

Highlands Newspaper

Happy Thanksgiving!

FREE Every Thursday

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Hotwire Communications to run town's broadband highway

The big news out of last week's November Town Board meeting was two things: the decision to go with Hotwire as the closed system provider on the town's broadband highway known as Highlands Smart Cities Network and the passing of an amendment to the Highlands Code of Ordinances requiring locked lids on bear-resistant toters, or risk a pen-

•See BROADBAND page 5

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From left are HCH CEO Tom, Neal, Dr. Scott Ramming, and MAMA crew members Pilot Bryan Neal, Medical Air Supervisor John Grindstaff, Paramedic Nicholas Cook, and Nurse Carrie Underwood standing in front of the new MAMA helicopter at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital on Friday. — Photo by Brian O'Shea

HCA gets MAMA a new chopper

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Mission Health's Mountain Area Medical Airlift (MAMA) got a new helicopter earlier this month thanks to its parent company HCA Healthcare. MAMA provides critical medical air transport throughout 18 counties in western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, northeast Georgia, and northern South Carolina. MAMA's new helicopter is

• See MAMA page 7

AHEC to round out tech needs at Highlands School

Despite a year that has been far from normal, the Advance Highlands Education Committee (AHEC) has continued on its course to raise funds for immediate technology needs at Highlands School.

With help from grants from Mountain Findings, Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation and Highlands Community Fund -- an affiliate of The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, AHEC recently placed its final order for remaining laptops for high schoolers, iPad keyboards for grades 4-8, and a set of Google Expedition virtual reality goggles to be used across all grades.

"AHEC has done just an incredible job of reaching out to the community and getting people to help Highlands School provide the electronic components that our students need to be ready for life and work in this online world," said Principal Brian Jetter. "Without AHEC's leadership our students would not have the same

• See AHEC page 17



Highschoolers getting a high-tech math lesson.

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Let's be grateful

Our country and its communities have faced hard times before. Think about our parents and grandparents who grew up in the Depression only to have to fight and win the Second World War. These folks, many of whom have passed or are nearing the end of their lives, went on to build a nation and the economic prosperity that we now enjoy.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

My parents were part of that great generation. I was constantly reminded by my father that they had struggled through those hard times, but that there were no better times than now. That generation after the war had a great sense of optimism about the future, and a great feeling of gratitude for what they presently had.

They embraced the Pilgrim's "Mayflower Spirit." On this Thanksgiving weekend, a time with COVID 19 that makes our celebrations very different, I think we too can be grateful and also embrace optimism in the future.

I am optimistic that we will overcome this pandemic. I am hopeful that vaccines will be widely available sometime

this spring. I am optimistic and hopeful that Highlands will have a spring season where people can once again get together at public events, in places of worship, and in businesses like our fine restaurants and retail stores. I hope our young people can return to school free of worries and concerns.

I miss seeing people in the way we used to encounter one another. Too many times I have been in the grocery store and fail to recognize folks who are wearing masks. I hope for the day soon where I can see people's facial expressions, especially their smiles.

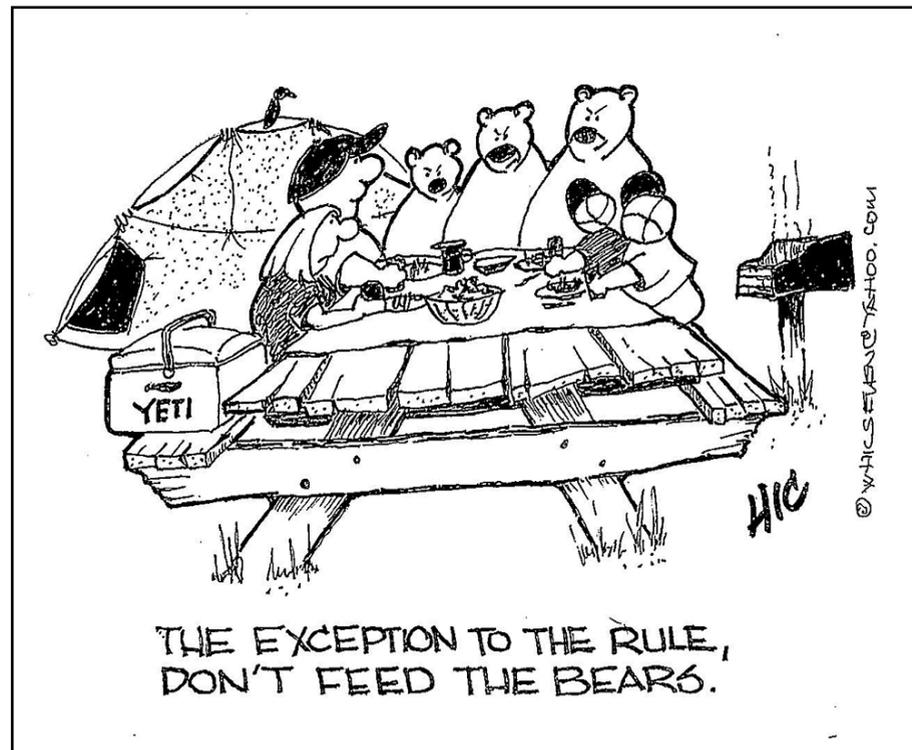
I am optimistic about the future of this town because of how so many people have responded to this current crisis. The love and concern for one another and for our community institutions has been life affirming. Like our forefathers and mothers who stepped forward to meet huge challenges, so many Highlanders have done the same. I will be grateful this Thanksgiving that I live in such a caring community. Like in so many towns and villages across the country, I think that "Mayflower Spirit" still lives here.

Now for a couple of more mundane items that make me optimistic. I am optimistic that we will have the Highlands Smart City Fiber Optic Network operative this coming year. That network will serve the community well into the future. I am also optimistic that the people of Highlands will create a wonderful community plan by the end of the coming year. It will be essential for us to create a collective vision for the future of Highlands.

Everyone can participate in the Highlands Community Plan at some level. If you have not done so, please take a few minutes this holiday and complete the Highlands Community Plan Survey. Simply go to the town website and click on the Highlands Community Plan. The survey can be found there. As of last week, more than 720 people had taken the survey. I hope that many more people will respond in the coming weeks. The community plan steering committee and the professionals guiding the process needs as much information as possible from a cross section of the community.

