

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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Thursday, July 16, 2020

Gov. Cooper says NC schools are to reopen August 17 under Plan B

Phase 2 extended three more weeks through Aug. 7

NC Governor Roy Cooper paved the way for school superintendents to put a plan in place for

when school starts Monday, Aug 17 – as concrete as can be expected given the mercurial virus.

At a press conference Tuesday, July 14 he extended Phase 2

• See **SCHOOLS** page 11

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By **Brittney Lofthouse**

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper announced Tuesday that the state will remain in Phase 2 for at least another three weeks, making the second time he has extended Phase 2.

The current phase limits the capacity available for businesses, as well as requires some businesses such as movie theatres, gyms, and bars to be closed entirely.

With another three weeks of Phase 2 in attempt to slow the spread of COVID19 cases in the state, small business owners are more concerned than ever as to how they will continue operating.

Since the launch of the Re-open Macon County Fund on June 12, Mountain Bizworks has received around \$60,000 in loan applications for small businesses

• See **FUNDS** page 8



The Highlands Land Trust is working on the road up to Sunset Rocks so this vista will be easier to experience.

– Photo by **Brian O’Shea**

HCLT repairs road to Sunset Rocks

By **Brian O’Shea**
Plateau Daily News

The road to Sunset Rocks is often washed out from heavy rains making traveling to the top in a vehicle close to impossible. In an

effort to maintain the road and smooth out some of the wash-outs, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust staff has been on site doing what they can to make the popular-Highlands attraction more ac-

cessible.

“We have been working to repair the road tread as best as we can to at a minimum allow us to drive a 4x4 capable vehicle to the

• See **SUNSET ROCKS** page 15

The impact of covid on area food banks

By **Andie Chilson**

Food banks in Highlands have had to adjust to the ‘new normal’ that came with life in a pandemic just like virtually everyone else. With the rise in unemployment over the last few months, food banks across the country have seen a surge in demand for their services, and Highlands is no exception.

The Highlands Food Pantry, which is a program at the International Friendship Center, has had to alter the way they distribute food to their clients. They now offer a box program for their clients instead of their normal client serve shopping process. Clients are often left with food they don’t want with this new program, so the food pantry is encouraging them to share what they don’t want with their neighbors.

• See **FOOD BANKS** page 10

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Please wear a mask

Let me again thank those folks who care for the health and safety of their fellow citizens by wearing masks. Research is very clear that wearing masks is a very basic, and effective way of containing the spread of COVID-19 virus. While individuals have personal freedom, there is a responsibility to not jeopardize the health and safety of others within the community. Individuals can't make it too far without the support of a healthy community. Concern for others is a fundamental religious and community value



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

In some instances, people go into businesses without masks. Some citizens ask for the police to be called to establishments to enforce the governor's mask order. The order prohibits our police from citing individuals on sidewalks or in businesses.

The first line of enforcement falls on the business owner. It is their responsibility to request people to wear masks. If a customer refuses to do so, that person can be asked to leave the business. If the person refuses, the police can be called, and that per-

son can be charged with trespassing. Rather than requesting police involvement, I suggest concern citizens talk with the business owner that they believe is routinely allowing customers not to wear masks. As a last resort, a business owner could be cited for failing to enforce the governor's mask order if there is a total disregard for doing so.

I hope Highlands will continue to have a high level of voluntary compliance. Our police have increased foot patrols in the business district. Officers wear masks in an effort to model best behavior in these crowded zones.

On public sidewalks outside the business area, there is no expectation that people wear masks, provided social distancing can be maintained. The governor's order states that if a person is exercising outdoors and maintaining social distance, masks are not required.

Tonight is the July meeting of the Town Board by way of ZOOM. The town website has the information for public access. I encourage anyone wishing to make a public comment to call Town Hall at 526-2118 and let our staff know. Requests can also be emailed to me at: mayor@highland-snc.org.

The first agenda items will be a request by OEI to annex the Farm on Arnold Road. This request was reviewed and recommended by the planning board. The next step will be a public hearing at the August meeting for the annexation and for the rezoning of the Farm property to B-3. The Farm is currently outside the town and is not zoned.

There will be a discussion of current town bear policies. I will request the board to form an educational partnership with the B.E.A.R Task Force. Also, I want the board to consider an ordinance prohibiting the willful feeding of bears.

A request to do engineering plans for several upcoming water and sewer projects is on the agenda. We believe another federal stimulus package may be coming that includes public works projects. Shovel-ready plans like the ones proposed could be funded through federal stimulus project grants. See you tonight.

• LETTERS •

Most people can and should wear masks

Dear Editor,

"Everyone is entitled to one's own opinion, but not to one's own facts." So said former statesman Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and many others have said something similar.

I bring this to the attention of Danny Crane, who wrote a letter published in the Highlands Newspaper July 9 that was factually inaccurate twice.

First, he states that "people with breathing issues like asthma and COPD should NOT wear a face mask."

In fact, only people with the most severe cases of either disease might find it more difficult to breathe when wearing a mask.

The large majority of people with mild or moderate asthma or COPD would find that they can breathe just as well with a mask as without, and would be afforded a significant degree of added protection against Covid-19 and other viruses by wearing one.

I know this as a physician, and as someone with moderate persistent, steroid-dependent asthma. Second, Mr. Crane states "...the fact that the masks are ineffective and do not protect anyone from Covid-19 or any other virus." He cites no references to back this claim, probably because the vast majority of scientific studies on the matter indicate that masks, though not a panacea, are quite effective at reducing the distance of exhaled air

• See LETTERS page 5

• NOTICE •

The Highlands Newspaper office at 256 Oak Street is temporarily closed. We are going through some renovations and updates, and plan to be back open in a few weeks with new and improved facilities.

In the meantime, we are working out of our home office. To contact us – as always – please email highlandseditor@aol.com or call 828-200-1371.

