Mum's giving me that look that says, "Give it a rest, son." Enough said; color me content.

• Lord Banjo lives in Georgia with his Mum, Kathy Manos Penn. Find similar stories in his book, "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch," available at Mountain Paws in Highlands, Books Unlimited in Franklin, and on Amazon. Contact him at inkpenn119@gmail.com. Sign up here to receive our newsletter and be the first to know about a new mystery series starring a dog and cat <http://eepurl.com/cO79Yj>



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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

Ongoing

- Movies at the Playhouse Fri & Sat 1, 4, 7; Sun. 1 & 4; Tues-Thurs 1, 4, 7.
- Ice Skating at K-H Founders Park -Thurs., 1-8p; Fri. & Sat 1-10p; Sun. 1-5p..
- The Bascom is open Friday - Monday 10am-5pm (Sundays 12pm - 5pm). Visitors are welcome to enjoy the newly

updated Story Walk Trail throughout the week.

- At the Highlands Recreation Dept. pool. Public Swim Monday-Thursday 11a-7p Friday and Saturday 11a-6p and Sunday 1-6p.
- Fibber Magee's Clothing Thrift Store on Laurel Street is open Tues.-Fri-

day 10a to 4p and on Saturday from 10a to 2p.

First Mondays

- New Guided Botanical Garden Tours: A Garden in Every Season. 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. Meet at the Highlands Nature Center Free. All ages welcome.
- Shortoff Baptist Church non-denominational Men's Mtg at 7p.

Mondays

- At the Rec Park, Dance2Fit classes with Tori Schmitt at 5:30pm.

Mon.-Wed.

- Hip Hop classes with Tori Schmitt 5:30-6:30.

Mon. & Thurs.

- The Joy Program at HUMC 11:30a to 1:30p. Includes a free lunch and a variety of programs and games. All seniors are welcome. For more info, call Kristy Lewis at 526-3376.

Mon. & Fri.

- Gentle Yoga at the Rec park at 9:15-10:15 a.m.. All levels welcome.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

- Heart Healthy Exercise Class Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30am-9:30am.
- Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.

Mon., Wed., Thurs.

- Pickle Ball at the Recreation Department Gym 10:30am -1pm

Tuesdays

- FREE Community Table Dinner at the Community Bldg. at 6p.
- The Highlands Writers Group meets Tuesday, at 3pm in the downstairs boardroom at The Bascom. Writers at all levels of proficiency are welcome. For additional information, contact Bud Katz, 828-526-3190 or budandlynn@me.com.
- The Humanist Discussion Group meets from 10:30-11:30 am in the Meeting Room at the back of the Hudson Library.

Third Tuesday

- The Macon County Poultry club meets to discuss topics related to raising backyard chickens. For more information please call 828-349-2046 or 828-369-3916.

• Highlands Area Indivisible Group meets at 5 pm in the Meeting Room at the back of the Hudson Library.

Tuesday and Thursdays

- At the Rec Park, Dance2Fit with Tori Schmitt at 7:30am.
- Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with many

different styles of exercise at Rec Park.

Wednesdays

- At Community Bible Church, 5-5:30p - Dinner - Free (Donations Appreciated) 5:45-7p - G.R.O.W. Get Real on Wednesdays - Classes offered on money management, addiction, discovering your spiritual gifts and personality type, studying the bible, evangelism, parenting, marriage, grief, and more. All are welcome! Visit www.cbchighlands.com.
- Power Flow Yoga with Nalicia Allio a certified Yoga Instructor 12-1pm and 6:30-7:30pm.

First 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.

Wed. & Fri.

- Highlands/Cashiers Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. Open meetings are held in Highlands @ the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., at noon. And held six times a week in Cashiers at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Rte 107, Cashiers. For meeting times in Cashiers go to website www.aawnc80.org or call (828) 349-4357.

- Duplicate Bridge 12-4pm at Rec Park.

Thursdays

- Storytime at Hudson Library, 10:40 am. Open to the public
- NAMI Support Group for individuals dealing with mental illness and the family members of individuals dealing with these challenges from 7 - 8:15pm at First United Methodist Church Outreach Center on West Main Street in Franklin Call Donita (828) 526-9510.
- Hip Hop classes with Tori Schmitt at 6:30-7:30 at the Rec Park.

2nd Thursdays

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

3rd Thursdays

- American Legion Post 370 meets in the 9:09 Chapel of the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in Highlands for Breakfast at 9AM followed by the meeting at 10AM.

Coffee with the Mayor is back on

Please join us on Friday February 28 at 11am in the Hudson Library Meeting Room for the first Community Coffee of 2020 - Budget Priorities for FY 2020/21: A Presentation and Discussion with Mayor Patrick Taylor.

Community Coffee with Mayor Taylor, a joint endeavor by Hudson Library and the Town of Highlands, is held on the last Friday of each month from February through October at Hudson Library. Every month Mayor Taylor, regularly joined by guest speakers, offers information about topics of interest to the entire Highlands community.

This month's refreshments are provided by The Hudson Library Board of Trustees.

