

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 17, Number 39

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com

Thursday, Sept. 24 2020

Decision on HCA water/sewer request likely to come at October TB meeting

By Brian O'Shea and Kim Lewicki

Last week, the Highlands Board of Commissioners tabled a

request from HCA Healthcare to supply water and sewer to a proposed workforce-housing development for Highlands-Cashiers

Hospital until some issues regarding future use are resolved.

Commissioner Amy Patter-

• See REQUEST page 18

New fire station gets green light

With a guaranteed maximum price of \$6,897,000 for the construction of the new fire station on the corner of Oak and Main streets, and with contractors lined up and ready to go, pending weather, Highlands will have a new Fire Station in about 14 months.

At the Sept. 17 Town Board meeting, commissioners OK'd the terms regarding the project that includes the guaranteed price, the ability for the town to review bids that are received at each construction phase, and to pick the contractors.

Financing is with BB&T for a loan of \$8.5 million which includes \$7 million for the contract and \$1.5 million to pay back the electric reserve fund whose money was used to purchase the land from Jane Woodruff.

The 20-year amortization

• See FIRE STATION page 17



One of the three displays that earned The Bascom "Best in Show."



The jailed Highlands Police Chief Andrea "Sissy" Holland and Mayor Pat Taylor won 1st Place.

Highlands Historical Society's Annual Dahlia Festival took to the streets

The Highlands Historical Society's Annual Dazzling Dahlia Festival was a "happening" all its own this year.

Covid restrictions forced the committee to come up with a new plan and as it turned out it will likely be something worth repeating.

"I only got the idea for this format 67 days before the event," said Committee Chair and format creator Kim Daugherty. "Only in Highlands can you make something like that happen in such a

short time."

Beautiful weather set the scene for the festival that showcased dahlias of every shape, size and color.

On Saturday and Sunday, September 19th and 20th, Highlands became the backdrop for numerous and varied vignettes of dahlias and native plants.

During the weekend, the public was encouraged to vote for the display they liked best on the HHS website.

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Covid-19 testing at schools has begun

Thanks to foresight and funding by the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation, weekly testing for Covid-19 began last week in Highlands and Cashiers.

The purpose of the testing program is to protect students but also to protect their parents, grandparents and community members with whom they interact," said Dr. Richard Ellin with HCHF. "Since symptoms of Covid-19 often do not show up until days after infection, it is likely that testing would identify the virus in asymptomatic individuals before they infect others."

Last week – the first week – students whose parents agreed to the testing beforehand – were tested at Highlands School and Summit Charter School and by all accounts all went well. This week

• See TESTING page 19

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Town Board meeting in a nutshell

I had hoped we could do a hybrid Town Board meeting last Thursday night. The plan was to ZOOM the meeting and conduct an in-person meeting following standard COVID-19 protocols. There were technical glitches that I had not anticipated. I take responsibility for not foreseeing the problems.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

At our October meeting adjustments will be made. Either we will do a ZOOM-only format or return to an in-person format without ZOOM. Town staff have recently installed a fixed camera at the Highlands Conference Center that might be used in streaming the meeting on the town website. Several test runs will be done before a final decision.

The September meeting was rather long. Let me provide a several updates.

First, the Town Board voted to reject the five bids companies submitted for the operation of the broadband network. Each bid submitted had some incomplete information that made them incomplete bids.

For an initial bidding cycle, state law requires there to be three complete bids before the best bid can be accepted. The lack of three complete bids necessitated the rebidding of the project. The board approved the issuing of a new RFP with additional clarifications. The original bidders have been sent the new RFP. This second bid cycle will be for 30 days and all five bidders can resubmit their bids with updated information.

New bidders can also submit. After the end of this second bid cycle, the board can consider any complete bid.

Second, I gave updates on several road projects that DOT has on their short list. These projects are contingent on state funds being released in the coming weeks. They could continue to remain on hold if this funding is delayed.

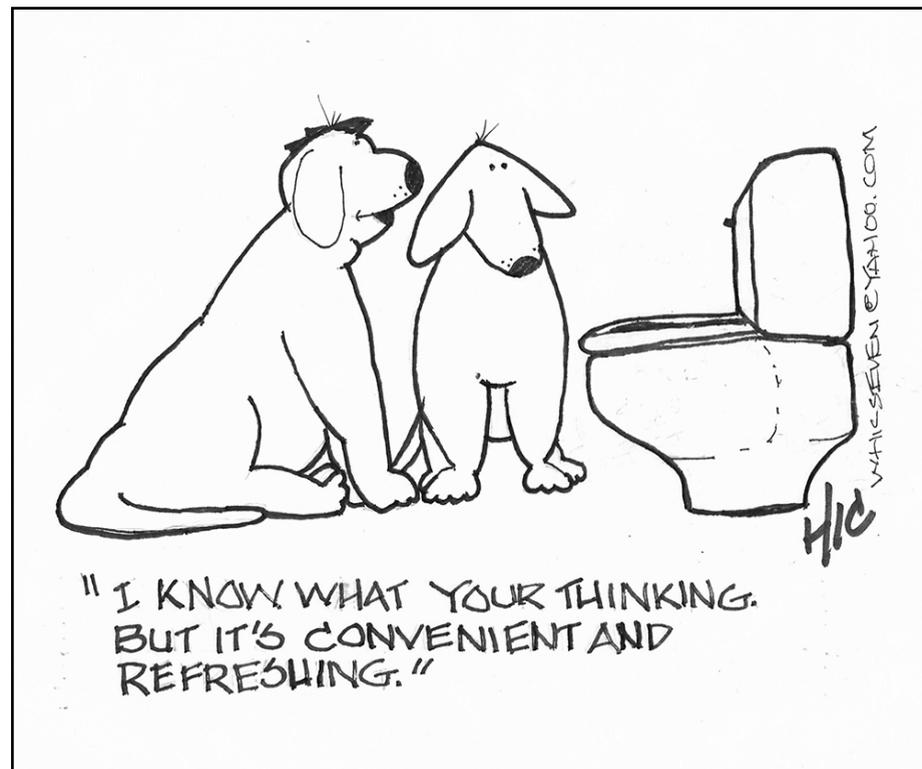
The resurfacing of Main Street is scheduled for this spring. There are several phases. First, in late March the existing asphalt on Main Street will be milled down by an inch and a half. Vehicles will be able to use the street afterward, albeit a rougher ride.