Have a grateful Thanksgiving.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 26-Nov	Fri, 27-Nov	Sat, 28-Nov	Sun, 29-Nov
66° F 40° F	67° F 41° F	58° F 35° F	55° F 34° F
A couple of showers	Rather cloudy and warm	Cloudy, mild: a p.m. t-storm	Rain
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High: 67° Low: 54°	High: 68° Low: 41°	High: 59° Low: 41°	High: 53° Low: 35°

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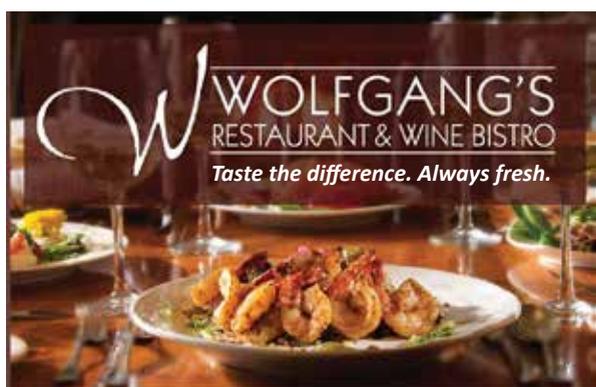
by Old Edwards

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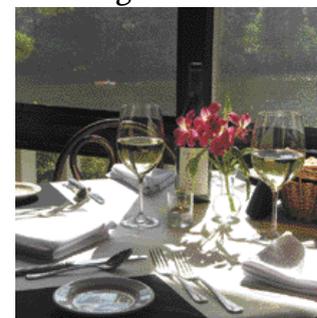
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• LETTERS •

Focus on spiritual growth not politics, please

Dear Editor

Once again, one of the rotating contributors to your Spiritually Speaking column has written an outlandish, attacking and bitter perspective of their contorted political beliefs as their contribution in your November 19 issue.

Perhaps these contributors, who are more into politics than the teachings of Christ, should stick to dark web internet chat rooms. This would allow the Spiritually Speaking column more space for contributors offering actual spiritual growth and insight.

Brian Renfro
Highlands

Republicans need to stand up for the sake of our country

Dear Editor,

I have always been an independent conservative voter and I continue to have conservative values but I cannot relate to the actions of the Republican Party and its representatives in Washington D.C.

I am not sure what it will take for my fellow Americans and conservatives to see the damage President Trump is doing to our democracy.

This constant cry about fraud without detailed evidence is growing tiresome and is hurting the trust the American people have in our system of governance. If the fraud allegedly perpetrated by the Democrats in the past and present has been so bad, why have the Republicans held the White House in the last 24 out of 40 years?

Supporters of President Trump need to understand the only thing Trump cares about is Trump. It is time to move on and we need the Republican Party to stand up to the president without worrying about their political future because the future of our country is at stake.

Jerry Moore
Highlands, NC

...BROADBAND continued from page 1

alty.

Mayor Pat Taylor said not securing lids and letting garbage overflow defeats the purpose of a bear-resistant toter.

The broadband highway issue was discussed in closed session with the outcome released the next day.

In closed session the Highlands Board of Commissioners heard reports from Town Attorney JK Coward, Finance Director Rebecca Shuler and IT Director Matt Shuler concerning the financial status of two companies that submitted bids to lease the dark fiber of the Highlands Smart Cities Network.

Initially three companies submitted a Request for Proposal (RFP) – North Carolina Broadband, Balsam West and Hotwire, but prior to the Town Board meeting North Carolina Broadband – the only “open” network contender – withdrew its bid.

During the closed session, the board also heard a report from the Town Manager Josh Ward concerning the references of the two companies.

In open session the board voted 4 to 1 to enter into contract negotiations with Hotwire Communications. Commissioner Marc Hehn voted “nay.”

Town staff will now develop a draft contract for the leasing of the dark fiber. The draft contract will be reviewed by the board and then sent to Hotwire Communications for their review and acceptance.

In addition, in a 5-0 vote, the board called for a public hearing at the December Town Board meeting to refinance the fiber optic buildout project loan with BB & T at a lower interest rate.

If the town makes more on the loan than the cost of building out the network, it has to be a taxable loan.

Hotwire is offering \$10,200,000 over 25 years – far more than the 15-year \$4.6 million loan with interest.

The nutshell of Hotwire’s RFP is to begin connecting customers three months after connection of upstream bandwidth; for residential customers they will offer Internet up to 10 Gps, voice, television, home automation and home security; and will build underground in three years with customer commitment.

“We will be negotiating the expedient build-out of the underground portions of the network,” said Mayor Pat Taylor. “About 17%-18% of neighborhoods have underground utilities and the fiber will have to be underground, too, in those areas.”

Hotwire’s fees for various residential and commercial packages are very competitive. However, customers who want to stay with the town’s initial provider – and the only other provider on the “highway” – Altitudes – may do so. Hotwire said it will honor those prices.

About Hotwire

“Hotwire Communications is a community driven, all-fiber service provider with an exemplary track record of technology leadership and innovation spanning two decades. Founded in 2000, Hotwire Communications provides a full suite of fiber-based telecommunications services to residential, commercial, hospitality, governmental, and educational customers across the Southeast. Hotwire Communications is headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, FL with regional operations throughout Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina and Pennsylvania.”

Services Offered

“Hotwire will bring its best-in-class, fiber-based telecommunications services for residential, business, educa-

tional, hospitality and wholesale customers to the Town of Highlands.

“Residential customers will be connected by XG-SPON, providing up to 10Gbps of connectivity to each home. Businesses will be connected either by XGSPON or by switched fiber connections depending on the level of services required.”

Altitude Community Broadband

“Hotwire will make no changes in the services or pricing for existing customers, but would welcome and encourage them to sign up for fiber-based services when available.

“We believe that products and services offered by Hotwire over the Town’s network will be more affordable and robust, but if a current customer wishes to keep their current pricing and services, they would be allowed to keep them for as long as the technology supporting them can be run reliably. Any transition would be done after notification and coordinating with customers so that the change in service minimizes any effect on the customer’s broadband use.

“High speed Internet, voice, television, and home automation/security are standard offerings for residential and small and medium business customers that Hotwire will bring to the Highlands. Pricing and services will remain competitive and in sync with the prices and offerings in larger, competitive markets – introducing residents and businesses to prices and services that are typically driven by rich competition.”