For more information or to request an accommodation, please call the library at 828-526-3031. Hudson Library, 554 Main Street in Highlands, is open 10:00am-5:30pm Tuesday through Friday and 10am-4pm on Saturday.

A Garden in Every Season



Photo by Cookie Patterson

There is always something changing in the Highlands Botanical Garden! Join the Highlands Biological Station on the first Monday of each month from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for a guided tour to see what's new in our demonstration gardens and among the hundreds of species that call our campus home. To participate in this free event, meet at the Highlands Nature Center, 930 Horse Cove Rd. The tours are weather dependent. The Highlands Biological Station is a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University. For more information, please call (828) 526-2623.

• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

• 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.

• Highlands Town Board meeting at 7p in the Community Building on US 64 east and Poplar Street.

4th Thursday

• At the Hudson Library, Kids Zone LEGO Club. Intended primarily for kids in grades 1-5, LEGO Club allows creativity and STEM skills to develop together as kids enjoy making LEGO creations.

Fridays

• Knee High Naturalists at the Nature Center 10a - 11a. Free, children of all abilities welcome.

• The High Mountain Squares will host their "Mardi Gras Dance", Friday night, February 21st, from 6:15 PM to 8:45 PM at the Robert C Carpenter Community Building, GA Road (441 South), Franklin, NC. Mr Kenneth Perkins Jr. from Pelzer, SC will be the caller and will be accompanied by the lovely Ms Sue Blair. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. Everyone is welcome. For information call: 828-787-2324, 828-332-0001, 727-599-1440, 706-746-5426.

• Encore screening of Kinky Boots at PAC on Friday, February 21 at 7 p.m. Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org or at the door. Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

Sat., Feb. 22

• At The Farm at OEI, Chef, restaurateur and author Hugh Acheson of 5&10 in Athens, GA. For more information, call 787-2620 or 787-2619.

• National Theatre of London's 'Present Laughter' at PAC via satellite at 1 p.m. Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspac.org

formingarts.com or at the door. Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands.

Sun. Feb. 23

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 6-mile hike, elevation change 1000 ft., on the Bartram Trail from Wallace Branch to William's Pulpit for lunch with a great view of Albert Mtn., then to a spur of a Forest Service road, and bushwhacking up to Gibson Ridge, scrambling over and through blow downs to return by the Bartram trail. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 11 am, drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader Katharine Brown, 421-4178, for reservations. Visitors welcome, also dogs.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.5 mile hike, elevation change 200 ft., on Lakeside Trail, around the Sheriff's department and through the Environmental Resources Center to see if there are wildflowers beginning to appear. Meet at the Health Dept. on Lakeside Drive at 2:00 pm. Call leader Kathy Ratcliff, 526-6480 for reservations.

Feb. 24-28

• Scholastic Book Fair at Highlands School.

Feb. 28

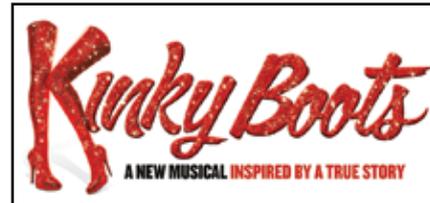
• Coffee with the Mayor in the meeting room of the Hudson Library on Main Street in Highlands at 11 a.m. Topic: Budget Priorities for FY 2020/21

Sat., Feb 29

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 6-mile hike, elevation change 800 ft., from Sawmill Gap, following Forest Service RD 7134 to Rocky Bald Ridge, then to Wine Springs on the Appalachian Trail and down the Bartram Trail to Sawmill Gap. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 9 am, drive 40 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Encore screening of Kinky Boots at PAC on Friday, February 21 at 7 p.m.

Kinky Boots was captured live from London's West End. Winner of every major Best Musical award on Broadway and in the West End, Kinky Boots is



the hottest show in town! With songs by Grammy® and Tony® Award winning pop icon Cyndi Lauper, and based on the comedy film about a son who reluctantly inherits his father's shoe factory, Kinky Boots continues to strut its spectacular stuff in its third year at the Adelphi Theatre. Big-hearted and high-spirited, inspired by true events, tells the true story of Charlie Price, the new owner of his late father's Northampton shoe factory. Trying to live up to his father's legacy and save the family business from bankruptcy, Charlie finds inspiration in the form of Lola, an

entertainer in need of some sturdy stilettos. As they work to turn the factory around, this unlikely pair finds that they have more in common than they

ever dreamed possible... and discovers that when you change your mind, you can change the world. Taking you from the factory floor to the glamorous catwalks of Milan, Kinky Boots' beloved status in the West End was consolidated in its Best New Musical victory at the 2016 Olivier Awards ceremony, proving that sometimes the best way to fit in... is to stand out! Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org or at the door. Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

National Theatre of London's 'Present Laughter' at PAC via satellite Saturday, Feb. 22



The Highlands Performing Arts Center will present the National Theatre of London's production of Present Laughter on Saturday, February 22 at 1pm. Matthew Warchus directs Andrew Scott (BBC's Sherlock, Fleabag) in Noël Coward's provocative comedy Present Laughter. As he prepares to embark on an overseas tour, star actor Garry Essendine's colourful life is in danger of spiraling out of control. Engulfed by an escalating identity crisis as his many and various relationships compete for his attention, Garry's few remaining days at home are a chaotic whirlwind of love, sex, panic and soul-searching.