Some time in April when 60-degree days return, the repaving of road will begin. The goal is to have Main Street completed and re-stripped before the new season. The original plan called for the road to be resurfaced only to 4th Street. This new contract will extend the new paving all the way to the Mountain Fresh area.

The other phases involve paving US 64 from Main Street out to Buck Creek. NC 28 from Main Street to Clear Creek will also be repaved. Our town engineer is in ongoing discussions with DOT engineers about how the intersection at NC 28, South Street and Satulah can be improved. These two high-way projects will get underway after Main Street is completed. Both will continue into the summer. Expect traffic delays coming into and leaving Highlands during this period.

Recently there was a meeting with DOT officials about the possible paving of Big Bear Pen from Upper Lake down to Chestnut. Discussions are in the preliminary stage.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

| Thu, 24-Sep | Fri, 25-Sep | Sat, 26-Sep | Sun, 27-Sep |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | |
| 59°F 53°F | 69°F 57°F | 73°F 57°F | 74°F 56°F |
| Cloudy and cooler: p.m. rain | A shower and t-storm around | Periods of sun | A shower and t-storm around |
| RealFeel® High: 61° Low: 51° | RealFeel® High: 70° Low: 59° | RealFeel® High: 77° Low: 61° | RealFeel® High: 78° Low: 59° |

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Highlands Newspaper

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Digital Media - Jim Lewicki

Locally owned and operated by

Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at

www.HighlandsInfo.com

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Highlands, N.C., 28741

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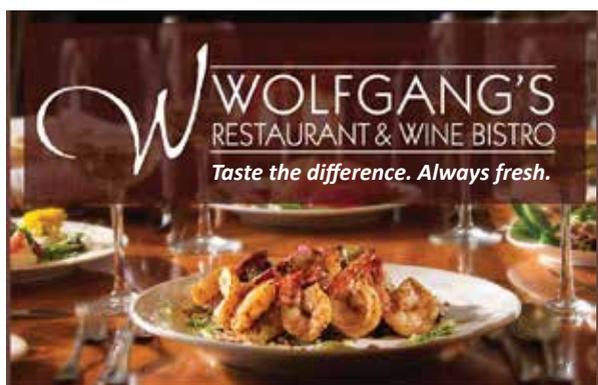
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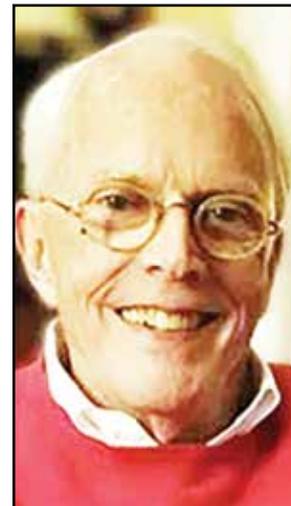
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• OBITUARY •

Kenneth Dan Adcock



Dr. Kenneth Dan Adcock died peacefully on Saturday, September 19, 2020. Born on November 12, 1937 in St. Petersburg, FL, he was the middle child of Lila Anderson Adcock and Louie Norman Adcock, Sr.

Dan graduated from St. Petersburg High in 1955. On August 17, 1957, he married his high school sweetheart and best friend, Judy Liggett.

He attended Duke University and was a member of the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity. He continued his education at the University of Florida, earning his bachelor's degree in 1959 and his Medical Doctorate degree in 1963.

From 1963 to 1966, he completed his OB/GYN internship and residency in Charlotte, NC.

In 1967, he joined the United States Air Force and served as Captain at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City, LA.

In 1969, he moved to Greenville, SC and developed a thriving OB/GYN practice. He loved his patients and staff and was known for how committed he was to all of those in his care.

After 35 years in practice, he retired to Highlands, NC in 2004. He enjoyed life in retirement by becoming active in the Episcopal church.

He completed The University of the South School of Theology, Education for Ministry course and

completed training to teach and participate in the Stephen Ministries program. At The Church of the Incarnation he served on the vestry and many volunteer positions. He also enjoyed volunteering at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital and with the Four Seasons Hospice program.

He celebrated life by keeping in touch with friends and family far and wide. He was a compassionate and enthusiastic supporter for the many people he held dear. These connections enriched his life tremendously and brought him great joy and comfort in his later years. He was truly a bright light that illuminated all of our lives.

Dan was predeceased by his former wife, Judy. He was also predeceased by his brothers and their

wives Louie Norman Adcock, Jr. (Mary) and Jack Anderson Adcock (Sarah Jane) and his sister in law Sarah (Sally) Liggett Smith (husband George).

He is survived by his partner, Thomas Mitchell Cox, daughters Sarah "Sally" Adcock Chambers of Diamondhead, MS, Elizabeth "Betsy" Adcock Baumgardner, and husband, Jim, of Greenville, SC; four grandchildren, Elizabeth Collett Chambers, William Adcock Chambers, James Krae Baumgardner, Jr., and Benjamin Easton Baumgardner, one great grandchild Charlotte Mae Chambers, his brother-in-law Frank Rahm Liggett, III and wife Mimi LeBlond Liggett and several nieces and nephews.

A private family service will be held at The Church of the Incarnation (Episcopal) in Highlands, NC later this week. A celebration of life service will be held in Greenville, SC in November.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be made to Church of the Incarnation, 520 Main Street, Highlands, NC, 28741.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve the family of Kenneth Dan Adcock, M.D.