Time to Subscriber Connections

“Bringing in sufficient, secured connectivity and connecting it to Hotwire’s core network will be a top prior-

BREC varsity volleyball team defeats Highlands in season opener

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Blue Ridge Early College varsity volleyball team travelled to Highlands on Wednesday Nov. 18 for the official season opener and took the win 3-1.

The Lady Bobcats came out swinging, coming fresh off the heels of scrimmages against Swain and Hiwassee Dam.

It was the Lady Highlanders first time back on the court in a game setting and they were also without hitter Jordan Carrier. Carrier is out for the season because of a torn ACL, MCL, and meniscus in her left knee.

BREC Coach Carlton Fowler said they played well, and every time they step on the court against Highlands it's a challenge.

"I thought we did a great job," said Fowler. "Highlands is a scrappy team and they played great also. It doesn't matter what the situation is, season opener or conference championship, every time we play against them it's going to be tough. This isn't a conference game and we know they're going to come back."

Wednesday's game was not a conference match because of changes in the season's schedule due to COVID. The breakdown is that each team plays against teams in their conference three times. The first game is considered a regular season game, and the second two are conference games.

Highlands Coach Desiray Schmitt said she was happy with what she saw on the court.

"We did really good," said Schmitt. "We were hustling like we're supposed to, blocking, returning their serves, getting our tips in, they were really reading the court well. But covering, it just killed us all game."

BREC Gracie Watson said it's always a challenge taking on Highlands, but it helped to get a couple of scrimmages in before the season officially began.

"We did great," said Watson. "We communicated better than we have been in the past, we kept our emotions out of it, and the



Highlands fought hard last Wednesday night against Blue Ridge Early College
- Photos by Brian O'Shea



game seemed to start slower without Jordan [Carrier] hitting it at us right from the start."

All athletes wore masks on the court because of COVID-19 protocols. Watson said it was difficult to hear her teammates through the masks, but they had to adjust.

Highlands Brandy Zagal made her first appearance on the Lady Highlanders varsity squad and said it was exciting starting off the season against BREC.

"It was my first game playing on varsity, we played Blue Ridge,

and the first game of the season is always the worst," said Zagal. "I was scared. I've heard about the hits from Gracie [Watson] and Charlotte [Sherrill] and they're tough. And our covering was awful, we weren't getting close enough and the ball would just drop right in front of us."

Spectators of athletic events are currently limited to parents, support staff, and media in adherence with North Carolina High School Athletic Association guidelines.

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...MAMA continued from page 1

an upgrade from an Airbus EC 135 to an Airbus EC 145. The EC 145 has more interior space giving nurses and paramedics better access to patients. It also carries more fuel increasing MAMA's range, more powerful engines for a higher payload capacity, and more sophisticated instruments.

MAMA provides medical air transport services 24/7, 365 days a year. This is the third helicopter in MAMA's fleet, so a backup is always available when one needs maintenance.

MAMA Air Medical Supervisor John Grindstaff said all aspects of mission safety are improved in the new helicopter.

"The main reason is safety," said Grindstaff. "We have more sophisticated instruments so we can fly in weather we couldn't fly in before. It has more power and can carry more fuel, and we have 100% patient access that we didn't have before because we didn't have the space. Now we can reach more people and give better patient care. It's been on our wish list for a while and I sleep better now that we have it."

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital CEO Tom Neal said providing medical services at a rural hospital can be challenging, one of the biggest being transporting a critical patient.

"When a patient needs advanced services for events like accidents requiring a trauma center or a heart attack requir-



ing emergency treatment, timely treatment is critical," said Neal. "In healthcare, there are several sayings we have such as the 'golden hour' with trauma or 'time is muscle' for heart attacks. These statements are more than an ad line, they are based upon scientific studies demonstrating the benefit of timely care. The addition of the helicopter to MAMA adds another resource that can support our goal to provide the best care possible."

MAMA's standard crew includes a pilot, nurse, and paramedic. MAMA Pilot Bryan Neal said having more power in the new helicopter comes in handy in the mountains.

"It's bigger and heavier than

the old one, but the first thing I noticed is the power," said Bryan. "It's much easier to climb and get over terrain, and all pilots have been in a situation where they're picking up a heavy patient and don't know if they're going to complete the mission without burning off some fuel to lighten the load. I don't have to worry about that anymore."

Bryan added that new helicopter also has an autopilot system that its predecessor does not. Autopilot allows MAMA to carry out missions in bad weather, such as dense fog or hurricane conditions that Bryan said can quickly form in the mountains.

When a patient is on board,

• See MAMA page 19



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CATSPEAK

• PRINCESS PUDDIN' SPEAKS •

Puddin's take on the deer

It seems that having a dog and a cat as pets is not sufficient for my Dad. That's right. Now he's adopted a herd of deer, possibly several herds.

We've always had deer visit our yard. Legend has it that once upon a time, Banjo, my canine big brother, came nose to nose with a fawn. Mom found him sniffing the little thing and scurried to get him away before he could hurt it. Like the big galoot would hurt a fly! He just likes to make friends.

The fawn stayed curled up in the woods for hours, and several neighbors came to see it. Finally, when no one was looking, it disappeared, and everyone supposed its mom had come back to get it. As this happened before I arrived at the Penn household, I can't vouch for the accuracy of the tale.

Since I've been here, I've heard Mom and Dad speak of the deer feasting on the salad bar, otherwise known as our shrubs and flowers. Yet, Dad has taken to inviting them over. Can you believe it? They didn't visit and hang out enough to suit him, so first, he planted ryegrass on one side of the woods. From the porch, I could observe deer munching on the lush green grass—often several at a time. Next, he added a molasses lick or some such.

Dad must be awfully lonely because now he's taken to throwing corn out on the other side of the yard, just off the screened porch. Wow! Now, the deer hold regular meetings out there in the morning and then again late in the afternoon. When I hear them arrive—they make more noise than the squirrels so I know it's them—I jump from the chair or glider to stand in the corner to watch. I think they're much more interesting than the squirrels—possi-



bly more entertaining than the birds, too.

Mom points out when a doe paws a youngster to move him or her out of the way or when two of the children play with each other. It's not like I can't see these antics for myself, but I guess she likes having

someone to talk to. That's because, in the mornings, Dad isn't up as early as we are. In fact, he often misses the early morning meeting. When he does get up, he goes to the garage and grabs the corn to throw in the "conference room" so the next group has food, too. Occasionally, a team holds a brunch meeting.