• WEATHER •

Thu, 16-Jul	Fri, 17-Jul	Sat, 18-Jul	Sun, 19-Jul
 77°F 62°F	 79°F 64°F	 78°F 65°F	 82°F 64°F
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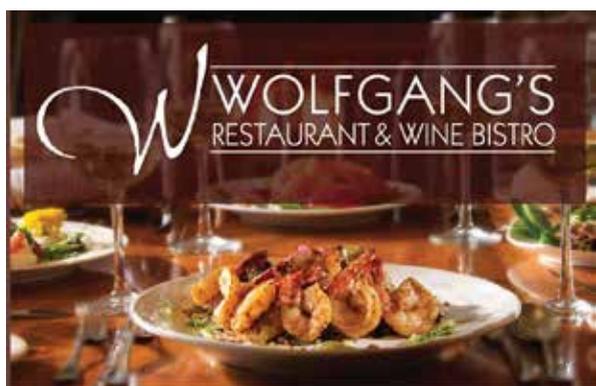
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...LETTERS continued from page 2

droplets from coughing, sneezing and even talking. This means that people nearby will be exposed to far fewer infecting particles. The masks also protect the mask-wearer, to some extent, from catching these viruses.

Therefore, in situations where social distancing is not possible, masks are ESSENTIAL.

This is not a matter of opinion, political or otherwise. It is a matter of fact as established by science and research, and the consequences are life or death for many.

Richard Ellin MD

Highlands

Protesting 'On Protest'

Dear Editor,

While I appreciate the thoughtful commentary offered by Bud Katz in his July 2 Word Matter column entitled "On Protest," I found a logical problem with his definition of "free speech".

Mr. Katz first offers an encomium of our First Amendment and its broad affirmation of our right to protest. I rise in support of both laudable statements.

However, the column goes off its rhetorical rails when a paragraph refers to limitations of free speech, of which Mr. Katz cites "blatant falsehoods, hate speech and overt threats." These terms are subject to interpretation and disagreement.

Who determines what is a falsehood, and whether it is "blatant"? Any reading of a news article concerning a politician will find an abundance of material to consider.

The same with "overt threats." Is a sinister cabal planning to steal a UPS package from my porch, or are they going to nuke Macon County? So, what is the degree of "threat" and is the party able to carry it out? A reading of social commentary can easily morph an assertion into a "threat" in the reader's mind.

But the most dangerous of Mr Katz' examples of

• See LETTERS page 12



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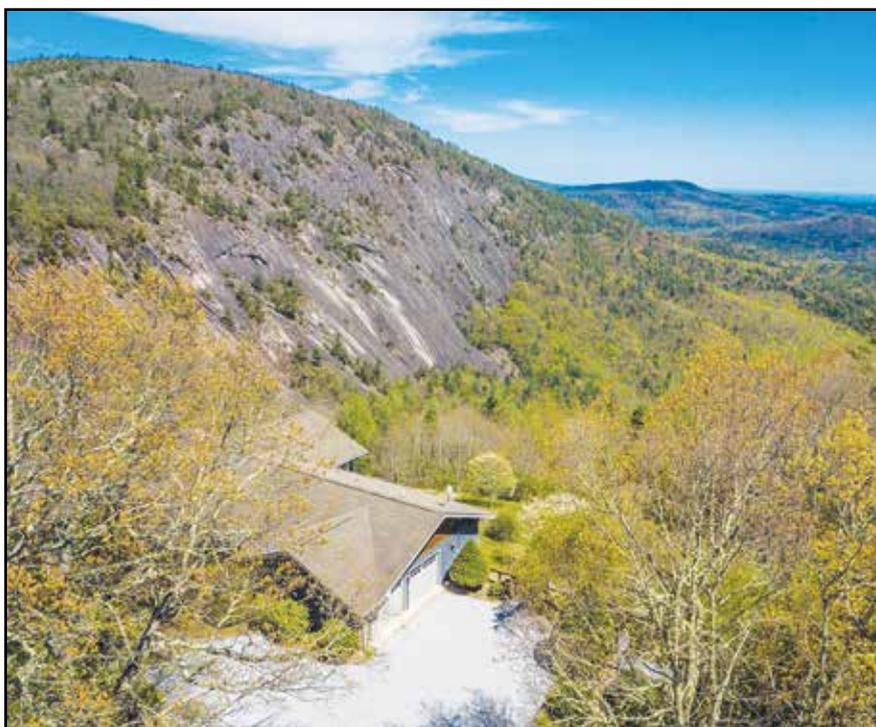
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ALL ABOUT BOOKS

• INK PENN •

The books in my books!

I'm an avid reader—someone who reads every night and never goes anywhere without a book. Heaven forbid I'd be stuck somewhere without a book. I can still recall with horror the time I downloaded a book to a new tablet for a business trip, and the tablet froze up on the first leg of the journey. And, lately, with my library closed and me downloading books instead of picking up the “real” thing, I'm distressed when I get that message on my Kindle about the need to recharge. Is it just me, or does this invariably happen at the very best spot in the book?

My passion for reading must be the reason I mention books in the cozy mysteries I write. My main character, Leta, belongs to a book club in the Cotswolds village of Astonbury. Once a month, she attends a meeting at the Book Nook on the High Street. My Atlanta readers will know I stole that name from the popular used book store in Decatur, Georgia.

In the first book—“Bells, Tails, & Murder”—Leta leads the discussion of Charlie Lovett's “The Bookman's Tale.” In that novel, a North Carolina antiquarian bookseller relocates to an English village after his wife dies. There, he stumbles upon a book about Shakespeare forgeries that leads him to investigate the age-old mystery as to who Shakespeare was—if indeed the name William Shakespeare was only a pseudonym.

I chose that particular book because my plot features author J.M. Barrie and touches on the world of book collectors. “The Bookman's Tale” triggered all kinds of ideas as did an article I stumbled across about the discovery of a previously unpublished play by Barrie. Funny how the brain works.

Each subsequent book also has a book club scene, and the books read by the group always loosely connect to the plot or setting. In “Pumpkins, Paws, & Murder” which takes place in October with a Fall Fete as a central plot point, I chose G.M. Maillet's “Wicked Autumn,” set in the fictional village of Nether Monkslip. My plot



Kathy Manos Penn

mirrored hers in both the season and the occasion of a fete. Who dies and why is of course completely different, as are the characters who populate the books.

For book three—“Whiskers, Wreaths, & Murder”—which takes place in, you guessed it, December, I chose “Mr. Dickens and His Carol” by Samantha Silva as the book club selection. Dick-

ens, the dog in my book, was very excited that a book about his namesake was featured. You'll have to wait until the book comes out in August to see if there are any other parallels.