Online condolences may be made at www.moffittfamilyfuneralcare.com

• LETTERS •

Katz's columns set a good example; will be missed

Dear Editor,

I want to commend Bud Katz for his "Word Matter" column in the Highlands Newspaper of Thursday, September 10, 2020.

Why?

Because he wrote a column describing his outlook on two

matters related to national matters of discussion and debate: health care and public education.

He wrote clearly: his own point of view, without attacking anyone, or identifying some sinister people or forces who might not think exactly as he does on both

topics.

His column set a good example for us all: constructive discussion with others without rancor and without malice.

Good job. Good example.

David Sweatt
Highlands

• See LETTERS page 7

...LETTERS from page 6

Dr. William James

Dear Editor,

Dr. William James, famous psychologist, was born in New York City in 1841. He had a rather famous family. His brother was Henry James, who had written a number of best-selling books, probably best known for his short stories. He also wrote 12 Broadway plays. Dr. James' sister had her diary published.

Dr. James became known as the Father of American Psychology. At one time his books were used in most of the colleges in the USA. He said the most important discovery of his generation was that we can change our lives by changing our attitude. The same thing Dr. Norman Vincent Peale said in his book, "The Power of Positive Thinking" which became one of the best-selling books of all-time.

Dr. James also said that deepest principal of human nature is the craving to be appreciated. We all want to be appreciated.

Dr. William Sturgeon, Professor of Theology, Boston College was sitting in his office late one afternoon reflecting on his life. He was thinking about the people in his life who helped him become the person he was. People who encouraged him, people who inspired him, people who really made a positive difference in his life. He was thinking particularly about his 5th grade school teacher. So, he decided to write her a letter and he did.

Shortly after, he received a reply. The reply went like this. "My dear William, I'm in my late 80s now, I live alone, and I'm lonely. I feel like the last leaf of Autumn lingering behind. You may be interested in knowing I taught school for 50 years. Your letter is the first letter of appreciation I ever received. It came one cold, cold morning. It cheered me more than anything in many years."

Dr. Sturgeon certainly made a positive difference in her life. I'm sure she read that letter many, many times. But just think how Dr. Sturgeon felt when he received her reply. I'm sure he read her letter many times. It probably brought tears to his eyes. When we make a positive difference in someone's life, we feel good about ourselves and when we feel good about ourselves, life is better. When we don't feel good about ourselves life is not as much fun. So, we need to do more that makes us feel good about ourselves.

Kenny Youmans
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• ELECTION COUNTDOWN •

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Karl Gillespie



Susan Landis

By Brittney Lofthouse

When Representative Kevin Corbin announced he would be running for Senate District 50 – it left his seat in the House of Representatives District 120 vacant. Macon County Republican Karl Gillespie and Cherokee County Democrat Susan Landis are both vying to represent North Carolina's Western most district.

"I never started out to be an elected official," said Gillespie. "I was appointed to be on the Macon County Planning Board and served on it for several years. Through being a public servant, I became familiar with the needs of the county and the projects that were on the table. When I was asked to

run for County Commissioner, I decided to because I felt like I was up to speed on the needs of the citizens and would be able to continue to work toward accomplishing some of the very projects the planning board had been tasked to work on. Since being elected as a Commissioner for Macon County, I have taken the job of serving very seriously and learned a lot from it. When Senator Davis announced his retirement, our current Representative Kevin Corbin decided to run for Senator Davis's seat. After conversations with several folks in the 120th House District, I decided that my experiences had prepared me to repre-

• See ELECTION page 9



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...ELECTION continued from page 8

sent the citizens of the 120th district.”

Gillespie is a 5th generation Maconian. He and his wife Janet have one son, Logan. Gillespie spent 17 years working on the road for Globe Communications, Inc. He started as a helper on a fiber splicing crew and was Vice President of the company by the time he left in 1999. That same year, he founded National Communications, Inc and has since grown the company into a regional provider of low voltage systems.

Landis said that she is running for office to be a voice for the West.

“I’m running for office to have a part in the conversation about what is best for this area, politically,” said Landis. “I’m a blue dot in a sea of red, but I think it’s important for people to hear more than one side of things and to make informed decisions about who represents them best.”

Landis is originally from Chattanooga, TN. She and her husband moved to Murphy, NC seven years ago when they retired. They have been married for 37 years and have three adult daughters who all work in science related fields across the country.

Landis holds a B.A. and M.S. degree from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, both in psychology. She worked in the mental health field for about 10 years at a psychiatric hospital and then a psychiatric clinic. Then she spent 28 years working as a school psychologist for the local public school district. Landis worked mainly in special education helping to evaluate the needs of students.

Hot Topic Issues:

Police reform is a major topic across the country and here in WNC. What is your stance on law enforcement and current discussions for reform and defunding police?

Gillespie: “These topics are both disheartening and disturbing. I have spoken to several sheriffs and they are all open to making any necessary changes. Interestingly, most of these changes require additional funding. We need to work with law enforcement at all levels to make sure they have adequate funding to provide the services our taxpayers deserve.”

Landis: “I wish that the term ‘defunding the police’ was not being used. I don’t actually know anyone who feels that police should not receive more pay, training and support. What I regret is that the police have become more militarized over time and often treat citizens as though they are enemies. I think outfitting police in military garb and weapons makes it hard to relate to them on a personal level. Their training has caused some of them to be less aware of, and less sensitive to the needs of the people. Having worked in the field of mental health, I have personally witnessed

police treating mental health emergencies as criminal behavior to the detriment of the mentally ill person. Police have an incredibly hard but important job to do, but their training is essential to our safety and well being. Obviously, there are problems in their training or in the selection of recruits, so that people who should not be police are being given badges. Like many social problems, it is complex and the solutions will be complex but it’s important to try to get it right so that innocent people are not murdered at the hands of police.”

