

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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Effective Jan 3, '22 no more STRs in R1

There are two sides to every story and Short-term Rentals are no exception. Here and across the country people are vehemently for or against them for a myriad of reasons. Though on the agenda as a closed session issue Thursday night, more than an hour of public comment was dedicated to mostly homeowners who are against STRs particularly in the R1 district of Highlands. It was

• See STRs page 6



Counterclockwise: Baily Baker, Andrew Fehrenbacher, Mary Fehrenbacher, Andrew Harvey, and Jimmy Lewis during the dress rehearsal for Curtains Up now on stage at The Playhouse through Sept. 5.

Curtains Up! debuts at Highlands Playhouse

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

The latest production at the Highlands Playhouse, Curtains Up!, opened last weekend and Director Marshall Carby said the response from the community has

been tremendous. Curtains Up! is a salute to 83 years of performances at the Highlands Playhouse showcasing the very best of musical theater with selections from The Sound

• See PLAYHOUSE page 15

Highlanders lose tough games on the road

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Highlands varsity volleyball team boarded a bus on Thursday for their third game on the road last week, this time they faced off against Murphy. After losing the first two sets, the Lady Highlanders rallied and took the third, but victory was not meant to be with Highlands losing 3-1.

Highlands Brandy Zagal is looking on the bright side and said if they keep playing like they did in the third set, things are looking pretty good.

"That's honestly one of the best games we played so far," said Zagal. "In the other sets we didn't cover very well, but I'm ready to play them again."

Highlands India Clark said

• See HIGHLANDERS page 7

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The first day of Highlands School is a family affair



Teacher Ms. Porter with three of her grands who started Highlands School Monday, Aug. 23. Jensen entered the 4th grade, Porter the 2nd and Deacon started Kindergarten. Beckett and Baylor attend the 3-year-old class at the Gordon Center. Also pictured are parents Caleb and Emily Bowers. See more school photos on page 14.

Owner of Ganilla's is arrested for fraud

By Beth Lawrence
WNC News Share

Two Cashiers residents are out \$100,000 in addition to the money they paid for repairs after

hiring local roofers who allegedly gained access to the couple's checking account.

Carole Davis and Stephen

• See FRAUD page 11

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

The story behind the board's decision to ban STRs in the R1 zone

The short-term rental issue is at the forefront of discussion in Highlands. For that matter it is a contentious topic in communities across the nation. There are no simple solutions or answers.

This past Thursday the Town Board held its monthly meeting by way of ZOOM. I, along with other board members, decided to return to Zoom meetings because of an outbreak of the COVID Delta Variant at Town Hall. The decision was not to exclude anyone from the meeting but out of a sense of caution.

At the public comment period of Thursday's meeting, we heard many comments concerning short term rentals. The board listened to folks with differing points of view for an hour. Everyone who wanted to comment had the opportunity.

The agenda for the meeting was long. The last item was a closed session where the town attorney advised the board on options concerning the issue of short-term rentals. A homeowners' group had submitted a legal argument that contended short-term rentals were not allowed in R1 zones. Our town at-



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

orney gave his legal opinion on that claim and advised the board on other issues related to short-term rentals. In question were the residential zones.

Short-term rentals are allowed in business zones.

As we approached 10:55 pm, our Town Manager informed the board that we had only five minutes of ZOOM time left. The staff had bought four hours of zoom time for several hundred participants. With time running out, the board voted to come out of closed session. Out of closed session the board voted to recess the meeting and then continue the meeting by way of ZOOM on Tuesday at 3 pm.

The session on Tuesday was not a new meeting. It was a continuation of the monthly meeting that had been started on Thursday, August 19. The agenda was simply a continuation of the agenda that had been approved earlier in the meeting. No changes to the existing ordinances were made. The town attorney gave his assessment of short-term rentals in residential zones. In short, he indicated that under current ordinances they are not permitted in R1, and that there are concerns about their legality in R2 and R3. The consensus of the board was to begin enforcement of current residential ordinances starting on January 3, 2022.

I, along with the board members, I have received a large number of emails concerning the STR issue, both for and against. Many folks feel we do not understand all the positions. In previous meetings the board has heard from the public and held discussions concerning STRs. I believe the board understands the pros and cons. The board and staff have considered both sides, examined what other towns have done and consulted with experts. This process will continue.

I normally try to respond to emails. There were so many emails with differing points of view. I decided to read all the emails, but not respond individually. Board members and I appreciate the citizen feedback on this important issue.

Any final decision concerning enforcement of short-term rentals will not be well received by everyone. Legal action has already been implied by one faction or another. I accept and understand citizens options to seek legal recourse. I, along with members of the

Town Board, will strive to make decisions that are legally sound. A review process may continue for months to come.

I hold on to the belief and hope that re-

gardless of the side the board takes, everyone understands that it will be about the long-term interest of Highlands.

• HIC'S VIEW •



"Nope. No one goes there anymore.
It's too crowded."