I'm hard at work on book four now. Though I've yet to come up with a title, the book club scene has already been written. This time, the group reads “The Sherlockian” about a quest for a missing Arthur Conan Doyle diary. I read this book when it came out in 2010 and didn't realize until I did a bit of research that Graham Moore, the author, also wrote “The Last Days of Night,” which became a movie starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Eddie Redmayne—“The Current War.” Based on historical events, it tells the story of the competition and conflict between Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse.

I won't tell you how the book club selection connects to the murder mystery, but I can tell you that Leta and friends visit a literary festival in a nearby village. Book titles and authors— even beyond those read for book club—are referenced throughout my cozies, and there are certainly enough to fill another column. Perhaps I'll revisit the topic of the books in my books one day and take a deeper dive. Stay tuned.

• Author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her cozy mysteries on Amazon. Locally, “Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch” is available at Highlands Mountain Paws. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com, and follow her on Facebook, www.facebook.com/KathyManosPennAuthor/.

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...FUNDS continued from page 1

throughout the county, according to Macon County Economic Development Director Tommy Jenkins.

“Mountain Bizworks have received several applicants so far,” said Jenkins. “Some of those applicants were denied because they didn’t meet the criteria of the

loan, but we have had several approved and have been provided funding.”

Reopening Macon Fund small business loans aim to provide a rapid source of assistance for Macon County-based businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19. The fund is a collaborative effort between

the Macon County Economic Development Commission, Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce, Highlands Chamber of Commerce, SCC Small Business Center, WCU Small Business and Technology Development Center and Mountain BizWorks.

Mountain BizWorks is the administrator of the emergency loans program, with funding being provided by the Macon County Board of Commissioners from the county’s economic development fund. Mountain BizWorks is managing a similar fund for Jackson County.

Reopening Macon Fund small business loans are designed to be flexible and rapid sources of low-interest loan capital to help local Macon County businesses meet pressing needs and navigate the COVID-19 crisis. Repayment is expected either from more permanent funding sources (like SBA Disaster Loans) or from the future cash flow of the business.

The loans are between \$2,500 and \$10,000, based on the business’s pre-COVID19 revenue and is expected to be paid

back after six months at a low interest rate of four percent. Businesses have to have been in operating in Macon County for at least one year and have between one and 50 employees – allowing self-employed residents to be eligible. The business has to have demonstrated a loss of revenue of 25 percent or more due to COVID19.

According to Jenkins, the funding source will be available until the \$257,000 allocated by the county is distributed. With state and federal loans such as the Paycheck Protection funding begins to run out, Jenkins believes that the county loan program will provide additional support for small businesses.

“I think we are going to see an increase in applicants as the federal loan programs expire,” Jenkins said. “It is going to be a while before our economy fully recovers and our businesses are still in need of help.”

For more information and to see how to apply for funds go to mountainbizworks.org.



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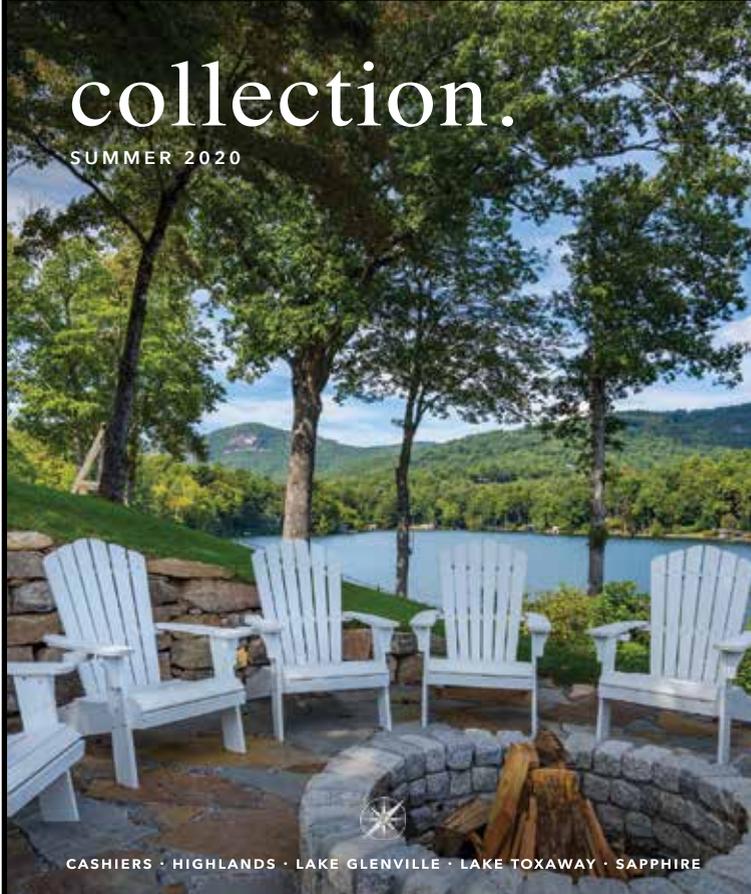
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— John F. Kennedy

For many years Highlands was a quaint town comprised of year-round locals and the seasonal residents from places in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, etc. The season was May through October, then most homes were winterized and seasonal residents returned home. Many of these were small cabins that had no heat and were not built for year-round use.

Between the 1960s and 2008, growth occurred bringing numerous developments including clubs and neighborhoods tucked into different areas. The earlier homes still were built for seasonal use, but there started to be more and more built for year-round use, to accommodate weekenders that lived within a 2-hour drive of here.

Also during these years we saw the addition or expansion of facilities like the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, the Hud-

son Library, churches, the Performing Arts Center and the Bascomb, just to mention a few. There were several hotels and inns, as well as B&B's and various restaurants, boutiques, furniture and antique stores. Throughout these times the town remained seasonal, with most businesses and restaurants closing during the off season.

Over the past 15 years or so, we have slowly seen the town open up more and more during the off season. Families are here for Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Years. Couples come for a romantic mountain getaway to celebrate Valentine's Day or an anniversary. Businesses hold planning retreats during the winter months and destination weddings happen all year long. There are still some retail businesses and restaurants that close during the off season, but the majority of them are open almost all year,



Carl Romberg, BIC
Landmark Realty
Highlands office

sometimes with just a short break. Most of the B&B's have gone away, but numerous vacation rentals are available. And the hotels and inns offer a variety of options ranging from world-class to the rustic and quaint.