As an elected official—how would you improve educational opportunities for WNC?

Gillespie: “First, we must fund our K-12 schools at a level so our children can compete on a global playing field. We need to create a pathway for technical training and admission to undergraduate studies. Second, we must fund our community colleges as they provide the specialized training in the trade fields that we need. I was fortunate to have been able to serve on the Board of Trustees for Southwestern Community College, this gave me an opportunity to see how Community Colleges changes lives. I look forward to working with Southwestern Community College and Tri-County Com-

• See ELECTION page 10

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CATSPEAK

• PRINCESS PUDDIN' SPEAKS •

Puddin' is Preenin'

Mum says it's becoming the norm that I get more fan mail than she does. That doesn't surprise me at all. When I wrote about my vet saying I needed to lose weight, I got quite the response—all supportive of me, mind you. This one from a friend in California made my day:

Puddin' Power. You rock, Girl! Treats are a Constitutional Right . . . Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness . . . um . . . TREATS! To the barricades Ms. Puddin', light the bonfires, and buy lots of spray paint! Even better, hide all the wine in the house and see how fast Mum folds! As the great philosopher, Kenny Rodgers sang, "Know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em." No folding here. Holding the wine hostage will win the day. Puddin' Power!!!

Now, Mum says some people may not see this response as politically correct. Can you see me sticking my snooty little nose in the air? I'm completely apolitical, and I know our friend on the Left Coast doesn't expect me to do any of the things he mentions, well, except maybe for hiding the wine. That's a great idea.

Meanwhile, my fans will be happy to know that treats have resumed. The little dish on Mum's desk gets filled and refilled innumerable times throughout the day. She



just returned from the grocery store with another container too. She says she told the lady at the checkout she couldn't go home without more treats. I'd say I have Mum well-trained.

Though I have not employed any of the aforementioned tactics, I did reach out and pat

Mum's face one day. That's right. As I've always done, I leap on her desk and talk to her when I want treats, but she's not always fast enough. So, one day, I just took my little white paw and patted her on the cheek. It seemed to work as my dish was filled pronto.

Are there any kitties out there whose pet parents require training? I will be happy to consult with you, and I'll take my fee in treats so you don't have to worry about nasty paper money. That stuff's only good for shredding. You can contact me at 1-800-Princess Puddin to schedule an appointment.

I think I'll meander down to the kitchen for a dab of wet food before I choose a spot for my next nap. And when I'm done napping? Why, I'll expect treats, of course. Got to keep Mum on her toes.

• Puddin' lives in Georgia with award-winning author Kathy Manos Penn. Find her cozy mysteries on Amazon. To contact Puddin' or her mum, please email inkpenn119@gmail.com.

...ELECTION continued from page 9

community College to ensure they have the tools they need."

Landis: "Having spent decades working in public schools and having attended school in many different places as a child, I think I can bring a lot to any discussion of education. I have a whole lot of opinions and insights into what changes need to be made in education, but it boils down to this...money. There has never been one single day in the history of this country that the schools have had all the money they needed to do the job. Not even close. If teachers were paid the salaries of CEO's, people would be running to colleges to become teachers. That has never happened. Just like with police, the vast majority of the thousands of teachers I have worked with over the years are hard-working, sincere, smart, educated professionals who would give anything in their power to help a child or teach

that child. They just do not always have the tools or training. I remember going into a brand new school where they had a brand new computer lab full of brand new computers, but it was locked up because no one in the building was trained on what to do with those computers. Grant money had paid for hardware, but not training. So, money is a start, or at least we need to try it for a change."

What is your stance on WNC's current broadband issues and how would you address it?

Gillespie: "Like so many other rural communities, WNC suffers from the lack of affordable broadband, in some areas over 40% of the households do not have access to affordable broadband. Currently the USDA's e-Connectivity program, North Carolina GREAT Grant, local county grants along with government/

• See ELECTION page 11

...ELECTION continued from page 10

private partnerships are all working to enhance broadband. The main issue with deploying fiber optic technologies in WNC is the cost of construction. To make any significant impact will require a substantial financial commitment by the federal and state government."

Landis: "Broadband is at the top of the issues I would like to address if elected to the legislature. Personally, I only have two options at my house for internet...both of them are terrible. I don't even have cell phone service at my house. I can't stream anything, zoom meetings freeze up constantly and I run out of my so called "fast" gigs of internet every single month. For this lousy service, I pay a satellite company \$147 per month, so I know first-hand how frustrating it is to not have decent internet. It is one of the few things that could make me move out of these beautiful mountains. One step that the legislature could take is to change the law that prohibits local municipalities from creating and operating their own broadband systems. They can also allocate more money for this purpose. The GA recently allocated some money for this purpose, but it was a laughably small amount compared to what is needed, and it only went to a few counties. Legislation could be put into place to require any busi-

ness offering broadband to make it available to everyone. That is what is missing now. I have decent wifi less than a mile from my house but no hope of ever getting it in my area. In the seven years I've lived here, my options have not changed at all."

What do you see as being the biggest issue facing WNC?

Gillespie: "Lack of affordable broadband, economic development/sustainable employment opportunities, healthcare."

Landis: "The biggest issue facing NC right now is probably the divide between the urban and rural areas. Urban areas such as the Triangle, Charlotte, Raleigh have needs that are very different from the needs in the rural areas. We need to ensure that some basic infrastructure is in place everywhere, such as broadband, but also in education, roads, water quality, media access, mail service, and training for public employees. I used to be on the board of our county social services. The staff had a terrible time getting all the required training because it was held so far away. It would require two days of travel to get to and from a place like Raleigh (360 miles away), which presented a hardship to the agency to be without employees for so long. Why the trainings were not offered virtually is probably due to the lack of

• See **ELECTION** page 19

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Fall Home Improvement - 2020

The best time to get a whole house generator is....before you need one!