Captured live from The Old Vic in London, Present Laughter is a giddy and surprisingly modern reflection on fame, desire and loneliness.

Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspac.org or at the door. Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands.

Voting Guide

Early voting continue until February 29 at 3 p.m. The polls are open from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Macon County hosts two early voting locations, one at the Robert C. Carpenter Building in Franklin and the other at the Highlands Civic Center.

This year, there will be only one Saturday to early vote – February 29 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The last day to request an absentee ballot by mail is February 25 at 5 p.m.

The primary election will be held on Tuesday, March 3 with polls opening at 6:30 a.m. and closing at 7:30 p.m.



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Silver Needle White Tea scented with
fresh Jasmine flower.
Each bloom can make 6-8 cups of tea.

...PRIMARY 2020 continued from page 9

Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Division at the Congressional Research Service, a branch of the Library of Congress. He worked there from December 2008 to January 2010. Davis was Executive Director of the Crimes of War Education Project from 2010 to 2011 and then was a full-time faculty member at the Howard University School of Law from 2011 to 2015. During that time, he was a regular contributor on MSNBC, CNN and other news outlets on military and national security matters. Davis' last job was as a judge for the U.S. Department of Labor. He was a judge from 2015 until September 2019 when he retired. Davis spent the last four months of his tenure at the Department of Labor teleworking from Asheville.

"Since I live in what was the gerrymandered part of Asheville, I thought that when I retired in September I was really retired," said Davis. "When the court intervened in November and told the legislature to redraw the congressional map or they'd do it for them, it became apparent that Asheville and Buncombe County would be reunited and I would be living in the 11th Congressional District. I looked at the Democrats that were running and I just didn't see anyone that I thought had the ability to generate the attention and the resources required to defeat Mark Meadows. I have a large national following, particularly on Twitter where I have about 158,000 followers, and I have high-level connections because of my military and federal government service. It's likely to take \$2 million dollars or more to win this race, and I'm the only one running on the Democrat side that has the potential to raise that kind of money. The bottom line for me was that I have spent more than 30 years of my life in uniform, in a suit on the Hill, or in a robe, because I believe in America and in democracy. I've invested too much of my life to watch our democracy go down the drain."

Do you live within District 11? Do you think it is important to live within the District you are trying to represent?

"Since the new map was officially approved in early December, I live in the District and the house I'm building is in the District," said Davis. "I know that in North Carolina it's not required that you live in the district where you run, but I believe a person running for office should live within the same boundaries as the people he or she wants to represent."

What do you see as being the biggest issue facing District 11 and how would you address it if

elected?

"The biggest issue the District faces is the same issue the entire nation faces: The current administration is the most immoral, incompetent and corrupt in America's 243-year history," said Davis. "I want to bring ethics, integrity and a commitment to public service back to Capitol Hill. There are a lot of important policy issues like climate change, healthcare, jobs and education that need to be addressed, but repairing the cracks in the foundation of our democracy has to be Job One. It is unacceptable for the President or any member of Congress to behave in a way that you would put your child in timeout for the same behavior. The public has the right to expect its elected officials to act honorably and with integrity and to take responsibility for their actions."

What are your thoughts on the Impeachment process?

"I've been licensed to practice law in North Carolina for 37 years and I've been a defense counsel, a prosecutor and a judge," said Davis. "The evidence that President Trump attempted to use money Congress appropriated to help Ukraine defend itself from Putin and his Russian thugs to extort President Zelensky in order to create dirt on Joe Biden is overwhelming. What's equally disturbing are the contortions Republicans like Mark Meadows and Thom Tillis go through to help President Trump avoid responsibility for his own actions. The oath they took is to the Constitution, not to Trump, but the Republicans seem to have either forgotten that or have chosen to betray it. It's going to take a long time to recover from the damage that's been done to our democracy the past three years."

For residents of Macon County, it's status quo for leaders to forget about our small community. If elected to Congress, how do you plan to be a voice for the entire district, even the small western-most counties like Macon?

"I've made a promise at many of my campaign stops that I will go personally to every county at least once a year and hold a town hall meeting to listen to concerns and suggestions," said Davis. "One of the things I hear most often is that no one ever sees Mark Meadows. He has one constituent and that's Donald Trump. He's working harder for Madison Avenue than he is for Madison County or Macon County. It's important for me to stay connected with every county so that you know what I'm doing and why I'm doing it and for you to give me feedback and keep me informed on the

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needs you face. I'm committed to representing the interests of everyone in the District, including those who won't vote for me."

What is your stance on marijuana legalization?

"I support legalization and the expungement of criminal records based on marijuana offenses," said Davis. "More than two-thirds of Americans support legalization and it's one of those rare areas where a majority of Democrats and Republicans, men and women, black and white, are all on the same side. It should be regulated and taxed like alcohol. Growing marijuana and hemp in this area would be good for the economy and it would help lift up some of the rural areas where poverty is well over the national average."