My point is that the town of Highlands has changed greatly over the past 60 years, but at a fairly slow pace. Even that pace has been too fast for many people who just do not want things to change.

The pandemic is going to leave many different impacts on society and our culture, and I expect that we are going to see changes here at a much faster rate than the past, but also more for the positive than what will occur in metro and urban areas.

Highlands is a very unique place offering many different lifestyle options includ-

ing outdoor activities like hiking, boating or fishing. There is an active arts culture and variety of unique restaurants. We have events like the antique car shows, concerts, art shows and food & wine festivals.

Not that people are flying much now, but there are several airport options within a couple of hours from here.

The town has been pro-active regarding items like a fiber optic network, planning and beautification. We have the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust that continues to save parcels of land and build additional trails.

These are just some of the many reasons, along with our cool summer temperatures, that we will become even more attractive to prospective home buyers that see that they can now work remotely.

One of the most common questions I now get is about internet options and speed, as buyers plan to work remotely at least part of the time they spend here.

• See INVESTING page 11



BOB RADIGAN



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...FOOD BANKS continued from page 1

While some volunteers had to take a leave in light of COVID, according to the Director of the Highlands Food Pantry, Marty Rosenfield, the food bank has seen a surge in willing and able volunteers in recent months.

"It takes a village, and Highlands has no lack of stepping up and volunteering," Rosenfield said.

When the virus hit, the Highlands Food Pantry saw a decrease in demand from clients located outside of the Town of Highlands, but an increase in demand from Highlands residents.

Rosenfield managed to stay ahead of the food shortages by stocking up on items before the shelves were wiped clean.

"I didn't know where this was all going, so I immediately decided that I was going to try to bring in

a six-week supply of everything . . . so I have not been hurting for distribution items," Rosenfield said.

The Highlands Food Pantry is primarily funded through donations, and they have seen a significant increase in donations over the past few months. Cullasaja Country Club, in particular, has collected a considerable number of donations for the food pantry. According to Rosenfield, a number of the country club's residents have given thousands in personal donations.

In order to honor social distancing precautions, the Highlands Food Pantry is only allowing three or four volunteers in the building at a time and requiring that they stay six to eight feet apart. They are always accepting donations that allow them to continue to provide their services to those in need in the

community.

You can donate food and money and get more information on becoming a volunteer at their website, internationalfriendship-center.org. They are located at 348 S 5th St, Highlands, North Carolina and are open Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m. or by appointment.

The Highlands Emergency Council has also experienced an increased demand for their services. In May, the Emergency Council was providing goods to 80 families, twice a month, and now the number of families the Emergency Council is helping has skyrocketed to 200+ families, twice a month.

In order to keep volunteers safe, the floor at the Emergency

• See FOOD BANKS page 16

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...SCHOOLS continued from page 1

for another three weeks (until Friday, Aug. 7) and said school superintendents could pick either Plan B or C to reopen schools.

"Plan B is the baseline for the state – we will move forward with plan B but school systems can decide for themselves if Plan C is best for them," he said.

Plan C is 100% remote learning at home.

Plan B requires social distancing, face coverings at all times for teachers, staff and students in grades K-12 as well as symptom checks for everyone entering school buildings, among other things.

"This means a limited number of people in the buildings and it might mean alternate days or weeks," he said. "One-way traffic within the schools is also encouraged as well as eating lunch in classrooms if the cafeteria can't accommodate students for social distancing and capacity, and no large gatherings in auditoriums at this time."

Gov. Cooper said the state is furnishing five reusable masks for each teacher, staff member and student as well as cleaning sup-

plies because classrooms, buses and equipment will have to be cleaned consistently.

"The Macon County School System has been preparing for the reopening of our schools on August 17," said MC School Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin. "We are excited that the Governor's Order will allow 50% of our students to return to our classrooms on a daily basis. We are finalizing our Plan B and will present these plans to the Board of Education for its approval on Monday night. Moving students within the facilities will be done to improve social distancing, but we still can't exceed the 50% capacity of the buildings."

The 50% capacity is part of Phase 2 restrictions which are in effect statewide for all businesses and gathering places.

Superintendent Baldwin said his principals, teachers and staff had been developing detailed plans for all three possibilities, A, B, and C, as well as planning for those parents who may choose to homeschool their children and who will then continue

• See **SCHOOLS** page 14

...INVESTING continued from page 9

Unfortunately, there will probably be some casualties of businesses or restaurants here. We already have a different retail scene than 10-12 years ago. However, looking ahead, there will be entrepreneurs that choose to open here because of all that we offer, and as the year-round population increases, there will be more to support the local businesses. Even with the growth, I think it will be a long while before we meet the requirements that the

chain restaurants and box stores need to make their business models successful, which will help our town maintain the charm that makes us unique.

• Carl Romberg is a full-time Highlands resident and the Broker in Charge of Landmark Realty Group's Highlands Office located at 225 Main Street. Feel free to stop by and visit with him, or reach him at 678-936-9309 or carl@LandmarkRG.com

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...LETTERS continued from page 5

speech limitation is “hate speech.” This is the basis of the cancel culture, which grew from college campuses to our current infected and infested zeitgeist. To many, “hate speech” has become whatever someone disagrees with. It is a terrible thing to silence or to be silenced by an ersatz elite cadre of people who so intensely disagree with free and robust discourse.

Our country was founded on the ability of speakers to “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable” - with whatever speech necessary.

What is it about “free” that we don’t understand?

Jim Graber
Franklin

The true story of the origins of the song 'You Are My Sunshine'

“You are my Sunshine, my only Sunshine
You make me happy when skies are gray
You’ll never know Dear how much I love you
Please don’t take my Sunshine away.”

Dear Editor,

Written in 1929 by Oliver Hood, a popular musician from La Grange, GA. Oliver Hood had eight children, worked in a Cotton Mill – not much money or sophistication. He never applied for copyright and never received any compensation.

Jimmy Davis country music star and future Governor of Louisiana filed and received rights to song in 1939. It is now the State Song of Louisiana. Jimmy Davis’s estate is still receiving compensation every time “You are my Sunshine” is recorded or used in a movie.