Since the time's changed, they often hold pre-dawn meetings, and Mom struggles to see them. Me? I can see them quite well, as we cats see better in the dark than humans do. We have a big—very big—buck who puts in an appearance from time to time. More often it's the doe and the Bambi's, as Mom calls them.

No matter what they're called, they've made themselves at home in our yard. When they're not eating, they often bed down in the woods where they're still visible from the porch. As the trees have shed their leaves, the deer are easier to see. I suspect the show will be even better this winter, but I don't imagine Mom or I will be outside to watch it.

Mom says the deer are holding their daily happy hour right this minute, so we're both headed to the porch. I wouldn't want to miss the show.

• To contact Puddin' or her Mom, write inkpenn119@gmail.com. Kathy Manos Penn's cozy mysteries can be found on Amazon and locally at Books Unlimited in Franklin.



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MC Reports 9th Death Related to COVID-19

A Macon County resident diagnosed with COVID-19, passed away Sunday, Nov. 22. The person was over the age of 65 and had underlying health conditions. This individual is not related to any existing clusters or outbreaks, to the knowledge of Macon County Public Health. To protect the family's privacy, no further information will be released about this patient.

As of press time there have been 909 cases of COVID in Macon County, 9 deaths and there are 90 pending tests.

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• LIFE ON THE SUNNY SIDE •

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving has to be one of everyone's favorites. No pressure to buy that special gift. Just get together with family and special friends and count our many, many blessings.

Thanksgiving was declared a national Holiday by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 during the American Civil War. He proclaimed it to be a day of "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelled in the Heavens."

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated by the pilgrims after their first harvest in the New World in 1621. It was attended by 90 Native Americans and 53 Pilgrims. It was a day of prayer and thanking God.

"When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around."

—Willy Nelson

"Be thankful for what you have, you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never have enough."



Kenny Youmans

"The greatest source of happiness is the ability to be grateful at all times."

—Zig Ziglar

First Thessalonians 5-18:
"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

"I like the taste of turkey Anytime throughout the year

But it never seems to taste as good As when Thanksgiving is here.

Could it be it's cooked with all the trimmings

That are cooked with it to eat?

But I think it's eating at Grandma's house

That makes it such a treat."

Wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

May all of you have many rich blessings, peace and prosperity throughout all the days of your lives.

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REALTY GROUP

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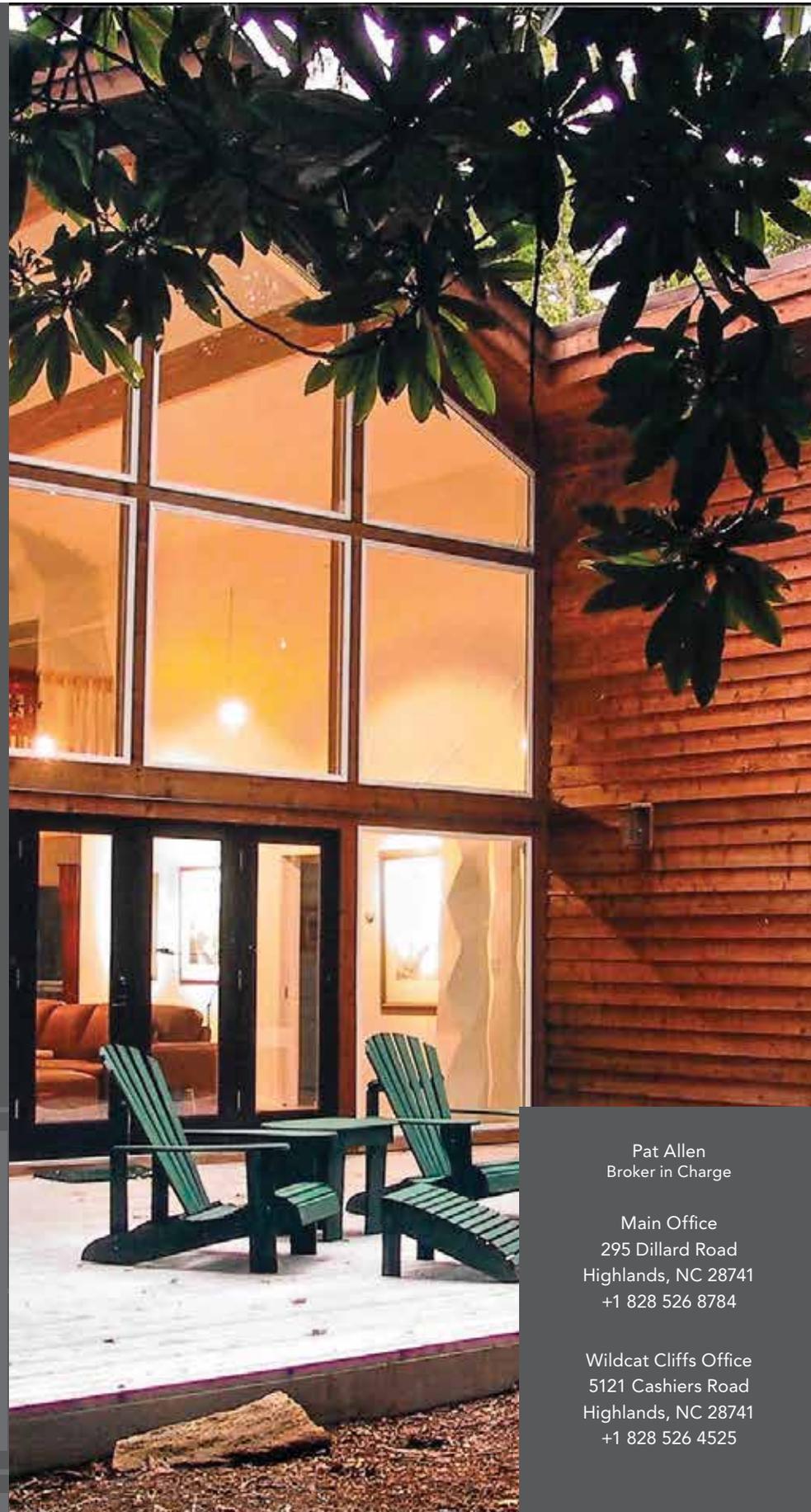
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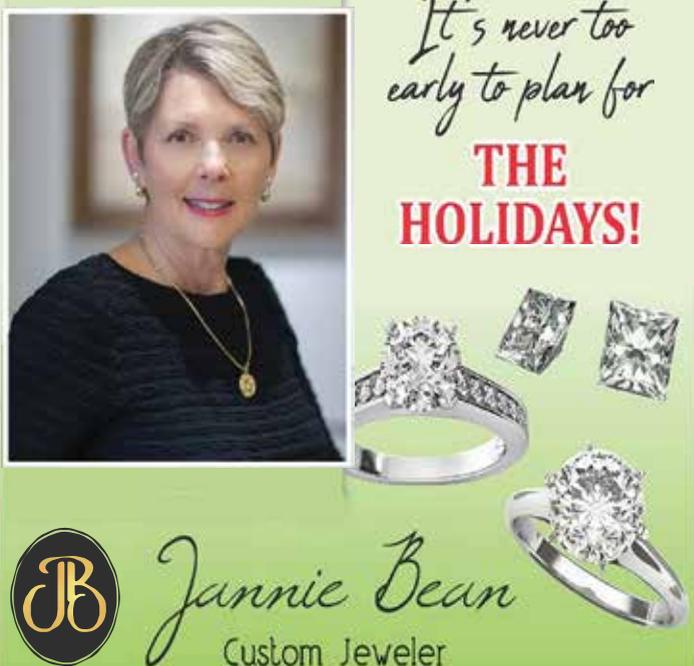