• WEATHER •

Thu, 26-Aug	Fri, 27-Aug	Sat, 28-Aug	Sun, 29-Aug
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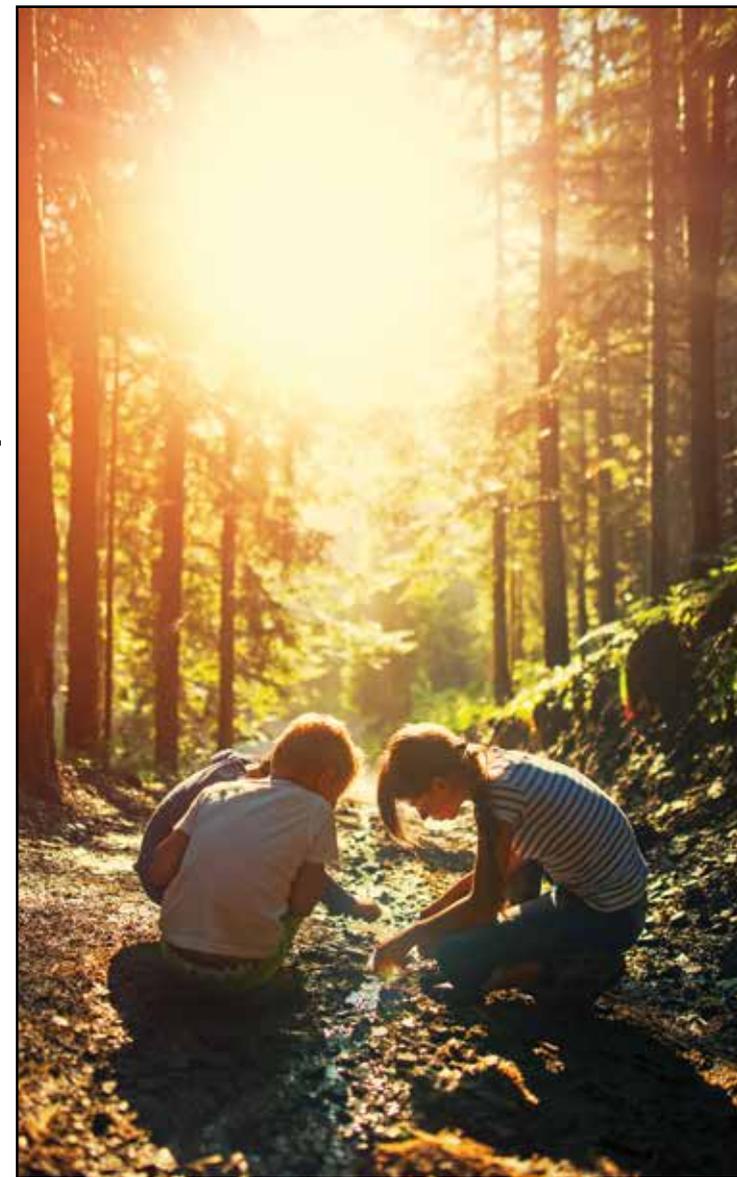
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We reserve the right to reject or edit letters-to-the-editor. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands Newspaper.

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• LETTERS •

Thank you!

To All of our Fireman, Emergency Men and Women & all those who stand by:

I want to express my admiration and appreciation to you all, from Highlands, Scaly and beyond who responded so quickly to an emergency call from my friends house fire, my neighbors, last week.

You were all so impressive in your professionalism, your hard and dangerous work, bravery in what you do, and in the midst of it all, even trying to protect some items from serious water damage.

I hope I never Need you in that way But I rest better, knowing you are out there, prepared to protect us all when we need you!! Thank you

Helen Moore
Highlands

Masked again

Dear Editor,

I got a good belly laugh from your front page article today, "Highlands School students to see 10 new faces this year" and the accompanying photograph.

All six of the "new faces" in the photograph are masked. Seeing them might be difficult. Perhaps the students will see the other four new teachers at large. They should be arrested on sight, of course, if that is possible.

Brian L. Buckley
Highlands

• OBITUARY •

John Frederick Lyle

December 26, 1953 - August 17, 2021

John Frederick Lyle, 67, passed away August 17, 2021.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care is honored to serve John's family.

2021 Upcoming Events



at the
Center for Life Enrichment

August Schedule

- **Pinot Envy: Around the World in Eight Tastes of Pinot**
Friday, August 27 Time: 3-5 Cost: \$40/\$50
Presenter: Cathy Huyghe
- **Botanical Watercolors (Session III)**
Saturday, August 28 Time: 1-3 Cost: \$35/45 per session
Instructor: Freddie Flynn
- **Tour of Appalachian Growers Hemp Farm**
Monday, August 30 Time: 9-2 Cost: \$40/\$50 (lunch included) Presenters: Steve Yuzzi and Lori Lacy

September Schedule

- **An Evening with Ron Rash**
Tuesday, September 7 Time: 5:30-6:30 Cost \$25/\$35
Presenter: Ron Rash and Brian Railsback
- **Critical Thinking**
Wednesday, September 8 Time: 2-4 Cost \$25/\$35
Presenter: Dale Stewart
- **After World War II**
Thursday, September 9 Time: 10-12 Cost \$25/\$35
Presenter: Shaheed Aderinto
- **What Makes a Southern Story Southern**
Monday, September 13 Time: 2-4 Cost \$25/\$35
Presenter: Tamra Wilson
- **Stay Safe During Online Shopping**
Wednesday, September 15 Time: 10:30-3:30 Cost \$80/\$90
Presenter: Loraine Smith
- **...On the Verandah: Favorites Through the Years**
Wednesday, September 22 Time: 11:30-2:00 Cost \$50/\$60
Presenter: Chef Andrew Figel

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...STRs continued from page 1

that prolonged outcry that ran the town's ZOOM allocation to the limit and thus initiated a continuation of the Aug. 19 Town Board meeting to Tuesday, Aug. 24 to solely discuss STRs.