It has been recorded by Gene Autry, Bing Crosby, Lawrence Welk, Nat King Cole, Ray Charles, Andy Williams,

Aretha Franklin, Anne Murray, Johnny Cash, Carley Simon and many, many more.

In 1959 Oliver Hood wrote:

“Somewhere the sun is shining,
But there’s rain in my Heart today
There’s no denying, my heart keeps crying
Somebody stole my Sunshine away.”

Kenny Youmans
Highlands

Show you care about your fellow man – wear a mask

Dear Editor,

Regarding the letter-to-editor by Danny Crane entitled “Not everyone can wear a mask” in the July 9 edition of Highlands Newspaper – masks do not stop microns but they do stop vapor that carries virus particles.

If you don’t like wearing a mask, wear a face shield. By not taking precautions in public you are making a statement that you don’t care about other people.

Please, this is a health issue, not a political issue.

David Stearns
Franklin

Why you should wear a mask if you can! Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

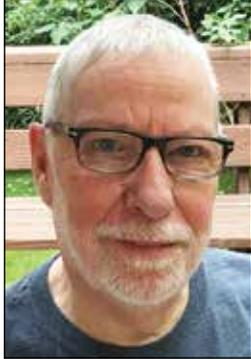
Dear Editor,

In a recent letter in the July 9 edition entitled “Not everyone can wear a mask”, the writer concluded that “masks were ineffective and do not protect anyone from Covid -19 or any other virus “ because the viruses are so small.” This has been disproven.

An article published in June 2020 in one of the most important medical journals “The Lancet”

• WORD MATTER •

Involuntary Opinion – Confirmation Bias: It's a Scary Thing



Bud Katz

I've written before about how a closely held belief or opinion can prevent an individual, or a large swath of American society, from accepting an equally powerful fact, or set of facts. An Israeli study attached a name to this phenomenon: it's called Involuntary Opinion-Confirmation Bias.

An example cited by the study asked students if a particular sentence – "The Internet are making people more isolated." – was grammatically correct. A number of students who agreed with the sentiment said the sentence was grammatically correct. It wasn't. "The Internet is making people more isolated" would be grammatically correct.

The bias demonstrated that if someone wants to believe something, there's an excellent chance the person will believe something incorrect, even when presented with facts in opposition to what the person wants to believe.

Way back when, in the year 2000, I was at a business function when a conversation about America's role in Vietnam turned ugly. Someone (not me) said that America should never have gotten involved in Vietnam, and that we were defeated by a smaller, more determined enemy. Another person at the table, who actually served on the ground in Vietnam, went berserk. I'll spare you the colorful language.

"How the (heck) can you say that?" the veteran, Eddie, screamed. "Not only should we have been there, but we won that blankety-blank war. I know! I was there!"

The contrarian, Tom, responded calmly, using facts, and opinions supported by facts.

"What did we win, Eddie?" he asked. "Did we turn back the insurgency from the North? No. Did we acquire Vietnam's natural resources? No. Did we install a democratically elected government? No. So, in what way did we win in Vietnam?"

Eddie responded, "We stopped com-

munist," he said.

"No, we didn't, Eddie," Tom said. "Communism stopped itself 10 years ago. In Vietnam, we lost 58,000 men, and as we now know, the war was based on lies."

"I was proud to serve," Eddie said, indignantly.

"I'm proud of you for serving, Eddie," he said. "But we didn't win anything in Vietnam, or in Korea, for that matter."

"What are you talking about," Eddie exploded. "Of course we won in Korea."

"Actually," Tom said, patiently, "in Korea, the North is still the North and the South is still the South. We've managed to keep the North at bay, but there are still two Koreas. We have thousands of American troops over there just to keep the North from overrunning the South. We may not have lost in Korea, but we didn't win."

I don't know whether Eddie changed his belief about our role in either war. He stormed off and we never spoke of it again.

Arguing with someone who chooses to believe something regardless of facts or evidence to the contrary, is like standing in a storm and pushing the umbrella upwards, believing the rain will change direction.

We hold beliefs and opinions based in great part on how, when and where we were brought up. We trusted our parents, teachers, religious leaders and other authority figures – sometimes, even elected officials – to always tell us the truth. We form a belief system based on this trust. And, over time, in our minds, they turn from belief and opinion to fact and truth.

As adults, we sometimes find inconsistencies in these teachings. We have our own set of circumstances and understandings, and, if we think critically, we change some of these opinions and beliefs to conform with the realities of our individual experience. In other words, we allow ourselves the intellectual flexibility to change what we believe.

We all know change is hard. It's easier to hold onto things that gave us comfort

• See WORD MATTER page 19

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...SCHOOLS continued from page 11

with remote learning.

“Opening schools under any of the three plans is complicated and challenging. We have utilized parent and staff surveys to help us develop plans for reopening,” he said. “We had intended to send out another survey for both parents and staff in late July or early August to better refine our plans. With the recent local spike in COVID cases, it seems likely that parent and staff inclinations may have changed which means that the plans that we have already developed will need to be modified.”

As of press time, Wednesday morning, North Carolina reported 89,484 cases, 1,552 deaths. In Macon County, 340 cases, (63 in Highlands) and one death. There are 369 tests pending.

In fact, Gov. Cooper said even the plans he put in motion Tuesday depend on the status of cases moving forward – whether they level off or increase. “So please wear a mask for our children, if nothing else,” he said.

“We have been conducting careful, collaborative, painstaking work working with information and science and we know there will always be some risk with in-person learning,” said Cooper.

Since school starts in about a month, everyone has been anxious to know how “the plan” will work – teachers, parents and students.

“Yes, parents, teachers, and the community have been concerned about the upcoming school year,” said Baldwin. “Please be assured that I am deeply concerned about safely reopening our schools this fall. If we reopen the safety

of our students and staff is paramount. We will need to remediate to help students who may have suffered from lost learning and engagement and since we are at 50% capacity with Plan B – which still includes five remote learning days – we must deliver instruction so that our students have the best opportunities possible.”

Baldwin said his central office and principals have met several times this summer to discuss reopening plans and strategies and they will continue to plan and prepare right up until August 17th.

In preparation, The Jump Start program has been set up for 2 weeks this summer. The program has been limited by the legislation which provided the funding and it can only be used for K-4 students who were identified as in need of remediation on March 13, 2020.