Any other issues or information you would like your voters to know?

"When I grew up in North Carolina, we were a proud progressive state. We had good roads, good schools and we had Research Triangle Park before anyone ever heard of Silicon Valley. That's not the case anymore. Poverty in 15 of the 17 counties in the District is higher than the national average and the percentage of people without healthcare coverage is above the national average in all 17 counties. Our children rank in the bottom third of the nation in reading and math skills. Broadband access in every county is below the national average. Mark Meadows is entering his eighth year in office and when I ask people what he has done that has made life better for them and their families, people struggle to try and name something. Meadows decided at the last minute that he wasn't going to run again, but every one of the Republicans running for the nomination is cut from the same cloth and will be another Mark Meadows. We can do so much better if we all tried rowing in the same direction rather than against each other. I'm asking voters to give me a chance.

If I don't keep my promises and if they don't see results, then 22 months after I take office, they can vote me out."

Michael O'Shea

Michael was born at Mission Hospital in Asheville and grew up in Mills River, NC where he and his wife Jennifer now live. Michael went to West Henderson High School in Henderson County and Jennifer went to AC Reynolds in Buncombe County and grew up in East Asheville.

Michael's family history in southern Appalachia goes back before the Revolutionary War and the mountains of Western North Carolina have always been home to him. His parents were the minister and music director at the Unity of the Blue Ridge church in Mills River for over 30 years until his father Rev. Chad Greer O'Shea passed away in 2014. Growing up in a church has given Michael a strong sense of moral responsibility that lends itself to a life dedicated to public service.

Michael graduated from The Honors College at Western Carolina University with a BA in Philosophy and an English minor. He served as the Editor-in-Chief of both the newspaper and philosophy journal, was a member of the Honors College Board of Directors, had several papers accepted to national conferences, and wrote his thesis on post-structuralist linguistics. Michael spent a semester studying abroad in Edinburgh, Scotland, and he did summer programs studying literature in France and Spain and business and marketing in China.

"We need leadership that's not afraid to pursue bold, progressive action to make the government work for the people instead of corporate special interests and billionaires," said O'Shea. "The working class in this country has been ignored for too long and we must elect leaders who will fight economic inequality instead of pandering to their donors. Additionally, the next 10 years is the only window of time we have to address the issue of climate

change and avoid hitting critical warming thresholds. My generation will personally live through the ramifications of not addressing climate change now, yet we hardly have a seat at the table while our futures are being decided. Millennials (age 24-39) became the largest voting age block in the country this year, yet we account for just 6% of Congress and have less representation than the Silent Generation who make up 8.6% of Congress and are over age 75. I'm proud to be the first Millennial on the ballot for a Democratic Primary in NC-11 and hope to be the first Millennial representative from this district."

Do you live within District 11? Do you think it is important to live within the District you are trying to represent?

"I do and I absolutely believe that it's important to live in the district you seek represent," said O'Shea. "I was born at Mission Hospital in Asheville, grew up in Mills River, graduated from Western Carolina University, and have spent most of my adult life living around the Asheville area. My wife grew up in East Asheville and graduated from Western Carolina University, too, and we actually live in my childhood home in Mills River."

What do you see as being the biggest issue facing District 11 and how

would you address it if elected?

Economic Inequality," said O'Shea. "First, we need to pass Medicare for All to ensure everyone has access to high-quality, affordable healthcare so we don't see people going bankrupt because they got sick or foregoing treatment because they can't afford it. My platform calls for a \$15 living wage tied to inflation, a Universal Basic Income of \$1,000/month for every adult citizen, student loan debt forgiveness, and free public colleges and trade schools to give low-income people a clear path to advance their economic prospects. I'm also calling for a federal "minimum professional wage" for educators to ensure our teachers are paid like the professionals they are and I want to use federal funds to pay for teacher pay increases so that the wealth of your zip code doesn't determine your child's quality of education. We must also immediately tackle climate change and the Green New Deal also addresses economic inequality in ways that would greatly benefit rural districts like NC-11."

What are your thoughts on the Impeachment process?

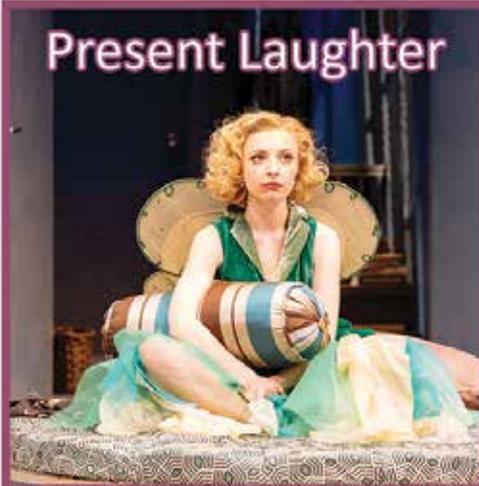
"Impeachment was absolutely the correct course of action and the American public deserves to hear evidence and witness testimony. "It's clear the Senate has ab-

dicated their constitutional duty to act as fair jurors and Washington is mired in divisive party politics. We must move past this partisan gridlock and elect leaders who care more for the people they represent than their donors and understand that their sworn allegiance is to the constitution, not their party."