Homeowners who want the town to specifically prohibit STRs in R1 districts

got their wish; whether it will stand forever is up for debate.

Town Attorney Jay Coward has interpreted the town's UDO concerning allowed uses in R1 to mean no commercial activity in R1. He considers STRs commercial activity.

Commissioners voted via consensus

4-1 to instruct town staff to enforce the R1 ordinance as written beginning Jan. 3, 2022. R1 homeowners who rent them out as STRs have until then to stop.

Commissioners made it clear that the enforcement is based on how the code is written now.

"All our ordinances need to be enforced as they are written now, and if we don't like them, we can change them at any time, but at this point we need to enforce what's on the books," said Commissioner Amy Patterson.

Commissioner Donnie Calloway voted against the notion on the grounds that there are too many conflicting opinions across the state and country as to what constitutes commercial.

"There is no clear answer to that," he said.

However, Commissioners Brian Stiehler, John Dotson and Amy Patterson disagreed.

"The state of North Carolina levies a sales tax on commercial activity – accommodations, retail sales – and the fact that STRs have to pay a sales tax means the state considers them a commercial activity and that isn't allowed in our R1 districts," said Patterson.

Commissioners agreed that since there is no ambiguity as to allowed uses in R1, staff should enforce the ordinance disallowing STRs.

But R2 and R3 uses aren't as clear and Attorney Coward agreed. "R1, however, is very clear," he said.

Commissioner Stiehler said he wants clarification concerning the other residential zones, particularly the Tourist Home verbiage, which is allowed in R2 and he doesn't understand what the problem is with allowing STRs in R2 and R3 zones.

The fight about STRs is far from over. Both sides – those against them in the R1 district and those for them – both have lawyers lined up and ready to fight.

And it comes down to money.

Accommodations for visitors is an economic engine that has seen Highlands' businesses across the board and its Chamber of Commerce make more money than ever before.

The town and the county stand to lose sales tax proceeds and the Chamber stands to lose a huge amount of the occupancy proceeds it has been receiving if STRs aren't allowed in residential zones.

"Old Edwards Inn is getting slammed for helping make this decision allegedly be-

cause we are being selfish and want everyone to stay with us," said Richard Delany, OEI President and Managing Director. "We are totally booked and do not need any more reservations and are totally supportive of STRs and in fact we need them. There are not enough hotel rooms in town as it currently stands, and STRs play a key role in our economy in ways people just simply do not understand."

Commissioners said for now this will be the stance they take but what happens in the future regarding the residential ordinances is up for grabs.

Amending ordinances happens all the time but like Commissioner Patterson said it takes time. Amending an ordinance involves verbiage being sent to the Planning Board, an advertised public hearing and a final vote from the Town Board for the amendment to be enacted. But it can be done.

Commissioners feel they have heard pros and cons concerning the issue, most recently via the public comment period of the Aug. 19 meeting where representatives from various neighborhoods -- Dog Mountain, Satulah, Webbmont, Little Bear Pen, and Sagee – implored the town to uphold its R1 ordinance.

"The ordinance clearly states that no commercial activity is allowed in R-1. These short-term renters pay occupancy tax and sales tax just as they would if they stayed at the Old Edwards Inn and that makes them the epitome of a commercial enterprise," said Carol Gable who lives on Dog Mountain Road and whose neighbors have spoken against STRs at a recent Planning Board and Town Board meeting.

However, according to Joseph William Singer Bussey Professor of Law, Harvard Law School in readthebusinessnews.com, not everyone considers short-term rentals commercial activity and that's the ambiguity Commissioner Calloway was referring to.

"The courts continue to be split on this question with the majority holding use of property for short-term rental (such as vacation rental or Airbnb use) as a residential rather than a commercial use," he said. "Restrictions contained in deeds and in zoning ordinances must be strictly construed to favor unencumbered and free use of property. Consequently, in order to be enforceable, deed restrictions that limit the free use of property must be expressed in clear, unambiguous, and peremptory terms."

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...HIGHLANDERS continued from page 1

they played well going up against a tough team like Murphy.

"The third game for the most part is one of the best games we've ever played," said Clark. "That was the first set we've taken against Murphy in a long time."

Clark spent some time over the summer playing sand volleyball in California competing in a national pairs tournament. Her partner while out west was Murphy player Liv Payne, who this time faced Clark from the other side of the net.

Highlands Reese Schmitt said she's tired and sore from consecutive games on the road, but likes how things are coming together so far this season.

"We did great on our third set, then we kind of shut down in the fourth," said Schmitt. "We weren't covering well at all, but we'll adjust some stuff and overall this season I think we're playing pretty good."