“We have also set aside some of the Jump Start money to identify those students showing the greatest need once school begins,” said Baldwin. “This is significant because while we know which students were behind on March 13th, we are unsure which students are significantly behind as a result of the school closing and summer break. We won’t know the students who suffered the most until school actually begins. We may utilize some of the Jump Start funding for after-school remediation, too, but it has to be spent by Dec. 31, 2020.”

Meanwhile, all over Macon County there are families either with unreliable internet or none at all and this is another obstacle the school system must clear since

the state mandated there be five remote learning days this ’20-’21 school year regardless of the startup plan.

“We are reaching out to community centers, fire departments even churches to set up wireless hotspots for families,” said Baldwin. “The school system will also be providing a device to all students in grades 5th through 12th as well as a device to any student in grades K-4, who may not have one in the home,” said Baldwin.

The Advance Highlands Education Committee (AHEC) in Highlands has been working on that issue, too, submitting grants to get funds for Highlands School’s remaining tech needs primarily for middle and high school students as well, as iPads for middle school since their textbooks are pivoting to digital like in the high school.

“These are critical for each student to have with the requirement of remote learning and they’ll be allowed to use them at home,” said AHEC board member Hilary Wilkes. “Many of our students do not have this technology at home and with many homes having multiple learners it’s important to have individual devices.”

Highlands School Principal Brian Jetter said they will be designing the school reopening around the guidelines in Plan B but the real specifics will be coming as they address all the issues and design the protocols needed to maintain the structure of the school.

- Kim Lewicki

...LETTERS continued from page 12

analyzed over 170 studies and it was felt that masks significantly reduce the risk of viral transmission.

Although, as pointed out by the previous writer, viruses are very small, it was not mentioned that viruses are mostly trapped within the far larger droplets of saliva and are caught to a considerable degree within the mask of an infected individual when they speak

or cough. That is the most important aspect of the mask.

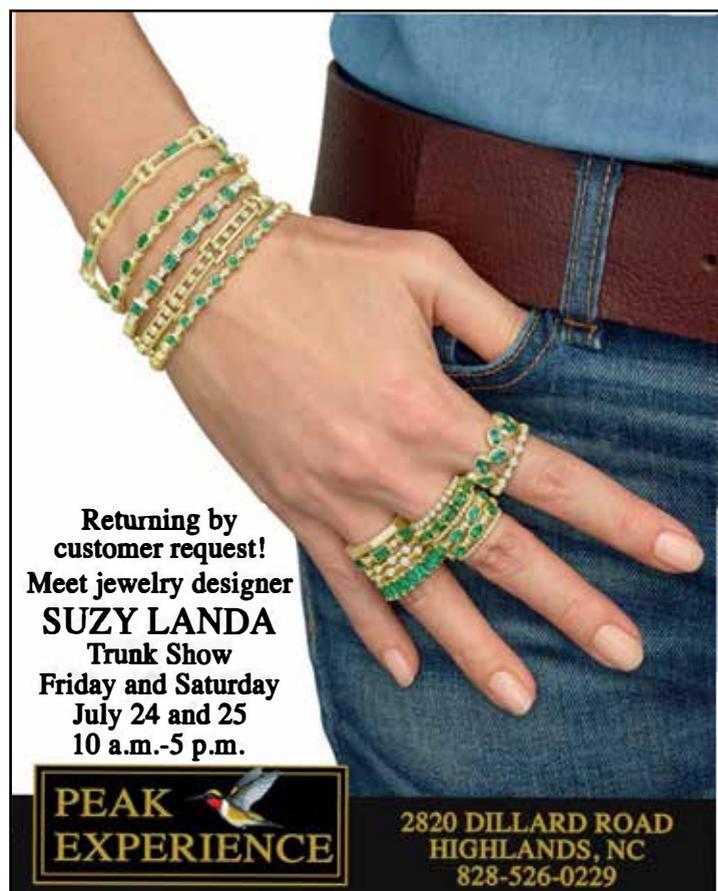
You are also partially protected by wearing one. Masks combined with physical distancing is the way to be safe.

There are many individuals who have Covid -19 who will have no symptoms and others that have not yet developed symptoms. All of them can pass on an infection, but masks can stop a high

proportion.

The previous writer is certainly correct that certain individuals cannot and should not wear a mask but they should protect themselves by the use of physically distancing since if they were to become infected they are at high risk for developing a severe case.

Michael S. Levine, M.D.
Highlands



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...SUNSET ROCKS continued from page 1



HCLT staff man the John Deere tractor donated by the Quin family, but the tractor has broken down. Work will start back up once it is fixed.

top for maintenance and event purposes,” said HCLT Stewardship Coordinator Kyle Pursel. “The road, having been abandoned by the Town, has degraded and washed out in many spots, leading to large trenches and swales that make driving most vehicles near impossible. The Town and us put up signs trying to warn people, but they ignored the warnings and kept getting cars stuck.”

However, according to Town staff, Sunset Park Drive was never owned by the town. A portion is private land and the rest is Highlands Land Trust property.

Over the years, the Town spent thousands of dollars annually scraping and graveling the road to ensure it was accessible by EMS vehicles and power line maintenance half-way up the road.

Due to Highlands weather, the gravel that was put in the holes on the road routinely eroded into culverts eventually finding its way onto Highlands Biological Station property across Horse Cove Road.

Due to the cost and futility of the effort, in 2018, the Town decided to stop maintaining it all together. With signage, the public was encouraged to walk up to the vista rather than to drive, because only high-clearance vehicles would be able to drive the road.

Pursel said staff tried doing the work by hand, but the amount of work neces-

sary versus HCLT’s staffing capability, combined with the amount of rain Highlands receives made that a futile effort.

“Luckily at the end of last year, the late Hillrie Quin and his wife Beverly donated a small John Deere tractor to us,” said Pursel. “Eventually, we managed to get the tractor to the site and started dragging the road to the best of the tractor’s capabilities over the course of a few weeks in-between rain events.”

However, in a sad twist of fate the tractor broke down just as HCLT was finishing up the work and now sits at the top serving as another barrier to vehicular travel.

As such, HCLT has put signs out warning people that vehicular traffic may be impossible and urging pedestrian access only – which is what the Town encouraged two years ago.