According to a Congressional Research Service (CRS) report, Weather-Related Power Outages and Electric System Resiliency, almost 50% of large power outages are caused by severe weather. Most of these severe weather occurrences are from lightning, wind, and rain. The CRS found that the next highest cause of large power outages is equipment failure (almost 30%). No matter the cause, large power outages affect millions of homeowners and can wreak havoc on you and your house.

In the event of a blackout or brownout, a backup power generator provides an alternate source of power for your home.

Standby Generators, or whole house generators, are backup generators that automatically power to your home when the electricity goes out. When the whole house generator detects a brownout or blackout, it can automatically begin to provide power within 20 to 30 seconds. Standby generators are normally installed directly outside of your home, similar to an outdoor unit of an HVAC system and require a professional installation.

During the home generator installation process, a standby generator is connected to your home's natural gas or propane lines so that it can provide power indefinitely for as long as you need. While a standby generator typically powers

your whole home, it can also be customized to only power certain appliances and electronics, based upon your needs.

Three of the main advantages of having a standby or whole house generator installed over a portable generator are:

- A standby generator provides power automatically. You don't have to be present for your home to maintain power when there's a power outage. If you're away on vacation and a power outage occurs, a standby generator can ensure that your sump pump is running and your home security system stays armed.
- A standby generator can power as much as you

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Fall Home Improvement - 2020

need. Most portable generators have a threshold for the amount of energy they can provide, thereby requiring you to either have multiple generators or limit the appliances you choose to power. A standby generator can power your whole house if you choose.

- A standby power generator can run as long as you need power. A standby generator is powered by natural gas or propane, so there's no need to refuel.

- Standby generators are installed permanently, usually on a concrete pad just outside your house.

These systems should be installed professionally and will have an automatic transfer switch. When an interruption in service is detected, the switch disconnects you from the municipal power grid and starts up your generator. The

switch can also detect when the main power comes back on and will shut down your generator and reconnect to the municipal grid.

Benefits of a Standby Generator

Seamless switching between systems means it is worry free. It means no fumbling around in the dark looking for gas and trying to get the portable generator going. Also, portable generators must be pulled outside, and long extension cords must be run back inside the house because carbon monoxide is given off by the motor.

- The continual flow of power is of particular importance for people who depend on powered, home medical equipment.

- Dependable electrical power can be critical for people

working from home who need to stay connected.

- A regular power source ensures food doesn't spoil in refrigerators or freezers.

- Having power during outage means you can continue to use any of your electric appliances to prepare meals.

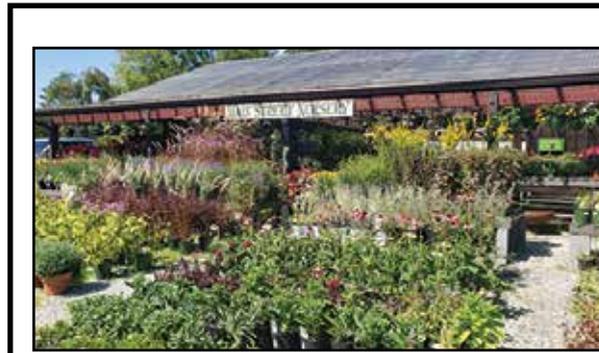
- Since the power and therefore the heat stays on, you do not have to worry about frozen pipes!

- The transfer switch acts as a surge protector and prevents back-feeding electricity, which is potentially lethal since it can start fires.

- You may be able to get a discount on your homeowner's insurance if you install a standby generator.

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• HOSPITAL NEWS •

Noteworthy \$5 million capital infusion for Highlands-Cashiers Hospital bringing facility improvements, new technology, and enriched care offerings

By Tom Neal
CEO/CNO

Highlands Cashiers Hospital

Some new developments happening at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) are enhancing our imaging capabilities and strengthening the infrastructure of the entire hospital. We are also preparing to welcome another new physician here, who will enable us to offer services that haven't been available at HCH for years.

We recently received a remarkable capital funds infusion for the hospital of nearly \$5 million from HCA Healthcare. This investment will bring advanced imaging technology to the Plateau and strengthen our infrastructure, which in turn will allow us to provide better care.

Much of this capital, nearly \$4 million, will update nuts-and-bolts facility features, like a new air conditioning system, elevator refreshments, a building automation system, upgrades to our kitchen, major plumbing repairs, and replacement of our medical air and vacuum system. While infrastructure enhancements are not flashy or even visible to most visitors to HCH, they are the types of investments that will allow us to deliver care even more safely and efficiently, so we can continue to serve our community for a long time.

Another very positive upgrade at HCH that the capital investment is fueling is in the realm of medical technology, specifically within the arena of imaging. We will be acquiring a new digital X-ray suite, which brings the latest advances in technology to the Plateau. The new technology allows for significant advantages to the technologists, such as ease of use, immediate visibility of the X-rays, the ability to optimize the images, and improved data storage. Just think of how much better pictures from your smart phone are compared to the ones produced by old cameras with film. But more importantly, this technology reduces the amount of radiation it takes to shoot an X-ray, making it safer for our patients.

An additional enhancement our imaging technology will be making is an upgrade to the latest 3-D mammography platform. The advanced technology on these new 3-D

mammography units produces sharper, more nuanced images of the breast, enabling the radiologist to have more complete visual clinical data for review and diagnostic purposes.

One of the most difficult conversations we have in healthcare is the disclosure of a grim prognosis to a cancer patient. The 3-D mammography technology has continued to advance over the last decade and has been proven to offer superior visualization, especially for women with dense breast tissue. The advanced technology also reduces false positives. When a false positive occurs, there's a call to a patient informing them that they need more X-rays to confirm there is no abnormality like cancer. This can create extreme anxiety for a patient, and this capability saves them from the stress of getting called back for more tests.