Highlands Emma Minton said Murphy brought an intensity from start to finish.

"They had so much energy, they stayed

positive the entire game," she said. "When they made a mistake, they picked each other up."

Minton added that the third game really came together for the Lady Highlanders.

"In the third set, we didn't let them get in our heads, their intensity didn't faze us and we came out on top."

Highlands JV volleyball team loses on the road

The Lady Highlanders junior varsity volleyball team faced a slew of games on the road last week, the third match faced them off against Murphy that ended with a final of 2-0.

Highlands Caroline Woods said a string of games on the road takes its toll.

"We played really hard," she said. "This is our third away game that's at least an hour away, we're not in our home gym, and Murphy has a really loud fan base. So, it's a little stressful."

Woods added said they'll get more practice time in and make improvements.

"We started practice a couple weeks before our first game, so I think for our third game we played pretty good," she said. "We worked really hard out there, but we need to pick up our spirit."

Highlands Abbie Doerter said they need to start talking on the court if they want to start taking home wins.

"We weren't communicating at all,

it was silent out there," she said. "But we played our hearts out and we'll get better."

Doerter added that playing so frequently on the road can be a challenge.

"We're all pretty tired and we haven't practiced all week," she said. "We need to get in the gym before our next game and work on some things and we'll get better."

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Varsity Highlander India Clark looks on as Julia Schmitt spikes the ball.



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The Inevitability of Change

With most changes come the good, the bad, and sometimes the ugly. When my late husband and I moved here 27 years ago, we didn't know anyone. We wanted to open a small bed and breakfast -- something we had always wanted to do. We became acquainted with inns and B&Bs in the late '80s and decided one day we would pursue becoming innkeepers ourselves.

In preparation, I attended a 2-year culinary arts program to learn all about foods worthy of serving our guests. Our opportunity arose in 1994 when a broker called from Highlands to say he had found a "perfect" place. To show our naivety, we thought we could come on the 3rd of July! Trying to get a room was totally impossible and the only

room anywhere near was in a hotel on Lake Rabun. We arrived and the lobby was filled with burly guys without shirts, drinking beer, and watching sports!

I just wanted to go to our room and lock the door! It was filthy and when we called the manager he came to look and only had profanity to say about the housekeeper -- if there actually was one! He changed the sheets and that was it. When I opened the closet there was a huge peephole reminiscent of Norman Bates in Psycho! We left at 5 in the morning and headed to Highlands. The house we came to see did not suit my husband since he grew up in an old house in Jackson, Mississippi and knew the constant maintenance required. We did find the "perfect" house in Flat Mountain Estates that had 6 bedrooms, a mountain view, 2 acres where I could have a perennial garden and hammocks, a sunroom for our dining porch and a wicker-filled front porch. It was perfect in my eyes.

A week later I had a call from a neighbor who accused us of "ruining" his neighborhood...how dare we? Then the "hate" mail from the elderly neighbors arrived in the mail (a form letter) I'm sure my constant Sunday night caller wrote for them. Their fear was that we would have delivery trucks, constant traffic, and neon signs. I assured them none of that would happen and it didn't! The food came from Costco and Sam's, there was no more traffic than the previous owners who had two stores in town, a teenage driver and two other children in school. The nice wooden sign I had at the entrance of our driveway was shot several times and ruined.

We persisted and had a beautiful B&B with lovely rooms, beautiful grounds, and great food. Our guests always returned and recommended us to others, so we really never advertised. A writer from Victoria Magazine suggested we offer cooking classes which we did, and Southern Living Magazine contacted us and took my classes (talk about pressure!) and that led to a 2-page story on our Morning Star Inn. A side note is that when I met the guy who was head of the Chamber at that time, he said we really didn't want to attract those "kind of people" -- whatever that meant! We ran the inn for seven years and met the nicest people who wanted to come and relax in this lovely little town. We



Pat Allen, BIC
Pat Allen Realty Group

enhanced the neighborhood, and the property values went way up! The neighbors came to know us and loved us after adjusting to the change in their neighborhood.

I know you're asking yourselves how does this relate to this column about real estate? Highlands has changed so much over the years, from the quaint town with little local restaurants like the Mountaineer (best burgers ever) and the Highlander with meat and

three, served with sweet tea on tap -- both with vinyl booths that were perfect at the time. Everything pretty much closed at the end of October and reopened in late spring.

Now look around at the town today with its modern hotels and restaurants serving gourmet food fit for the best critic's palate and the best wines available. The clothes selections mimic Rodeo Drive, and the hotel rooms boast the latest in designer finishes and furnishings.

There has definitely been a change in our town due to the Covid crisis and an exodus from crime-ridden big cities. We now see baby carriages and small children on Main Street, younger people wanting to live here, and the streets and restaurants are more crowded than ever before. That's a good thing. There is such a shortage of workers in every profession that some places are having to limit their days of operation. That's a bad thing.

The discussions now on restricting short term rentals in town may turn into an ugly thing with protestors if it's not handled correctly. We simply don't have enough hotel rooms to accommodate visitors and that's a bad thing that needs to be changed to a good thing. Anyone staying in a rental should abide by the same noise restrictions and safety issues that we locals do. The police are to be called and fines are to be issued in the same way they are to full-timers. Let's stay on the "good" path.