For residents of Macon County, it's status quo for leaders to forget about our small community. If elected to Congress, how do you plan to be a voice for the entire district, even the small western-most counties like Macon?

"My family on the Greer side has been in WNC since before the Revolutionary War and I have deep roots in this region. My wife and I both graduated from WCU and lived in Jackson County, so we're familiar with the unique challenges that rural communities face and my platform was written with the rural communities in our district in mind. Moving to Medicare for All would help with rural hospital closures and provide new jobs in healthcare. The Green New Deal would create high-paying jobs to build green energy infrastructure in rural communities. Universal Basic Income would allow a boost in entrepreneurship in small communities and help sup-

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Present Laughter



Live via
Satellite

Saturday
February 22

1 pm

National
Theatre
Live

of
London

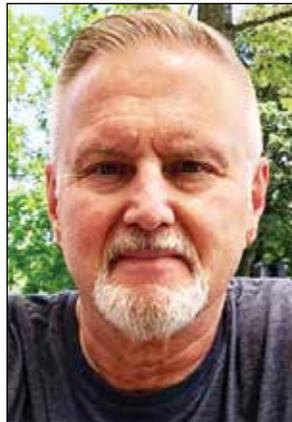
Highlands Performing Arts Center 507 Chestnut Street

Tickets available online: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspac.org at the door

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Gina Collias



Moe Davis



Michael O'Shea



Phillip Price



Steve Woodsmall

port rural working-class citizens and alleviate poverty. Treating broadband internet access as a human right would ensure that rural children are not growing up technologically behind their peers and that we can attract businesses to rural counties. Higher federal funding for schools and raising teacher pay federally would ensure that rural communities with small property tax bases still can provide high-quality education to their children so that the wealth of your zip code does not determine your child's future. Free public colleges and trade schools provide a way for people from disadvantaged rural communities a clear path to better their economic prospects. I understand the struggle that rural communities are facing and my platform is specifically designed to ensure that we are not leaving these communities behind."

What is your stance on marijuana legalization?

"I support legalizing marijuana at the federal level and ending the failed war on drugs. The US incarceration rate is higher than any other country and drug offenses account for 1 in 5 people incarcerated in the US. Addiction should be treated as a public health issue and solved through treatment programs, not incarceration. I don't believe the government was right to criminalize Moonshiners in Maggie Valley during prohibition, and I don't believe it has any business criminalizing adults for using mari-

juana. We need to end the black market and create a well regulated market that allows us to stop missing out on tax dollars we could be using for education and infrastructure improvements. The cultivation of non-psychoactive cannabis for industrial hemp applications would be a boon for our region's agricultural industry as well."

Any other issues or information you would like your voters to know?

"I was the 2nd person to file FEC paperwork and officially jump into the race, and I did that back in October four days before the first remapping court decision, so I thought I would be running against just Steve Woodsmall in the old gerrymandered district. I was willing to run in an extremely gerrymandered district against Mark Meadows and I will bring that same sense of dedication to representing the people of NC-11 in Congress. I have endorsed Bernie Sanders for president and have been endorsed by Our Revolution WNC (the local chapter of the progressive political organization that grew from Bernie's 2016 campaign) and progressive leaders Cecil Bothwell (former Asheville City Council member who ran for NC-11 in 2012) and Brian Haynes (current Asheville City Council member)."

Phillip Price

Phillip Price is a small business owner, woodworker, musician and hunter. He and his wife Michelle have raised three children with the help of the North Carolina Public School System and the

Episcopal Church. He has lived in Western North Carolina for over 36 years, through good times and bad, and long enough to have had his fill of politicians who get citizens' votes and then cater to billionaires instead of them. Price is running for Congress in North Carolina's 11th District, hoping to earn the vote on March 3rd. He wants Western North Carolina to have a voice in Congress instead of a rubber stamp for the agenda of the rich and powerful as Mark Meadows has become. He believes healthcare is a right, not a privilege only for the rich. He supports expanding access to everyone, not taking it away.

"Meadows has continuously voted to repeal coverage for pre-existing conditions. He's taking our district and our country in the wrong direction," he said. "My vision for the people of North Carolina's 11th Congressional District and for all Americans includes better healthcare, a robust economy, a clean environment, public education, a secure Social Security, strong civil rights protections, support for women's issues, humane immigration policies, promotion of arts and culture, criminal justice reform, trade policies that respect all workers and campaign finance reform.

"I am running for Congress because the working class has been denied a seat at the table of government for far too long," said Price. "While life gets easier and easier for a smaller group of people, it gets harder every day for folks who

live paycheck to paycheck. I have been making my living with my hands for my whole life and I have a real understanding of how policies affect the lives of the working class and families in western North Carolina. I believe that people are our greatest resource and we must invest in people so that they may improve their lives."