I am happy to see this growth at HCH, as it enables us to provide more and better care to the Plateau. The benefits I've described illustrate the immense value in our being part of HCA Healthcare.

Another upcoming change that will allow us to expand the care we offer our patients is the addition of yet another new physician. He is an orthopedic surgeon, and his arrival will mean that we can restart surgical services that we haven't offered in more than five years. I'll have more details on this in next month's column.

In closing, I want to remind you to stay safe. COVID-19 continues to be present, and it is important that we continue to practice social distancing. Like many of you, I look forward to the day we can quit worrying about wearing a mask or just going to the grocery store. However, we are not out of the woods.

I also want to make you aware that we offer support with our Insurance Assistance Hotline, which offers help for those struggling financially during the pandemic. Our trained professionals are there to assist those who need help applying for emergency medical coverage, from COBRA insurance to Medicaid. You can contact them Monday through Friday from 8am to 6pm at (833) 541-5757.

• INVESTING AT 4,118 FT. •

Real and Surreal!

The exodus from large cities has been a shock to all brokers in this country! The number of buyers seeking small town living is amazing.

Many felt that Covid 19 would the economy in a spiraling downturn and buyers would hold on to their money but not so! Buyers are here and ready to buy.

We are overwhelmed some days with so many buyers and homes to show and offers to write.

We are now experiencing a shortage of homes to sell. The day a good home in a good location comes on the market it is under contract that day! If you are looking for a home to purchase here are a few tips:

1. Contact a broker now and give them your criteria and ask them to be on the "lookout" for you and stay in contact.

2. Know what your budget is and don't hold out for something less because you may lose a great house you could af-



Pat Allen, BIC
Pat Allen Realty Group
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ford. There are no great deals now on great houses.

3. Try to pay cash and obtain a mortgage after purchase. With multiple offers and a "hot" market many sellers don't want to wait on loan approval. The mortgage process is slower now with many loan officers and underwriters working from home.

4. Go for a short due diligence- that will get the seller's attention if there are multiple offers. Be willing to close rather quickly also.

5. Know that a home inspection can be 50-65 pages or more and don't be alarmed at first sight. The computer-generated report always says to have a general contractor look at the home in almost every paragraph -even for minor issues. You may be told to have an electrician look at a light that is not working and it may be a burned-out bulb! Be willing to call the inspector about real concerns and then have your broker get someone to look at the various items. They

• See **INVESTING** page 19

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

The Miracle and Prophecies of Fatima



Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone
Our Lady of the
Mountains Catholic Church

Hollywood's recent movie "Fatima" details the greatest miracle since the parting of the Red Sea that occurred in Fatima, Portugal on October 13, 1917. Despite a continual downpour, a crowd of 70,000 people gathered to witness the predicted spectacle, some motivated by faith, others curiosity, still others contempt, such as a local Communist newspaper reporter, who hoped to discredit primitive and superstitious faith.

The story of three little shepherd children was the source of the commotion. Lucia (10) and her cousins Francisco (8) and Jacinta (6) claimed to be witnesses of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who had been appearing to them on the 13th day of each month since May.

The children said the Lady was sharing "secrets" with them; furthermore, in order that all may believe the Lady promised to perform a miracle on October 13th, which, if proved true, would be the only predicted miracle in history.

At the appointed time (midday), the children, standing amidst the crowd, suddenly became enraptured as they received the final apparition and message of the Lady. Lucia then cried out: "There she goes; there she goes!"

The rain suddenly ceased, and everyone then marveled as they noticed the sun through the parting clouds that amazingly did not hurt their eyes.

The sun then dislodged from its place in the sky whirling and dancing about while casting off different colors. To the horror of all, the fiery orb then seemed to crash upon the crowd.

Many, fearing imminent death, began screaming and confessing their sins. Death however would not come. In a flash, the sun returned to its proper place and the previously soaked spectators, including the Communist reporter who recounts the story, found themselves and the muddy ground bone dry.

The Miracle of the Sun, as the event would be named, was also accompanied by prophecies.

The Lady predicted the speedy end of World War I, but "another and worse war will break out during the reign of Pius XI" (not yet pope), the sign of which would be "when you see a night illumined by an unknown light." The aurora borealis, seen from Europe for the first time in several hundred years, covered the entire continent on January 25, 1938 just weeks before Germany's annexation of Austria.

The Lady also told the children that "Russia would spread her errors across the world" a mere four months

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 22

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

BLUEVALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

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

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

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Wes Sharpe, Pastor 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

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3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC

Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

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

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

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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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

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Wed: Choir: 6p

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

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Pastor Dan Robinson

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Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

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

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...FIRE STATION continued from page 1

schedule at 2.7% interest shows the first debt service payment due the beginning of 2021 of \$658,000 – over the course of the loan, payments will drop to \$12,000.

Town Manager Josh Ward said payments of the loan can be covered with the Fire Department annual budget with approximately \$56,000 surplus remaining.

The recent fire tax increase resulted in an increase in revenue of approximately \$670,000 for a total revenue of \$1.05 million. That plus Jackson County's annual donation of \$50,000 equaled \$1,100,000 for FY19/20.

...DAHLIA continued from page 1

ful. The town was packed with people walking around with their "Dahlia Trail" map which pinpointed locations and supplied tidbits about the history of Highlands," she said. "People were enjoying the hunt for the different displays, and they enjoyed learning

However, Jackson County has increased its contribution to \$84,000 for FY20/21. Therefore the new revenue total is \$1,134,000 annually, which covers everything including the department's annual operating cost of \$420,000.

It's likely operating costs will increase over the years as the department moves to the 24/7 scenario like other departments in the county, which means more firefighters will be on payroll.

"It's getting harder and harder to get volunteers," said Ward.

But Ward said as the payment amounts decrease over the

about the history of Highlands."