• Pat Allen is Broker-in-Charge of Pat Allen Realty Group, newly affiliated with Allen Tate Realtors based in Charlotte. They are NUMBER 1 in sales in North Carolina and the NUMBER 1 independent firm in sales in America! Julie Osborn is Broker-in-Charge of the Wildcat Cliffs Country Club office. Call 828-200-9179 or 828-200-6165 for more information.



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• INK PENN •

Afterschool at the Literacy Council



Happy First Week of School! The Literacy & Learning Center began its After-School Enrichment and Homework Helpers programs at the start of the school year. These programs serve students in grades K-12. Students meet at The Literacy & Learning Center to work on homework and receive individualized academic and literacy help in areas where they need improvement. Students also engage in fun educational activities with partnerships from The Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, The Bascom, and other local nonprofit organizations. All of these programs are totally FREE, and TL&LC is still accepting applications. Take advantage of these programs by visiting www.maconncliteracy.org or calling (828) 526-0863!



OLD EDWARDS INN

Cocktail Swap
WITH THE GARDEN & GUN CLUB

Garden & Gun Club in Atlanta is serving Old Edwards' Appalachian Lemonade and Pomegranate Spritz, and Hummingbird Lounge is shaking up the G&G Kentucky Tea cocktail. Come try these cocktails through September.

'Codebreaker Girls' A Tour de Force in so many ways!

I purchased this brilliant book for my 91-year-old American friend who departed Cherbourg, France with her family on August 5, 1939, aboard the passenger ship, the Empress. They arrived in Quebec City on August 10. To put that in perspective, after France and Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, the ocean liner made one last trip from France on September 8. It was filled to overflowing with people wanting to escape the everlasting toll coming German invasion.

Given her avid interest in history and particularly the WWII era, I knew my friend would love this book. Little did I know. When I took her to see the author at a book signing, she brought her copy, filled with colorful sticky flags marking interesting passages plus several pages of notes. I think her response to the book speaks volumes.

That day, I purchased my copy, and I was equally entranced—though I skipped the sticky notes! Only recently has the work of the codebreaker girls at Bletchley come to light and been detailed in several books. "The Imitation Game," the 2014 movie about Alan Turing and his team, was my first exposure to this history, but there's so much more. I also read "The Rose Code," a fictionalized account of the Bletchley Park experience before reading this book, and the details in the two accounts dovetail in fascinating ways. I highly recommend both.

What sets Jan Slimming's work apart is the focus on the women of Bletchley and their experience as seen through the eyes of her mother Daisy Lawrence—during the war and long after.

There's something for everyone in this non-fiction tale. Some will be fascinated by the ins and outs of the codebreaking pro-



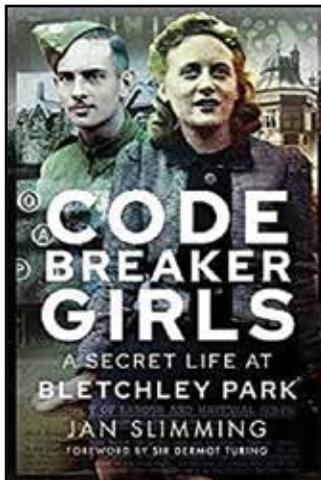
Kathy Manos Penn

cess while others will be intrigued by the familiar names of many who worked there.

The intelligence breakthroughs at Bletchley and how they contributed to the Allies winning the war are all here, but it's the personal aspect that will stay with you. Imagine taking an oath never to reveal what you did during the war, never to speak of three emotionally fraught years of your life.

This book reveals the work and the secrecy took on but one of these unsung heroes and puts me in mind of the saying, "Not all who serve wear uniforms."

- Award-winning author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her cozy mysteries locally at Books Unlimited in Franklin and on Amazon. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com, and follow her on Facebook, www.facebook.com/KathyManosPennAuthor/.



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Rotary refills hand-sanitizer machines

Last week, 11 volunteers from Mountaintop Rotary executed the Rotary Refills program, funded by the Highlands Rotary and Highlands Mountaintop Rotary. The workers cleaned machines, replaced hand sanitizer supply and affixed Rotary Refills-Stay Safe! Stickers on 53 machines. Thanks to all who braved the rain to help keep our community safe! Robin Phillips, Robin Canady, Berry Howard, Jim Spencer, Lorine Spencer, Faye Lockard, Paul Showalter, Karie McClure, Robin Austin, Michael Lanzilotta and Alistar Brady.



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Rotary guest discusses pests and diseases affecting hemlocks and boxwoods

Last week, the guest speaker at Rotary was Christy Breden Kamp of the North Carolina Macon County Cooperative Extension Service. Introduced by Scott Carter, Christy has more than 20 years' service with the Extension Service and is the Horticulture & Community Development Director. Her office supplies much needed horticultural information to land and homeowners, landscapers, and nurseries. Today Christy offered an extensive amount of information on the pests and diseases that are affecting the hemlocks and boxwoods of our area. For more information on these and other topics, visit the Macon County Center, North Carolina Cooperative extension at NC <https://macon.ces.ncsu.edu/>.