Do you live within District 11? Do you think it is important to live within the District you are trying to represent?

"Yes, I live in District 11 and I have lived here for 36 years," said Price. "In those 36 years I have lived in Transylvania, Jackson, Macon, Haywood, Buncombe, and McDowell counties. I have worked, lived, played, attended school and raised a family in WNC. I met my wife at WCU and I was married in Jackson County where both of my parents are laid to rest. I have paid property taxes in Jackson, Buncombe, and McDowell Counties. Yes, I think it is very important that a US House Representative live in and have roots in the district that they represent. How can a person represent those that they do not know? How can someone represent a place they have never been except for a campaign event? I have family, friends, customers, and business associates spread all throughout the 17 counties of the District 11."

What do you see as being the biggest issue facing District 11 and how would you address it if elected?

"I believe that a lack of access to affordable healthcare is the biggest problem in our District. Rural

hospitals in the far western counties are closing doors because the state legislature has not expanded Medicaid. Since the Affordable Care Act was passed North Carolinians have been paying federal taxes that should be funding the expansion of Medicaid, but instead our tax dollars are going to neighboring states that have chosen to expand Medicaid. On the federal level, I support passing a Medicare For All bill similar to H.R. 1384. This will replace the need for Medicaid and will solve most of our healthcare problems in Western North Carolina and across the nation while creating millions of jobs nationwide. The biggest barrier to passing Medicare For All is the massive flow of dark money into our political system that allows the health insurance industry to purchase candidates that will continue to vote against M4A."

What are your thoughts on the Impeachment process?

"I believe that the impeachment was necessary to hold the president accountable for his actions so that a standard was not set for future presidents to behave the same way; however, I did not expect the Senate to remove the president from office. They have become loyal to the president and not to our country as they have sworn to do. No trial is a fair trial without witnesses or documented evidence."

For residents of Macon County, it's status quo for leaders to forget about

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our small community. If elected to Congress, how do you plan to be a voice for the entire district, even the small western-most counties like Macon?

"Well, since I have deep roots in Jackson, Macon, and Transylvania counties I will surely not forget where I come from. I will return home to the far western counties very often to get re-energized by the Blue Ridge Mountains that have made me who I am, and continue to listen to the concerns and the solutions of the good mountain people."

What is your stance on marijuana legalization?

"I support removing Cannabis from the federal schedule of controlled substances. This will give individual states the power to legalize, regulate, and tax the plant in a way that will benefit all taxpayers and not those dealing in the black market. We spend approximately \$50 billion a year on a failing "drug war" while ruining peoples' lives by locking them up for possession of one of God's most versatile plants. This has helped to keep the for-profit, private prison system in business on the backs of the taxpayers."

Any other issues or information you would like your voters to know?

"My platform is about bringing better jobs with higher wages to Western North Carolina by investing our federal tax dollars into four areas that will actually benefit the middle class and reduce poverty: Universal Healthcare; Public Education from pre-K through career-ready training; protecting our clean water, air, and forests and promoting the hemp industry for manufacturing plastics and textiles; rebuilding our public facilities, including our National Park infrastructures, and providing affordable access to high-speed broadband internet to every household and business in Western North Carolina. These are investments that will have a high rate of return to the tax base by creating 10's of 1,000's of good paying jobs right here in Western NC, and will improve the lives of everyone."

Steve Woodsmall

Steve Woodsmall enlisted in the US Air Force in 1975 and retired at the rank of Major (0-4). He held command positions in five separate assignments. Woodsmall was recognized during his service as Company Grade Officer of the Year, Center for Professional Development, Maxwell Air Force Base, and Outstanding Airman of the Year, Scott Air Force Base. He was selected as Jaycees "Outstanding Young Men of America" in 1983 and again in 1988. He holds a master degree in Business Administration and a PhD in Organization and Management. He has also published academic papers and authored a book, "It Beats Eat'n' Lizards — Lessons in Life and Leadership." Following retirement from the Air Force, Steve held positions at the US Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Aviation Administration, several corporate leadership positions, a community action agency, and has taught at several colleges and universities including graduate courses for the Forbes School of Business. He has been active in the Transylvania community, previously serving as the Executive Director for the VISION Transylvania leadership program, a member of the Transylvania County Planning Board, and board of directors for Brevard Little Theatre, where he has performed in numerous productions. He has also conducted seminars for the Transylvania County Chamber of Commerce, is a member of the Transylvania County NAACP, and has volunteered at Schenk Job Corps. He is also active in local Moms Demand Action and Be SMART groups. Woodsmall is also a former NCAA women's college basketball official, AAU national official, and is currently a North Carolina high school basketball official. He and his wife BJ have six children and eight grandchildren and reside in Pisgah Forest, where their property is a certified wildlife habitat.

"I learned in the US Air Force that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem,"

said Dr. Woodsmall. "We need people in Congress with the experience and education to solve problems, not create them. I am the only candidate that has no baggage in my background that the other party can use against me. I strongly encourage voters to do their research on all candidates and vote for the one who can turn NC-11 blue in 2020. We have a great opportunity to reclaim our democracy, and we must take advantage of it."