Best of show: Dahlias at The Bascom; 1st Place: Steal Dahlias at the old jail by the Mountain Garden Club; 2nd Place: Kirkin' & Barefootin' at the First Presbyterian Church by Helen Steward, Ruthie Watts, Susie Day, Natalie

years, even if the operating costs increase, there shouldn't be a problem.

MC Emergency Service Director Warren Cabe said if more money is needed, the fire tax can be increased again in the future.

Due to property valuations, Highlands still has one of the lowest fire tax percentages in the county.

Bob Ralston with D.R. Reynolds said 35% of the subcontractors in line for the various jobs are local because they were the low bidders.

"We hope they are doing this for the town," he said. "But we

Jones and Kris Nelson; 3rd Place: Nature's Beauty Cannot Be Caged in Town Square by The Vineyard. Honorable Mentions were X Marked the Spot on the stage at the Kelsey-Hutchinson Park by the Laurel Garden Club; The Bee's Knees at the Highlands Historical

will continue to solicit bids to save money on contractors throughout the process."

Ralston said the bids in hand are good for 90 days and the length of construction will be 14 months based on when the job starts.

"We have to get started because construction prices right now are going crazy. We would like to start before the end of the year."

Now that the Town Board has given its OK, the town will go to the Local Government Commission for approval of the loan with BB&T. At this point, all is expected to go smoothly. – Kim Lewicki

Village Bug House by Drew English and Still Life with Flowers at the Highlands Historical Village by Jodie Zahner.

Daugherty said entry fee proceeds support the Highlands Historical Society's Village on S. 4th Street, and also the Kelsey Kids camp.

– Kim Lewicki

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...REQUEST continued from page 1

son said there is no disagreement regarding the need for workforce housing or that the design of the proposed development along Buck Creek Road is a good one. She said the problem is that if HCA sells the property, there's no guarantee it will remain workforce housing for the hospital.

"We don't give water outside of Highlands except for things that are good for our community," said Patterson. "What's to stop HCA from putting this in, and then deciding that for financial reasons they need to sell it off and we're stuck providing water and sewer to noncitizens of the Town

of Highlands for somebody else's benefit?"

She added that if HCA sold the property and it was turned into VRBO's for example, it would no longer benefit the town.

"I don't disagree with the concept, but I can't give you a yes or no answer without some sort of agreement with HCA about what can and cannot be done," said Patterson. "That thing needs to stay workforce housing for the hospital forever and ever."

HCH CEO Tom Neal said he appreciates Patterson's concerns and said HCA's goal is to continue delivering quality healthcare, not sell off assets for financial reasons.

"We're giving up a very prime piece of property," said Neal. "We could in fact, sell it off today if we were looking to generate revenue or generate capital, but that's not our interest here. Our interest is in supporting the Hospital, supporting growth, and supporting success here."

He added that plans will include provisions tying the developer into supporting workforce housing specifically for healthcare.

"I don't know if I have the right answer you're looking for, all I can tell you in that we share in that and were looking to put the same type of provisions in the ground lease to protect it so that it's only used for healthcare workforce housing."

Highlands Town Attorney Jay Coward said that if the town wants to stop supplying water, it could turn it off.

"Highlands can continue to provide those amenities if it wants to, and it can be contingent upon being for hospital-support purposes only," said Coward. "If it is not, it could be cut off. The water and sewer could be cut off and that would be the end of it."

But Patterson countered saying, "The people in this situation who are innocent would have their water cut off. We would never do that."

She said the town didn't cut Chestnut Hill off when the hospital sold it and they wouldn't do it if it happened again, but she doesn't want the town to be put in

that position.

"Been there, done that, learned our lesson," she said.

The story about water and sewer to the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital and the town's involvement is a long one.

According to Public Works Director Lamar Nix, who has worked in that capacity for the town since 1994, the story goes something like this.

When the hospital outgrew what is now the Peggy Crosby Center, a tract of land was purchased off US 64 east where the Hospital and Chestnut Hill Retirement community now stand.

The first issue was water.

An easement was agreed upon with the Dewey family who owned adjacent land to the hospital. The plan was for the hospital to dig a well, pipe the water to the top of the mountain on the Dewey property where a water tank was erected and then gravity feed it back down to the hospital. So, all was well in that regard.

But what about sewage?

It soon became apparent that digging numerous septic fields was not reasonable for a hospital complex. Consequently, an agreement was made with the town to extend its sewer to the hospital property and to pipe and process its effluent.

Then, Highlands hit a dry period and the hospital was worried that its wells would dry up.

So, another agreement was made to pipe water to the hospital in addition to processing the sewage.

The reason was simple: though outside the town limits, such an arrangement would benefit the citizens of Highlands who needed a hospital and obviously water and sewer were paramount.

Meanwhile, the Chestnut Hill property, which was owned by the hospital, was to be part of the hospital community offering individual residences and assisted living apartments. The idea being, that people could segue into the Eckerd Living Center which is a skilled nursing facility when needed.

Since it was part of the hos-

pital tract and basically an arm of the hospital, Chestnut Hill got water and sewer, too.

Then in the early 2000s, the hospital needed money, so the Chestnut Hill complex was carved out and sold.

The result, of course, was that a private entity was now hooked up to the town's water and sewer.

This is what Commissioner Patterson said cannot be allowed to happen again.

She said she wants a guarantee in writing, that HCA will not sell off its workforce housing complex for any reason; and that it will always be a part of the hospital.

"If not, 10 years from now if HCA decides to abandon the hospital, we will be stuck giving water and sewer to something that isn't part of our community," she said. "We have to work out what is best for our community."

Dr. Patti Wheeler, who is the only person currently involved with Highlands Cashiers Hospital with decades of history, said she hoped the two parties could enter into an arrangement with good faith.

"There are no guarantees in life, I am evidence of that," she said, "but your request sounds reasonable."

Commissioner Donnie Calloway said approving HCA's request sets a precedent for other requests for water and sewer.