...FRAUD from page 1

Dougherty hired D&P Concepts roofing located on N.C. 107 in Cashiers to perform home repairs, said Matt Wike, chief deputy with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office.

A tree fell on their home in 2020, and a neighbor recommended the company.

Piper Betances, 39, of Cashiers was arrested for eight felony counts of obtaining property by false pretense and eight felony counts forgery of instrument, one felony count of conspiracy to obtain property by false pretense, two felony counts of possession of marijuana and one misdemeanor count of possession of drug paraphernalia.

Dustin Gilman, 41, of Cashiers was arrested for one felony count of conspiracy to obtain property by false pretense, two felony counts of possession of marijuana and one misdemeanor count of possession of drug paraphernalia.

Betances is listed as Piper Leffler, senior consultant and project manager on D&P's website, and Gilman is listed as senior project superintendent.

The pair allegedly printed, forged and cashed fake checks made out to Davis and Dougherty's checking account.

Davis and Dougherty paid D&P nearly \$96,000 for the repairs using checks and wire transfers.

Their bank recently discovered additional suspicious transactions on the account and notified the couple.

"Mr. Dougherty notified our office on June 30, and an investigation into the incident was initiated," Wike said. "Piper Betances and Dustin Gilman were arrested on Aug. 3, during the execution of a search warrant at their home in Cashiers."

Betances reportedly cashed eight checks for \$9,200 each and one for \$27,600 between May and August. She allegedly printed fake checks for each of the transactions and made them out to D&P Concepts. The first check was

• See FRAUD page 19



On the spot offers!

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Walk-In Wednesdays Hiring Event

Interviewing for:

- RNs
- CNAs
- Allied Health Professionals
- Support Services Professionals

Event Details

The First Wednesday of every month from 1pm-3:30pm, starting September 1st

Location

190 Hospital Drive, Highlands NC 28741, Front Entrance.

What to bring to this event:
Please bring an updated resume

What to wear:
Casual (come as you are, but please be presentable)

About Highlands-Cashiers Hospital

Join a team that's dedicated to improving more lives in more ways – there's a place for you here!

We're hiring RNs, CNAs, Allied Health Professionals, Support Service Professionals and more. Come join us on Walk-in Wednesdays between 1pm-3:30pm the first Wednesday of every month starting September 1st. Sign-on bonuses offered for select positions.

What is a Hiring Event?

Think of it like a job fair, but for one company and more personal. Hiring events are a great way for employers to fill multiple roles quickly. Hiring is a human process, and they would like to meet you to see if you're a fit!

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

NOTE

• Effective immediately MASKS are required in the Civic Center, Pool and Community Building and all other indoor Town Facilities.

Village Nature Series is in Cashiers on Aug. 31



A dark fishing spider.

Join the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and the Village Green at 5 p.m. on August 31 for a live presentation at the Village Green Commons in Cashiers as local spider expert, Alyssa Fuller, demystifies the spiders and their closest kin.

This program is FREE and is open to all ages, kids welcome!

The Village Nature Series is co-hosted by The Village Green and Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and features experts in their field presenting on wildlife, habitats, conservation, and local cultural heritage. These events are held on the last Tuesday of every month during the summer season. Thank you to Cedar Creek Club for sponsoring these programs!

The Village Green is a public park located in the heart of Cashiers, North Carolina, at the crossroads of Highway 64 and Highway 107, providing a place for community members and visitors to gather for events and to enjoy nature, learn more HERE.

The Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust is a nonprofit organization that protects more than 3,500 acres of biologically diverse mountain landscapes, rare habitats, wildlife corridors, and headwater streams in the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau.

• Movies at Highlands Playhouse will return in the Fall of 2021.
 • Church in the Wildwood, Horsecove Road, has cancelled services for the remainder of the season due to recent CDC guidelines. Call Mary Bean if questions at 1-828-506-0125.

Second Mondays

• The local chapter of PEO, an off-campus sorority founded in the 1800s that provides grants and loans to women who want to return to school or further their education and have a financial need, meets at 10 a.m. If interested, please call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004 for meeting places.

Mon.-Fri.

• Water Aerobics 18 years plus 10:15-11 a.m.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

• The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a to 6p.

Mon. & Wed.

• Cardio Kickboxing with Crystal Corbin 5:30-6:30 p.m. A full body workout that engages every muscle

in the body. With the many benefits of cardio, kickboxing is also a great stress and frustration reliever. We will be making contact with pads. If you have your own gloves and pads, please bring them. Kickboxing combines cardio and strength training to tone muscles and burn fat. Burn off stress and calories while having a great time.

Mon., Wed., Thurs.

• Indoor and outdoor Pickle Ball 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class 8:30am-9:30 a.m. \$25 a month. The class is led by Cathy Hodgson. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9 a.m.

• Highlands/Cashiers Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. Open meetings are held in Highlands at the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at

5:30 p.m. and on Wednesday & Fridays at noon. And held six times a week in Cashiers at Church of the Good Shepherd, Rte 107. For exact meeting times visit our website www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of A.A. call (828) 349-4357.

Tues. & Thurs.

• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30pm. This will be a combination class with many different type of exercise.