Do you live within District 11? Do you think it is important to live within the District you are trying to represent?

"I do, and although the law does not require it, I believe one should be part of the community one represents. I also believe one should have lived in the district more than a few months, paid taxes here, and actually voted here before running for office."

What do you see as being the biggest issue facing District 11 and how would you address it if elected?

"What I hear in talking with voters is concern about healthcare and the attempts to cut

social security and Medicare. I support single-payer universal healthcare — the so-called "public option" would still allow for the profit motive in healthcare, and simply would not solve the problem. Quality healthcare and affordable prescription drugs are a

basic human right for everyone. I pledge to protect our social safety net programs like Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment, which we can do by eliminating the corporate welfare programs and leveling the tax system."

What are your thoughts on the Impeachment process?

"Extremely disappointing. I called for impeachment the day after the Mueller report was released, and now we've seen both houses of congress disregard the oath of office and show loyalty to the party and not the Constitution."

For residents of Macon County, it's status quo for leaders to forget about our small community. If elected to Congress, how do you plan to be a voice for the entire district even the small western-most counties like Macon?

"I have done 225 campaign events as of today (Feb 3) in all 17 counties in the district, I have, and will, show up and listen to voters' concerns and represent them in

Congress — not the big donors, PACs, or party leadership. I will hold frequent town hall meetings and have an open-door policy for my office."

What is your stance on marijuana legalization?

"I support the federal legalization of cannabis, due to the positive consequences agriculturally, and to the criminal justice system. I've met with many law enforce-

ment leaders in the district, and they agree. I also support the expungement of all nonviolent offenders as a result of cannabis."

Any other issues or information you would like your voters to know.

"I believe the most serious threat to democracy is the idea that "corporations are people" and that billionaires and special interests are legally allowed to spend unlimited, untraceable (dark) money in America's elections. As a PhD in management, I understand the importance of addressing the root cause of a problem, and big money is the reason there's no progress in any major issue facing the country. We must overturn the Citizens United ruling to fix our rigged political system and pass stringent campaign finance reforms, and I will fight to make this happen."

• *Highlands Newspaper will continue candidate profiles next week with Republican candidates running for District 11 of the United States House of Representatives in part 5 of our Primary 2020 series.*

To view parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the Primary 2020 series, go to www.highlandspac.org, click on news and read issues, Jan. 23, Jan. 30 and Feb. 6, respectively.

Captured Live from
London's West End

Kinky Boots

A NEW MUSICAL INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY



Encore
Screening
Friday
February 21
7 pm

Highlands Performing Arts Center 507 Chestnut Street

Tickets available online: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspacperformingarts.com at the door

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Ten Days Left



Pastor Randy Lucas
Highlands United Methodist Church

What if you only had ten days left,
or maybe just five, or two?
Would you look at the world differently?
Tell me. Whaddya think you'd do?

Would you let go of all the bitterness
that's been festering in your soul?
Would you finally relinquish the illusion
that you are always in control?

Would you stop and smell a flower,
or watch some children play?
Would you visit with an old friend?
Tell me what would you do, today?

Would you give an extra hug today,
or listen with greater care?
Would you work to help the hurting,
or maybe pray an extra prayer?

Life is lived in moments,
until one day they're all spent.
And then someday along the way
we'll wonder where they went.

But, if you're reading these few words,
here's good news that I bring.
You're still alive! You still have time!
So live! Love! Dance and sing!

What if you only had ten days left,
or maybe just five, or two?
Would you look at the world differently?
Tell me. Whaddya think you'd do?

Looking for a church home?

Wayfarers Unity Chapel is a non denominational, inclusive church located at 182 Wayfarer Lane, off Highway 246 in Dillard, GA, just 1.7 miles from Highway 441

Social time begins at 9:30 and services begin at 10 a.m. on Sundays

Visit our website www.wayfarersunity.org for more information, or call 706-746-3303

Proverbs 3:5

BLUEVALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

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

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

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Wes Sharpe, Pastor 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

CHAPEL OF THE SKY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

Sundays: 10 a.m.; Worship

Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011

464 US Hwy 64 east, Cashiers

9:30a Sunday School; 10:30a Worship Service; Mon. 6p Bible

Study & Supper in homes

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

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

Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

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

1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC

Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun.: 9:30am: Sunday School 10:30am: Middle & High School;

10:45am: Child. Program, 10:45am: Worship

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

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKYVALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447,

Pastor Gary Hewins

Worship: Sun. 9 a.m., with Holy Communion the 1st & 3rd

Sun.; Tues: Community Supper 5:30 followed by Bible Study.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. W. Bentley Manning • 526-2968

Monday-Friday: Morning Prayer at 8:15a. Sundays: 8 am

Holy Eucharist Rite I; 9 am Sunday School; 10:30 am Holy

Eucharist Rite II. Childcare available at 10:30

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands

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

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Choir 5p; Prayer Mtg 6:15p

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors

526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

Sun.: Worship 8:30a Adult Ed.: 9:30a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.