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Broker in Charge

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Wonderful flat lot and walk to town with this 3 bedroom, 2 bath home with a 2 car garage, wood floors, heated tile master bath, generator. Lush rhododendron in back and sides for privacy. Oil Furnace with wood stove backup to keep you warm. Offered at \$699,000. mls #94369



This beautiful home has it all. Main level is open floor plan and stunning custom built kitchen. Dining area opens up to large screened in porch to enjoy some outdoor living. One bedroom, full bath, half bath and bonus room all on the main level. Upstairs is a private master suite with large bathroom. Partially finished basement with two car garage, bonus room and full bath. Beautiful 6 acre lot with gorgeous landscaping complete with a basketball court. Offered at \$599,000.



Walkingstick Road. Looking for a small cabin with great view, this cabin lives large with 3 bedrooms and 3 baths, and is pleasant with a porch and a wall of glass in the living room to enjoy the view of Sage and Blackrock mountains. This house is in good condition and is at a price that won't break the bank. Offered at \$339,900. mls #93206



5 Bedroom 5 bath home located at Highlands Country Club. Usable lot with lovely landscaping. Seller has golf membership. 45 KW Generator. Sophisticated irrigation system which allows full property irrigation and a 19 station window and deck flower box irrigation drip system. Do not miss seeing this one! Offered at \$1,495,000. mls #88512



This 3 bedroom, 2 bath plus a guest apartment over the garage is a great vacation size or can be expanded with a current owners plans for a full makeover to over 5,500 square feet of living area. This wonderful home is located on popular Big Bear Pen Mountain and has one of the most spectacular views in this area Bar None! Offered at \$798,000. mls #93319



Located in the Mirror Lake area, this 3 bedroom 2 bath features a bright open plan with bamboo floors. the great room has cathedral ceilings, and opens onto a huge covered entertainment porch. Master on main with a deck and views. Guest suite in the lower level with sitting room and kitchen, laundry room and storage. Parking and a carport. Offered at \$650,000. mls #93727



Wonderful post and beam is move in condition and features a spectacular Blue Valley View. House is post and beam hybrid, with an open plan Living room with fireplace, dining and kitchen, Upstairs is a master suite with large master bath with soaking tub and shower. Lower level has a guest bedroom, bath, sitting room with laundry, and an additional office or overflow room. Large RV garage that is stubbed for possible studio or guest quarters. Offered at \$650,000. mls #93290



5 Bedrooms, 4 baths, not your plain Jane ranch. Very unique with heavy logs, lots of stone and wood. Lovingly restored with central heat and air and meticulously maintained by the current Owner. Offered at \$875,000. mls #93129



Located above Highlands Country Club on Hudson Road is this cherished family cottage that exudes old Highlands charm. Lovely grounds and old stone work frames the cottage which is adorned with wormy chestnut, chunky stone and school house windows. 2 bedrooms, one bath on the main, with living room, dining room and kitchen. Huge screened porch. Large master with bath upstairs. Garage with guest quarters. Offered at \$799,000. mls #94063



Highlands Falls Country Club. 2 bedroom, 2 bath Chestnut Cove unit will not last long. good condition and can be customized to your standards. Offered at \$295,000. mls #95255



Fabulous 6 bedroom 6-1/2 bath log cabin on historic Satulah Mountain. 3 large stone fireplaces including one in the master bedroom. This log home is a rare find in the town of Highlands on 2 acres of land. Old heart pine, wormy chestnut and charm throughout from the gourmet kitchen to the large great room with dining area and adjoining sun room that all open out to the deck with a fabulous view to the west for those wonderful sunsets. The owners have added a large 2 car garage. Offered at \$2,900,000. mls #94319



Lovely Old Orchard estate Over 9 acres with a spectacular mountain views, this house is move in condition, with 5 bedrooms, 4 1/2 baths. Fully renovated kitchen with dining area and cathedral living room with fireplace. Immaculate grounds and guest house is available listed separately. Do not miss this one if you want privacy and usable yard. Offered at \$1,875,000. mls #94043



2 BR 2BA Charming Highlands cabin features a view of Lake Sequoyah with boat access. Large covered porch. Very low maintenance. Some updates and ready for your personal touch. Fully furnished. Offered at \$350,000. mls #93186



This home is a must see sitting on over 3 acres of land with great panoramic views to the west. This all glass contemporary home is a one owner well built with 3 fireplaces, 2 levels of decks, walls of glass to see the views and lots of land for privacy or development. this home is convenient to the hospital, country clubs, highlands and cashiers. Offered at \$765,000. mls #87715



What a great opportunity to make Highlands your home, situated on a peaceful lot this one level home offers easy living with plenty of room to spread out. Features include a spacious foyer, two living areas, an eat in kitchen, private dining room, lovely wood floors throughout the living area and a stacked stone fireplace. The master bedroom with a private bath. This home also has a two car garage. The front porch is perfect for rocking chairs and relaxation also the back yard is fenced. Offered at \$425,000. mls #94441

• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

The Space Between us

"To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch Heaven"

(Johannes A. Gaertner).