First Wednesdays (starting Sept. 1)

• Highlands-Cashiers Hospital is featuring Walk-in Wednesdays Hiring Event. Interviewing for RNs, CNAs, Allied Health Professionals and Support Services Professionals. 1-3:30 p.m.. 190 Hospital Drive, front entrance. On the spot offers. Sign-on bonuses offered for select positions. Bring updated resume. Casual wear.

Wed.-Sat. & Sat. & Sun.

• Live productions at The Playhouse. Wed.-Sat at 8 p.m. and Sat. & Sun. 2 p.m. Thurs.-Sat. For ticket information, visit highlandisplayhouse.org.

• The Bookworm at 555 Main Street is now open Thursday-Saturday 11a to 3p. For more information, call 828-526-3031.

• Mountain Findings Thrift Store at 432 Spruce Street is open Thursday & Friday 10a to 1p. Satur-

day 10a to 4p. The store will only be open during business hours.

Thursdays

• AL-ANON Meetings. The AL-ANON Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. An In Person Meeting with Covid 19 Preventive Measures is held each Thurs Noon at the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., Highlands. An AL-ANON Zoom Meeting is held each Saturday @ 10:15am ID:889-3772-7928 Password: EasyDoesit or to speak with a member of AL-ANON call 828-342-6866.

Thursday Evenings

• Free ESL classes at the Presbyterian Church 5:30-6:30 p.m. There is no registration required; students can just show up and participate. Set at a time that is convenient for students to attend after work, TL&LC also provides snacks for this kid-friendly event. The classes are for all ages, and anyone who wishes to learn English is encouraged to participate. For any questions, visit www.maconncliteracy.org, call (828) 526 - 0863 or email info@maconncliteracy.org

Every Saturday

• Highlands Marketplace in K-H Park on Pine Street. 8a to 12:30p.

Third Saturday

Zahner series continues Thursday nights



On Thursday, Aug. 26, Join the Highlands Biological Foundation (HBF) on Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Highlands Community Building (869 N. 4th Street) for the next installment in their annual Zahner Conservation Lecture Series. This event will feature Owen Carson of Equinox Environmental as he presents "Supremacy or Stewardship? An Exploration of Modern-Day Anthropocentrism."

Simon Pearce Trees Trunk Show



At Acorns on S. 4th Street, Highlands, Simon Pearce Trees Trunk Show is Friday-Sunday, Aug. 27-29 from 10a to 5. Handcrafted in Vermont, Simon Pearce believes in simplicity, quality and artisanship are tenets of a better way of life. Each piece of Simon Pearce's lead-free glassware carries a story that lends meaning, authenticity and grace to every use. From sapling-sized to stunningly stately; brilliantly clear or dusted with snow; wrapped, dappled or silvered: Simon Pearce signature glass trees come in many form. For more info: call (828) 787-1877.

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

• American Legion 370 meets every 3rd Saturday at 10a at the Highlands United Methodist Church in the Fellowship Hall. All veterans are welcome.

Through Sept. 5

• At the Highlands Playhouse, Curtain's Up. This original tribute to the best of Broadway and beyond was created by our very own Playhouse artistic team, led by Marshall Carby and Jimmy Lewis. This all new - original concert - featuring some of your favorite Playhouse performers, will explore the classic musical theatre tunes we all know and love along with today's Broadway and West End hits! For tickets call: 828.526.2695.

Tues., Aug. 24

• The annual Alpha Delta Pi

Soroity alumni luncheon for members in Western North Carolina and North Georgia will be held this summer at Wildcat Cliffs Country Club in Highlands at 11:30 a.m. on Friday. All ADPIs are invited to come and renew acquaintances and college memories. For more information or to make a reservation, please call or email Emily Benson Buskirk at 828-787-1015 or ebbuskirk@gamil.com.

Thurs., Aug. 26

• A Highlands favorite, singer songwriter Mike Kinnebrew returns to The Orchard Sessions Live Concert series on Thursday from 6-8 p.m. Tickets are \$15-\$25. The \$25 ticket includes light bites, and a cash bar is available. THE Orchard Sessions concert series brings a stellar lineup of well-known musicians to The Farm at

Old Edwards - located at 336 Arnold Road in Highlands. For more information about Orchard sessions - and to book online visit oldedwardshospitality.com/ORCHARDSESSIONS.

• Glenville Area Historical Society members, neighbors, friends and history lovers will gather on Thursday at 6PM at the Glenville Community Center for the Society's annual meeting. The event begins with light refreshments and an opportunity for attendees hailing from every corner of the Glenville area and Hamburg Township to meet and greet. The meeting agenda includes a brief business meeting to elect a Board of Directors and hear a review of the 2020-21 year. For additional information call 828 507.0322 or email historicalsocietyglenvillearea@yahoo.com.

• Join the Highlands Biological Foundation (HBF) on Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Highlands Community Building (869 N. 4th Street) for the next installment in their annual Zahner Conservation Lecture Series. This event will feature Owen Carson of Equinox Environmental as he presents "Supremacy or Stewardship? An Exploration of Modern-Day Anthropocentrism." This lecture is graciously sponsored by Kathleen and Jim Milby. All are invited to participate in HBF's free Zahner lectures. Please visit www.highlandsbiological.org or call the Highlands Biological Foundation at (828) 526-2221.