"We all know there's another piece of property that's being looked at by a group for employee housing that also wants water and sewer," said Calloway. "Once we start this, where are we going to cut it off? How are we going to stop it? We're going to be inundated with requests."

At Commissioner Marc Hehn's suggestion, Mayor Taylor has formed a committee of Commissioners John Dotson and Amy Patterson to work with hospital representative before ruling on the water/sewer request.

They will report findings at the October 15 Town Board meeting.

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...INVESTING from page 15

usually aren't as bad as they seem.

6. Understand that attorneys are overloaded so the closing may take a little longer than planned.

7. Do your "homework" by searching Realtor.com or other internet home sites. Zillow is the most erroneous so consult your broker.

8. Contact your broker with the MLS numbers you want to see but use their judgement as far as location and other factors that may not suit your needs.

9. If you see something that really interest you don't wait! Be prepared to make a trip quickly or it will be gone!

10. Let your broker guide you and do listen to their advice. A full-time experienced broker is the difference in being elated of deflated!

• *Pat Allen is owner of Pat Allen Realty Group and a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist and also certified in Resort and Second home properties. Her firm was recently selected as a Leading Real Estate Company of the World. She is consistently a top producer and award-winning broker on the plateau. Visit her on the web at Pat Allen Realty Group.com, call 828-526-8784, or 828-200-9179. The office is conveniently located at 295 Dillard Road with a second location at 5121 Cashiers Road at the entrance to Wildcat Cliffs Country Club.*

...ELECTION from page 11

funding and broadband access. It again hurts rural areas and costs rural areas more. During this pandemic we literally have students sitting in parking lots trying to do their homework that requires broadband because up to 50% of the people in this area do not have it at home. Thank God for Bojangles and McDonald's. They offer free internet."

Anything else you would like to for your voters to know?

Gillespie: "I love calling western North Carolina my home. As a native, I grew up fishing, camping, rock hunting, riding the back roads and climbing all over these mountains. I worked on the road for 17 years and as I traveled in and out of the county, I came to realize how truly blessed I had been to grow up in this region. If elected, I will be its voice. I will represent it with integrity and enthusiasm! I am a small business owner and understand the issues a small business faces and will bring that experience with me. My family and I live on the family farm, where we raise registered black Angus cattle, being a farmer, I think I can represent the region with this knowledge and experience."

Landis: "I am currently the Treasurer of the Cherokee County Democratic Party, the President of the Tri-county

• See ELECTION page 22

Gorge road closure from Buck Creek to Brush Creek

9a to 3p Tuesday, Sept. 29 to Thurs. Oct. 1

This is to advise that beginning Tuesday, September 29 US-64 will be closed during the hours of 9a -3p intersection of Buck Creek Road to the entrance of Brush Creek Drive in Highlands, NC.

...TESTING from page 1

students at Blue Ridge School were tested.

"We agree with education and medical science experts that in-school learning is critical and while we know that information about Covid-19 testing can be confusing, we hope parents take advantage of this offer," said HCHF Executive Director Robin Tindall. "As the program continues weekly through the end of the year, testing will be open for additional students and staff to sign up. All results of the test are confidential."

Highlands School Principal Brian Jetter said those students in all grades (K-12) whose parents agreed to testing were tested with no problems.

The test is for the virus; antibody testing is not being done. Testing is being done using a nasal swab, which is like a Q-Tip into the tip of the nose. It may tickle a little, but it causes no pain. It is NOT the deeper more uncomfortable nasopharyngeal swab.

Keeping the risk of Covid-19 transmission low allows schools, restaurants and businesses to stay open and allows people to remain employed.

Principal Jetter said of the 65 staff members, 13 said "yes" to testing.

Only parents of the 347 students attending in-person school were given a permission form; only 67 said "yes" to testing.

"We will continue to add parents that want to get in on the testing; I hope more parents will allow their students to be tested," said Jetter.

— Kim Lewicki

The closure to all through traffic on this section of US-64 is necessary to repair and maintain a damaged section of guardrail. DOT anticipates re-opening the Gorge Road to through traffic no later than Thursday, October 1.

The detour routes for through traffic for both east and west bound directions will be Buck Creek Road (SR 1538) to US-64.

Road closure barricades will be placed on US-64 E at the intersection of Buck Creek Road and US-64 W at the entrance to Brush Creek Drive.

If there are any questions regarding this issue, please call (828) 321-4105.



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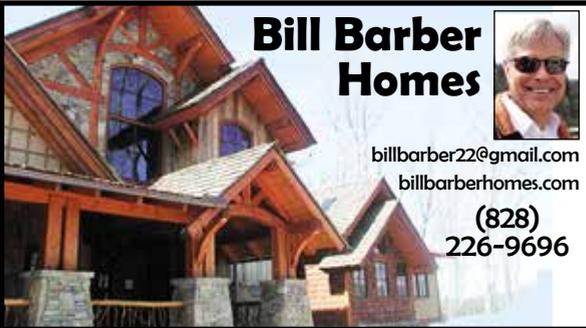
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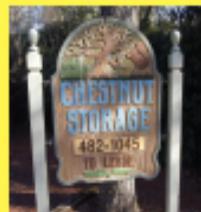
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...ELECTION continued from page 19

Democratic Women (Cherokee, Clay and Graham counties), as well as a candidate for NC House District 120. I am the delegate for this county in the Senior Tar Heel Legislature, which is a nonpartisan advocacy group that works to obtain funding for services for senior citizens across NC (programs such as Meals on Wheels and transportation). I am also one of the people who evaluates scholarship applications annually for the Ronald McDonald college scholarships for this region. And, in my spare time, I enjoy time on my porch with our two dogs, two cats and lots of wild birds. My website is susanlandisnc.com."

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from 16

before the Bolshevik Revolution.

Finally, her "third secret" to the children included the shooting of the Pope, something that occurred on Fatima's feast day, May 13th, 1981, in the failed assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II.

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