Pat Gleeson
Owner, BIC
White Oak Realty
Group
828-782-0472

your beliefs or non-beliefs, this one's for all of us:

- For family near and here, Lord, we give thanks.
- For family far and gone, Lord, we give thanks.
- For the ones easy to love, Lord, we give thanks.
- For the ones we fight to love, Lord, we give thanks.
- For the people who see as we see, Lord, we give thanks.
- For the people we don't understand, Lord, we give thanks.
- For the people who don't understand us. Lord, we give thanks.
- For easy conversation and expressed affection, Lord, we give thanks.
- For gentle discord within our discourse, Lord, we give thanks.
- For unity, not sameness, Lord, we give thanks.
- For charity in all things, Lord, we give thanks.
- For a world that reflects your goodness, Lord, we give thanks.
- For humankind that bears your image, Lord, we give thanks.
- For a day when we'll delight in our differences and not just tolerate them,
- For a gathering of every tribe and every tongue,
- For a table and a feast today, anticipating the one we'll someday enjoy with You, Lord, we give thanks. (Sarah Anderson)

Happy Thanksgiving everybody, from our table to yours. I'll finish with a quote from the one and only Rick Riordon: "If there's one thing I've learned over the eons, it's that you can't give up on your family, no matter how tempting they make it"

• Pat Gleeson, Bee, Tom, Christal, Michael, and their dog Gemma are Helpers and Brokers of White Oak Realty Group, in downtown Highlands (4th Street across from the Old Edwards Inn). Since 2009, White Oak Realty Group remains one of the leading boutique brokerage firms on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau. You can reach all of us at 828.526.8118.

We interrupt this Real Estate column to bring you Thanksgiving in Highlands.

OK, just one Real Estate thought. Why not set a goal to spend Thanksgiving 2021 in your very own Mountain Home, Cabin, Cottage, or Condo in Highlands or Cashiers. There are 288 Brokers up here who will help you reach this goal, and will graciously buy your Thanksgiving Dinner!

Back to Thanksgiving. "Hey Pat, please don't bring up politics or religion at the dinner table" (gee, thanks Mom). What else are we supposed to talk about with this crowd at Thanksgiving, COVID?

Perhaps never before in history has the divide been wider when it comes to politics, religion, and yes, COVID. Conversations, beliefs, and actions have turned downright rude and uncivilized. Watch your favorite news source or pretty much anybody in Congress and you'll see what I mean. It seems that all respect for another opinion has disappeared. The question is whether the current volcano will erupt at your house during Thanksgiving Dinner.

I heard an interview last week conducted by Andy Stanley during our Sunday morning small group session (yes, some of us still meet for church). Andy interviewed Sarah Anderson who has written a book called *The Space Between Us: How Jesus Teaches Us To Live Together When Politics And Religion Keep Us Apart*. The author's family was getting together for Thanksgiving Dinner amid normal levels of family dysfunction, differing opinions, and Aunt Sarah's mushy green bean almonidine casserole. Before dinner, Sarah sat down and wrote the pre-meal prayer which I share with you now. No matter

SCAM Notice from the Highlands PD

The Highlands Police Department has received information about a scam in which an unknown sender threatens to kill the recipient unless they are sent money.

The message begins with "Someone paid me to kill you" and then demands money in order to call off the threat.

Our department suggests that you not open the email. We also suggest that if you do open the email and find a similar message, do not respond and call the NC Fraud and Complaint hotline at 1-877-5-NO-SCAM.

From ...

White Oak Realty Group

- Thank You Town of Highlands Leadership
- Thank you Chamber of Commerce
- Thank You Police & Fire Departments
- Thank You Public Works Department
- Thank You Garbage Men & Women
- Thank You Hotel Restaurant Workers
- Thank You Shops, Boutiques, & Gas Stations
- Thank You All Buyers of Property
- Thank You All Sellers of Property
- Thank You All "Lookers" (yet to make a decision)
- Thank You Fellow Real Estate Brokers & Staff
- Thank You Plumbers, Electricians, Yard Crews, Landscapers, & Carpenters
- Thank You Home Inspectors, Structural Engineers, and Surveyors
- Thank You Lenders, Appraisers, & Attorneys
- Thank You Newspapers & Radio Stations

**Thank You Lord,
and be with all
of those listed above**

Happy Thanksgiving!

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...BROADBAND continued from page 5

ity upon signing an agreement or Letter of Intent (LOI.) Hotwire has several data centers in relative proximity to Highlands and there is existing fiber in the region that should reduce the time required to establish and test connectivity.

“While it is securing connectivity, Hotwire will be working on its headend facility, marketing and early signups so that service can be provided once connection is established and tested. Hotwire will commit to lighting its first, non-beta/testing customer no more than three months after connectivity is established but would aim to light its first customers following a two-week testing period of the connectivity and the network.”

Local Presence

“After signing an agreement, Hotwire will begin the process of setting up a local office and storefront in the Town of the Highlands – staffing the office and op-

eration from the local community.”

Financial

“Hotwire proposes that it take over all aspects of the of network management, service provision, infrastructure maintenance, support and all associated functions of the Town’s current network and infrastructure. Hotwire will be responsible for providing its full suite of residential, commercial and enterprise services over the network – including voice, video, Internet, and home security/automation.

“All risk associated with the operation of the network – including, but not limited to headend builds and upgrades, infrastructure maintenance, labor employment and cost, broadband cost, customer premises equipment, and content costs will be borne by Hotwire.

“As consideration for its network lease, Hotwire proposes to pay the Town of Highlands \$425,000 in quarterly payments be-

ginning in 2022 through 2045.

“As with all portions of this RFP, Hotwire looks forward to discussions both before a final agreement is completed and regular discussions between the Town and Hotwire to ensure that the project is successful and sustainable for all parties involved,” reads the RFP.

Pricing

“Hotwire seeks to provide competitive services and pricing based on its local and national market evaluations. We are committed to aggressive pricing and will keep the rates for services in the Town of Highlands on par with those offered in more competitive markets.