“We are actively working on finding someone to come out and help fix the tractor,” said Pursel. “Once we get it back running, we will be moving it back off the property and plan to bring it back periodically as needed and as our time and capabilities allow. The tractor is not a permanent solution, nor does it do enough of a job to allow small, unraised cars to necessarily pass on the road, so all-wheel drive and or higher clearance cars will likely be necessary to make it to the top even after the tractor is gone.”



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• BUSINESS/ORG NEWS •

Highlands Mountaintop Rotary 'Handover Ceremony'



Rotary District Foundation chair, Carol King, recognized Gerry and Avery Doubleday for becoming members of the Rotary Foundation Bequest Society.



The Rotary gavel is passed to Dr. John Baumrucker for the third time.

Members of the Mountaintop Rotary gathered outdoors at the home of Bill Zoellner for a Handover celebration, and passing of the gavel, capping the year with Dr. John Baumrucker as President. This was the third time Dr. John has served as a Rotary President.

There was much to celebrate, including a 30 percent rise in membership, excellent projects and great results, but also pride that the club had never missed a meeting due to Covid. Thanks to the tech leadership of incoming President, Kirk Dornbush, the club met every week on Zoom and boasted 80-90 percent attendance every week.

At the celebration, Rotary District Foundation chair, Carol King, recognized the club for being 4th overall in the district for per capita Foundation giving. Mountaintop Rotary is an all Paul Harris Fellow club and every member gives quarterly. In addition, Gerry and Avery Doubleday were recognized for becoming members of the Rotary Foundation Bequest Society.

Treasurer of Mountaintop Rotary, Karen Armour was named Rotarian of the Year and others recognized for service were longtime Secretary Ann Greenlee, Past President Duncan Greenlee, and Michael Mavrek who is now President Elect.

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...FOOD BANKS continued from page 10

Council has been marked by tape with the appropriate distance to keep between individuals in order to respect social distancing precautions. Additionally, most volunteers wear a mask during their shifts, and only three customers are allowed in the building at one time. Food boxes are set outside of the door for a no-contact pickup process for customers.

Maryanne Creswell, the Emergency Council's Program/Project Coordinator, said that although they are anticipating a decrease in funds due to the cancellation of their fundraising events, the Emergency Council is still committed to serving the people of Highlands.

"We've been doing this since '85, and we're still hanging in there

doing the best we can," Creswell said.

The Emergency Council is always looking for more volunteers. For information on how you can get involved by donating food or funds please call (828) 526-4357. They are located at 71 Poplar St, Highlands, North Carolina and are open Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

• BUSINESS/ORG NEWS •

Highlands American Legion Post 370 announces Awards Ceremony



There has been an active American Legion Post in Highlands North Carolina since 1946. Through the years returning Veterans have kept the Post going with membership as low as 9 to a one time high of 146. The current membership of 55 American veterans continues to serve the four pillars of the American Legion:

1. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
2. National Security
3. Americanism
4. Children & Youth

The American Legion celebrated its 100th Anniversary on March 19, 2019 and refamiliarized their members of with meaning of the Emblem of the American Legion.

The rays of the sun:

The rays of the sun form the background of the emblem and suggest the Legion's principles will dispel the darkness of violence and evil.

The Wreath:

The wreath forms the center, in loving memory of those brave comrades who gave their lives in the service of the United States that liberty might endure.

The star:

The star, victory symbol of World War 1, symbolizes honor, glory and constancy. The letters "U.S." leave no doubt as the brightest star in the Legion's constellation.

Inner rings:

The smaller of two inner rings set upon the star represents service to our community, states and nation. The larger outer ring pledges loyalty to Americanism.

Outer rings:

The larger of the two outer rings signifies the rehabilitation of our sick and disabled comrades. The smaller inside ring denotes the welfare of America's children.

The words:

The words "American Le-

gion" tie the ring together for truth, remembrance, constancy, loyalty, honor, service, veteran's affairs and rehabilitation, children and youth, national security and Americanism.

Due to the restrictions from the CDC and the impact of the Covid 19 Virus, the Highlands American Legion Post 370 has not met since their February Meeting. They ordinarily meet on the third Saturday of each month at 9AM for a breakfast followed by their meeting at 10AM. They meet at the Faith and Fellowship Center of the Highlands United Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in Highlands.

The current Commander of Post 370, Ed McCloskey, did not want these announcements to go unnoticed due to the lack of meeting opportunities so the awards will be made to these recipients at the Veterans Plaza on Saturday July 18th at 10AM. CDC guidelines will be followed including masks. All are welcome to view and congratulate at appropriate social distancing. The recipients of the following awards will be recognized this Saturday.

- Honorary Life Member
- Legionnaire of the Year
- Meritorious Service
- Meritorious Service
- Meritorious Service.

Congratulations in advance to these Veterans and all who proudly served with distinction and continue to serve this community and this nation.

Post 370 welcomes all Veterans to join the Legion and continue their oath by making a difference in our community and across the nation.

The American Legion published this 8 point "Veteran's Creed" in 2018:

1. I am an American Veteran.
2. I proudly served my country.
3. I live the values I learned in the military.
4. I continue to serve my community, my country and my fellow veterans.
5. I maintain my physical and mental discipline.
6. I continue to lead and improve
7. I make a difference.
8. I honor and remember my fallen comrades.

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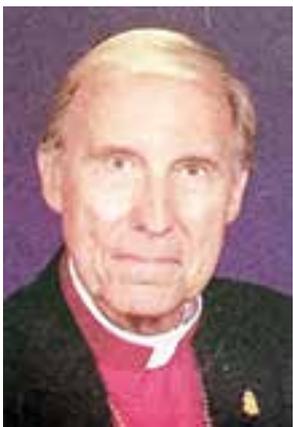
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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

What are we waiting for?



**Archbishop
John S. Erbelding**

It sometimes seems that we live as if we wondered when life was going to begin. As an old adage so correctly states, many spend their lives waiting for their ship to come in only to find out at the end they spent their entire life in a bus terminal.

It isn't always clear just what we are waiting for, but some of us sometimes persist in waiting so long that life slips by – finding us still waiting for something that has been going on all the time.