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

Wed: Choir: 6p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS

Non-Denominational-Contemporary Worship

242 Hwy 107N, 1/4 miles from Crossroads in Cashiers

www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter: 743-9814

Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glencville, NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson

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

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson

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

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

Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Randy Lucas 526-3376

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

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

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

Intercessory Prayer Ministry

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

Chaplain Margaret Howell • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Sun: School/Communion: 10:30; Early-Bird Christmas Eve service of

Lessons and Carols, Sunday, Dec. 22, 10:30 am.

All are welcome.

HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Zane Talley

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

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

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

at St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin • 828-524-9463

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church,

4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone – 526-2418

Mass: Thurs. 12:10; Fri. 9am; Sun: 11 a.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

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

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

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

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

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

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Thurs. 9am, Fri., 11am; Sun. 9am

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 S., Office: 743-2359 • Rev. Rob Wood

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

Nursery available for Rite II services

Sept 6-Oct 25- Informal Evening Eucharist- 5:30 p.m.

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive, Franklin • uufranklin.org

Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

• FIRE REPORTS •

Rotary Club of Highlands Meets K-9 Unit's Hope and Xena

From left: Sherry Holt, Rotary Club of Highlands, Rotarian and Highlands Police Chief Bill Harrell, Master Officer Kevin Breedlove and Xena.



Members of the Rotary Club of Highlands were on their best behavior recently when they met Hope and Xena, Highlands Police Department K-9 patrol dogs. These dogs are trained to sniff out drugs, search for breaking and entering suspects or find lost people suffering from dementia.

Accompanied by their human handlers, Master Officers Kevin Breedlove and Kyle Kinsland, both dogs wore full uniforms: vests designed to protect them from stabs and gunshot wounds. Although the cost of these trained dogs runs \$10- \$15,000 each, Hope and Xena were fully funded through private donations and they live with their handlers so the only "salary and benefit" cost is their dog food: approximately \$1,200 per year, per dog. Both K-9s are female, specifically chosen for their temperament; Hope is a German Shepherd and Xena is a Malinois. The dogs train and are certified as a team with their handlers and their devotion to their officers was clearly demonstrated at the Rotary meeting.

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HPD requests information

An investigation by our department has led to multiple embezzlement by employee charges.

Twenty-one (21) felony charges have been secured and warrants have been issued for Kristeena (Kristi) Byrd Gray of Franklin NC.

Ms. Gray was employed by the 4th Street Market in Highlands from June 2019 to December 2019. We were contacted when the management of 4th Street Market realized the checks written for cash did not match the amount of cash loaded into the ATM machine.

During the course of this investigation, it has been determined that 4th Street Market has suffered a loss of over \$31,000 in US currency.

If anyone has any information in regards to this case, please contact my office.

– Chief W. Harrell,
Highlands Police Department
828-526-94321

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Feb. 11

Feb. 11

- At 11:06 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on N. 5th Street.

Feb. 12

- At 10:40 a.m., the dept. investigated smoke on Shortoff Road.

- At 10:51 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on N. 5th St.

- At 11:53 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on the Cashiers Road.

Feb. 14

- A little past midnight, the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

- At 1:05 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on N. 4th. St.

- At 12:40 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on the Dillard Road.

Feb. 16

- At 1:20 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clubhouse Trail.

- At 1:03 p.m., the dept. rescued someone with a medical emergency on the Franklin Road.

- At 3:27 p.m., the dept. conducted a search on Hickory Gap Road.

Feb. 17

- At 3:06 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Dixon Drive.

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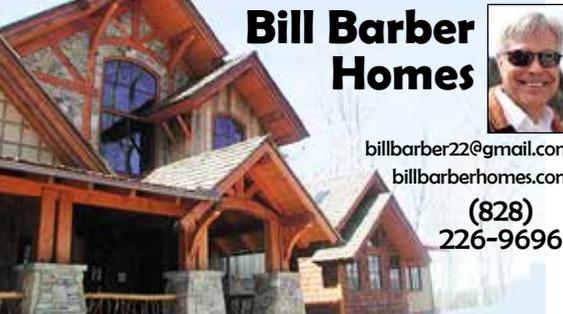
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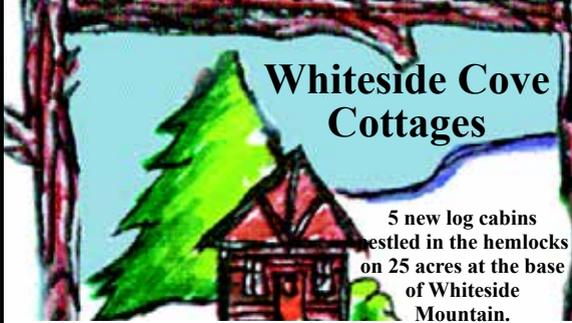


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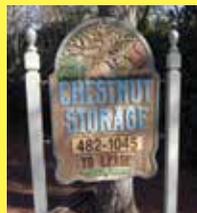
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