“Customers are offered bundles, month to month services, and term contracts so they can find a package that allows them to afford and enjoy their services. Hotwire is aggressive with new customer promotions and existing customer upsells. In all markets, Hotwire’s prices for broadband services remain below those of the incumbent providers for similarly bandwidth, but without the fiber advantage.”

Mayor Taylor said he expects the contract negotiations and subsequent service to citizens to proceed smoothly and to happen as soon as possible.

– Kim Lewicki

Wilbanks Smile Center

Dr. Joseph H. Wilbanks, D.D.S.

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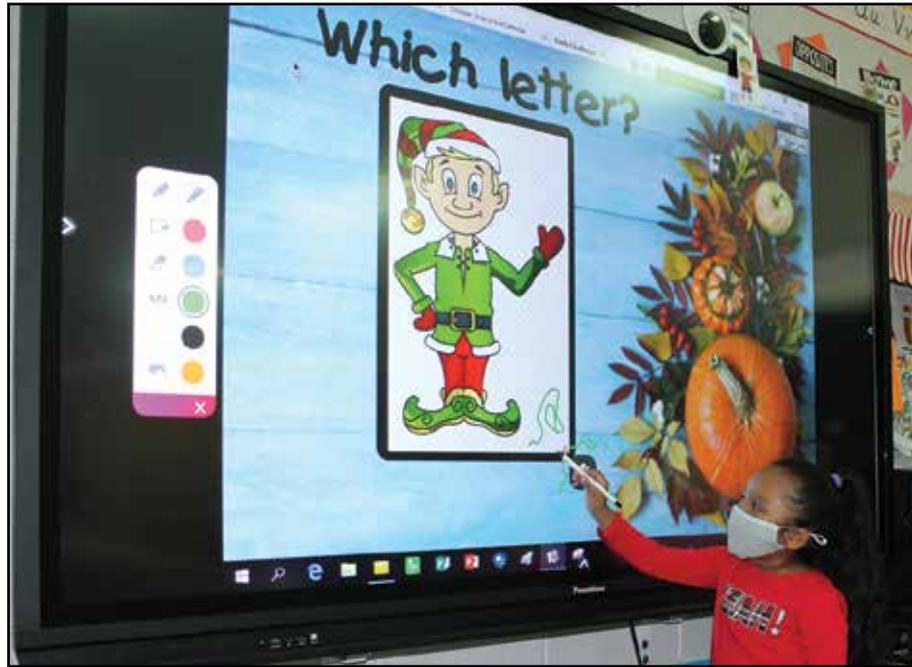


www.WilbanksSmileCenter.com

“Light up the Park” is Saturday, Nov. 28 at 6 p.m. and it’s when holiday lights will be turned on. Santa, Mrs. Claus and their elves will be in the K-H Park on Pine Street on a firetruck giving out candy canes.

This is a drive-thru event; no program is planned. Then at 7 p.m. the movie “Elf” will be airing at PAC’s drive-up outdoor theatre on Laurel Street. Call 828-526-9047 to reserve a parking space.

...AHEC continued from page 1



Elementary students make use of the white board.

advantages students in a more cosmopolitan setting have.”

Not long after AHEC was formed in 2018, individuals from across the community were eager to help. “The early donors provided the spark,” said board member Derek Taylor. “We would like to thank all of the individual donors who have helped so far.”

Board President Hilary Wilkes also recognizes the community approach to their fundraising. “As a committee, we have done very little solicitation outside of writ-

ing grants. Many of our donors caught wind of our efforts and approached us to contribute,” Wilkes says. “We knew virtual learning was inevitable this year and are very appreciative to those who have helped give Highlands School the tools to meet the challenges that come with that.”

AHEC will spend \$150,000 in 2020 on these upgrades, with just under \$300,000 total spent in support of Highlands School over the last two years.

– Submitted



Middle School students on laptops in the media center.

with Gratitude

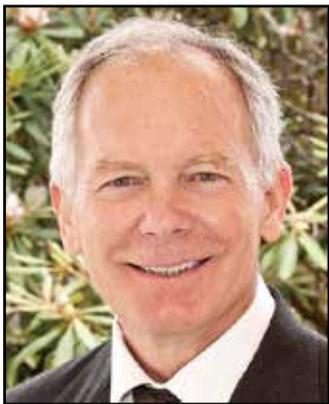
The Advance Highlands Education Committee (AHEC) thanks the following for their continued support of our fundraising efforts on behalf of Highlands School:

- Richard and Melissa Delany
- Clay and Leigh Hartman
- h Foundation
- Highland Hiker
- Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation
- Highlands Community Fund
- Jim Kneisley
- Lupoli Construction
- Stephanie McCall
- Mountain Findings
- Christopher and Janice Raby
- Rotary Club of Highlands
- Justin Souma
- Swift Family Foundation
- Jim and Allison Tate
- Tate Landscaping
- Derek and Irina Taylor
- The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
- Jeff Weller
- Chris and Hilary Wilkes
- Dennis and Sheryl Wilson
- Wreaths Across America

Contributions to AHEC may be sent to
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AHEC 
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Co-Pastor Curtis Fussell
First Presbyterian Church

**There's
always
a reason
to give
thanks**

This Thanksgiving celebration is like no other. We struggle to have family and friends gather during a surging pandemic. Thanksgiving celebrations will likely be sparsely attended, if attended at all.

Still, we will celebrate Thanksgiving. We will give thanks, even if it means doing so in an abbreviated manner. We will pause on Thanksgiving and give thought for what we have to be thankful. Even for those who suffer grievously due to the effects of the pandemic, they surely remain aware of God's light shining in their lives. Giving thanks at this time is a bold act of spiritual maturity with God against this vile enemy that harms our life and our community. We will not be defeated!

The constant rhythm of scriptures is to give thanks in all circumstances because "God is for us." Scripture reminds us to see our blessings from God and to offer up praise.

Remember how, on the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and he gave thanks. Even though Jesus knew death was coming, Jesus gave thanks to God for the blessings in his life.

The Apostle Paul, imprisoned and under a death sentence, tells the church, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Phil. 4:6).

In the book of Habakkuk, the prophet thanks God, "Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines... yet I will rejoice in the Lord" (3:17).

Perhaps, giving thanks comes after a certain point in life. After a life lived, after numerous ups and downs, various joys and struggles, a certain spiritual maturity arises in us. It's the awareness that no matter your station is in life, there is the awareness of God's blessings filling your life.