There are fathers waiting for a better time to become acquainted with their sons, perhaps until other obligations are less demanding. But one of these days these sons are going to be grown and gone, and the best years for knowing them, for enjoying them, for teaching, and for understanding them, may also be gone.

There are mothers who at their earliest convenience sincerely intend to become closer to their daughters, who are going to be more companionable. But time passes, distance widens, and children grow up and away.

There are old friends who are going to enjoy each other a little more. How many of us remember that oft-spoken phrase, “when all this is over we really have to get together more often.” This phrase is almost obligatory at every funeral. But the years move on.

There are husbands and wives who are going to be more understanding, more considerate. But time alone does not draw people closer.

There are men who are going to give up bad habits; there are people who are going to eat more wisely; there are those who are going to live within their means – sometime soon. There are those who are going to take more

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

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Proverbs 3:5

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John 3:16

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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.

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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: Holy Communion Supper 5:30 followed by Bible Study.

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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 • fchighlands.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

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

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville, 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 and Adult discussion group 9:30 a.m.;

Worship/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.

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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

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from July 2. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

July 2

• At 5:17 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on Big Bear Pen Road.

July 6

• At 5 p.m., Clarence James McCall, 27, of Highlands, was arrested on a warrant for offenses committed in another jurisdiction. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond. His trial date is July 28, 2020.

• At 5 p.m., Charles Christopher Tallent, 33, of Highlands, was arrested on a warrant for offenses committed in another jurisdiction. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond. His trial date is July 29, 2020.

July 7

• At 4 p.m., officers received a call from Oak Leaf Flower and Garden regarding someone using a credit card fraudulently to steal \$7,700.

• At 5:40 p.m., officers responded to a call from ...on the Verandah about someone communicating threats.

July 10

• At 9 a.m., officers responded to a call from a man who was threatened via text messages at a residence on Wingina Place.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from July 9.

July 9

• At 6:23 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

July 10

• At 3:26 p.m., the dept. respond-

ed to a rescue call on Walking Stick Road where someone with a hurt leg couldn't make it back from the falls.

• At 8:44 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Chestnut Street.

July 11

• At 11:20 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

July 12

• At 4:23 p.m., the dept. responded to a rescue call at a location on US 64 west. A man fell down an embankment going after his dog but he was back up when the ambulance got there and wasn't injured.

July 13

• At 12:56 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a chimney fire at a location on Half Mile Drive.

• REC PARK NEWS •



Pool Hours Starting Saturday, June 27

LAP SWIM (18+)

Monday-Friday • 6am-10am

(6 lanes, 3 lanes required circle swim lanes)

Monday-Thursday • 5pm-7pm (1-2 lanes) (Shared Pool)

Saturday • 10am-11am (6 lanes)

WATER AEROBICS

Monday-Friday 10:15am-11am

PUBLIC SWIM

Monday-Thursday 11am-7pm

Friday & Saturday 11am-6pm

Sunday 1pm-6pm

RESTRICTIONS – MASKS REQUIRED ON DECK

No Pool Parties Available until further notice

Pool will be limited to 30 swimmers at a time.

Temperatures will be taken at sign in

Front office, bathrooms, showers and dressing rooms are open. Lockers are closed.

No equipment will be available for water aerobics or lap swim

Reservations for lap swim will not be available after Friday June 26

Call the Pool at (828)526-1595 for more information.

NOTE:

The Civic Center is still closed while the town awaits Governor Roy Cooper's Phase 3 announcement.

...WORD MATTER continued from 13

when we were young. We're sometimes frustrated by what we know. We find comfort in what we believe. We seek information, media, for example, leaders, in another example, that support our beliefs.

Millions of Americans wanted to believe that Covid-19 would be gone by now, and our economy would roar back just because we believed it would. Well, we now know that hasn't happened. And it won't. Not for a while. That's my opinion, hope-

fully informed by facts.

We have to fight the impulse to follow a belief system just because it makes us comfortable. Sometimes, for our own good, we need to be made uncomfortable.

It's called Involuntary Opinion-Confirmation Bias, and, I believe, it's one of the scariest psychological conditions that, as both individuals and as a nation, we've ever faced.

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from 18

interest in their government, be more active in service and civic activities. But when?

When she was in college, my wife Susan knew Harry Chapin who sang the song "Cat's In the Cradle" about a father who was just too busy doing everything but always promised his son that one day they'd get together.

The son would say, "I'm gonna be like you, Dad, you know I'm gonna be like you." And that's how the son grew up. The son had a job and children of his own and finally said to his father, "I don't know when, but we'll get together then, Dad. We're gonna have a good time

then."

There is no reason to doubt all such good intentions, but when in the world are we going to begin to live as if we understood that this is life? This is our time, our day, our generation. Heaven and the hereafter will have its own opportunities and obligations. This is the life in which the work of this life is to be done.

Today is as much a part of eternity as was any day a thousand years ago or as will be any day a thousand years hence. This is it, whether we are thrilled or disappointed, busy or bored!

This is life, and it is passing. What are we waiting for?



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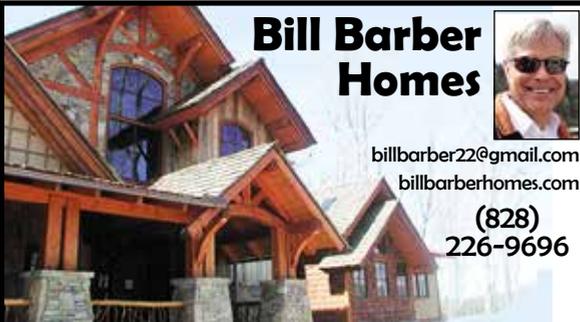
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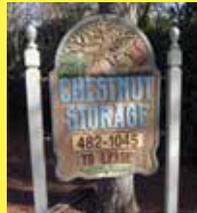
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Employment in Highlands Falls Community Association Maintenance Department wanted for help with roads, water, sewer, etc. Could become year-round with benefits. Please Call 828-526-2203 or 828-200-9763. (7/9)

THE LOG CABIN restaurant, downtown Highlands, is hiring all positions including sous chef, front of house manager, servers, line cooks and handyman/landscaper to start immediately. Call 828 526-5777 or email jason@logcabinhighlands.com. (st. 6/11)

FULL-TIME SECURITY GUARD Position in Highlands. Please call 706-982-5526. (6/18)

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