At that Thanksgiving in Plymouth in the fall of 1621, every Pilgrim family had lost someone in the previous months. They landed in Plymouth in the harsh winter of December 1620 with precious little to eat. If the Native Americans had not helped them, they would have all perished.

Only half of those who landed on December 1620, were alive to celebrate only a few months later that 1621 Thanksgiving. For what could they give thanks? They gave thanks to God for being there, for being alive. They gave thanks for the Native Americans who helped them. Gratitude welled up in them in spite of bitter losses and

•See SPIRITUALLY page 21

Proverbs 3:5

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

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1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.
Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

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Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins
Sundays: 9:30am - Adult Sunday School; 9:45am (masks required) Early Worship Service; 11:15am (masks optional) Worship Service; Sundays 10:45am-Children's Program, Sunday Youth-4:30pm - 6:30pm Dinner
provided

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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

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526-3175 • fpchighlands.org
Sun.: Worship 8:30a Adult Ed.: 9:30a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.
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Wed: Choir: 6p

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John 3:16

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

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Randy Reed, Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
Pastor Dan Robinson
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Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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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.

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Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

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Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Oct. 31. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Oct. 31

• At 1:30 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on Main Street.

Nov. 3

• At 2:40 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on Leonard Road.

Nov. 4

• At 11:40 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on US 64.

Nov. 11

• At 7 p.m., officers were notified of a burglary/breaking & entering, the possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia at a residence on North 5th Street where a person entered into a home without permission and was staying in the rear bedroom.

• At 7:15 p.m., Dillan Lee Taylor Medlin, 21, of Highlands, was arrested for burglary/breaking & entering and possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia at a residence on North 5th Street. He was issued a \$10,000 secured bond. His trial date is Nov. 25.

Nov. 18

• At 8:15 a.m., officers were notified of vandalism to a vehicle with an object at a gas station on US 64

Nov. 21

• At 8 p.m., officers were notified of an assault on a female at a accommodation on

Chestnut Run where a husband hit his wife, blocked the door from her leaving and told her he was going to punch her in the face if she left.

• At 8:10 p.m., Bruce George Van Horn, 72, of Highlands, was arrested for assault on a female and communicating threats. He was not issued a bond. His trial date is Dec. 17.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Nov. 17

Nov. 17

• At 9:24 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Brookside Lane.

• At 1:59 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Holt Road.

• At 9:01 p.m., the dept. returned to check on the extinguished structure fire on Clear Creek Road.

Nov. 18

• At 11:17 a.m., the dept. investigated the structure fire on Clear Creek Road.

• At 10:05 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Jasmine Lane.

Nov. 20

• At 9:09 a.m., the dept. was called about the small of gas at a residence on Maple Street.

• At 10:54 p.m. the dept. was first-responders to a location Whiteside Mountain Road.

Nov. 21

• At 8:41 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Morewood Circle.

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...MAMA continued from page 7

MAMA Nurse Carrie Underwood doesn't think about bad weather, payload capacity, or anything else beyond caring for her patient. She said the increased space is a huge plus in terms of patient access, but it took a little time to get used to the exposed tail rotor.

"It will be easier to get to the patients in all aspects of their care," said Underwood. "There's so much more space in this aircraft. But use caution around that exposed rotor, if you're over 6'1", steer clear."

MAMA Flight Paramedic Nicholas Cook acts as the navigator on the way to the call but takes position in the back once a patient is on board.

"Access to the patient from where I sit in the rear-facing seat was limited in the old one," said Cook. "Now if I need to do an intervention or insert a breathing tube, I have room to do that. And with more fuel we can go farther out into the region and provide access to people we couldn't normally serve."

MAMA has bases at Mission Hospital in Asheville and Angel Medical Center

in Franklin. Grindstaff said it takes about an hour and twenty minutes to drive the 68 miles between the two without traffic, but it's a 25-minute flight. He said when patients are suffering from stroke, STEMI, or trauma; every second counts.

And it's those critical time-sensitive calls that Neal said having access to medical air transport can save a patient's life.

"Anyone who has visited Highlands appreciates the remote location," said Tom. "While the calls for a helicopter transport may not happen every day, it is critical the response is rapid. Having a reliable transport team could not be more important when one of our patients needs care quickly."

He added that HCA has invested \$5 million to support improvements to Highlands Cashiers Hospital's infrastructure, new technology, and support-improved patient care. He said these investments and the purchase of a new helicopter not only reflect a commitment to the hospital and the community, but also reflect the strength of HCA.



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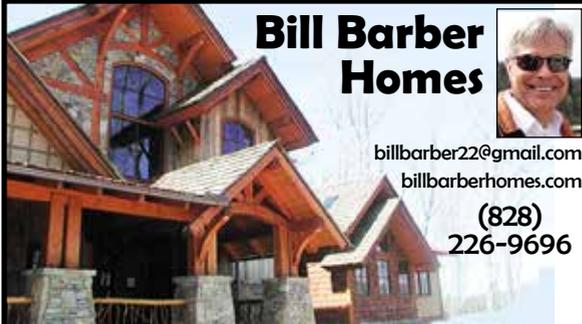
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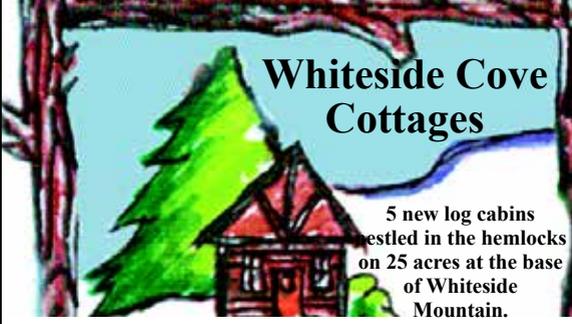
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...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 19

sorrows. It was an act of spiritual maturity.

Their giving thanks in the midst of their ordeal, mirrors that of Jesus, who took the bread and cup and gave thanks to God; mirrors Paul, who while imprisoned admonished giving thanks in everything; mirrors Habakkuk, who rejoices in God even when the fig tree is bare.

The season of Thanksgiving is here. We, though huddled in our homes, can again give thanks to God for the blessings in our lives. In good times and difficult times, it is

meet and right that we should give thanks to God.

“So... let all things now living, A song of thanksgiving

To God our Creator Triumphantly raise;
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