Fri.-Sun., Aug. 27-29

• At Acorns on S. 4th Street, Highlands, Simon Pearce Trees Trunk Show 10a to 5p. Handcrafted in Vermont, Simon Pearce believes in simplicity, quality and artisanship are tenets of a better way of life. Each piece of Simon Pearce's lead-free glassware carries a story that lends meaning, authenticity and grace to every use. From sapling-sized to stunningly stately; brilliantly clear or dusted with snow; wrapped, dappled or silvered: Simon Pearce signature glass trees come in many form. For more info: call (828) 787-1877.

• Friday Night Live in Town Square: 6-8:30p. Trudition

Sat. & Sun. Aug. 28-29

• Mountaintop Art & Craft Show will be held in downtown Highlands at K-H Founders Park (Pine St.) from 10 to 5. The FREE event features regional potters, jewelers, woodworkers, fine artists, etc. plus food. For more info call (828) 526-9227 or visit www.mountaintopshow.com.

Sat., Aug. 28
• NO CONCERT

Sat., Sept. 4
• New York Times best-selling author Kristin Harmel will appear at Hudson Library on Saturday at 12:30 PM to talk about her new novel The Forest of Vanishing Stars.

Books will be available for purchase and signing at this free event, and lunch bites will be served. Attendance at this event is limited and reservations are required. To make a reservation, please call Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

PINOT ENVY: Around the World in Eight Tastes of Pinot

Is Pinot Noir really "finicky" and "easy to get wrong," as many suggest? Does it have a mind of its own? This ancient grape is also described as "seductive," "charismatic" and many other adjectives not normally associated with wine.



South America, Australia and New Zealand.

C o m e and find out what makes Pinot Noir the most romanticized red wine in the world, a wine that inspires emotion and worship among

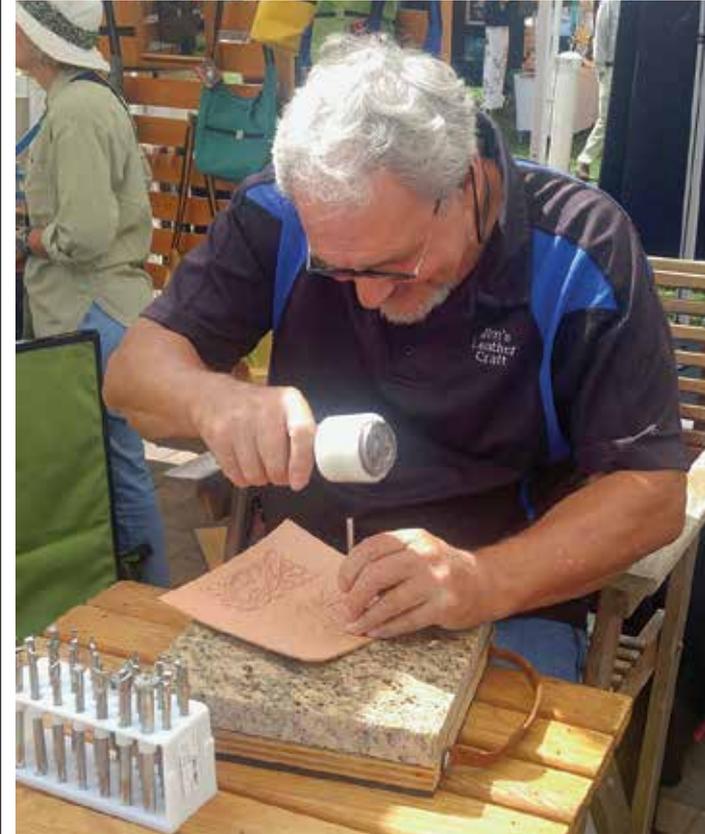
wine enthusiasts.

The Pinot Noir grapes date back to 1375, making it a very old grape. It is grown around the world and the gentle flavors are transformed depending on the soil, climate, elevation and directional facing of the vineyard. Every step of the production of this grape also affects the outcome.

Pinot is one of the easiest wines to pair with food and offers a diversity of flavors. Originally from its ancestral and legendary home in the Burgundy region of France, the world's most prized bottles are still produced there. However, Pinot is also found in the cool climates of Germany and Austria, across the ocean to New York state and California, and all the way to the Southern Hemisphere in

On Friday, August 27, from 3-5p you will have the opportunity to taste and learn about all the varied aspects of Pinot Noir. Presenter Cathy Huyghe is an award-winning journalist and entrepreneur, and an engaging public speaker. She is the co-founder and CEO of Enolytics, a data-driven business intelligence provider to beverage alcohol companies around the world. This event is sponsored by The Center for Life Enrichment, 348 South Fifth Street, Highlands. Cost to members is \$40, non-members \$50. To reserve your space call 828-526-8811 or go to www.cle-highlands.com to register.

Handcrafted items for sale at the MountainTop Art & Craft Show Aug. 28-29



Leathercraft with Jim Boxerman.

Highlands Mountaintop Rotary invites you to their Mountaintop Art and Craft Show this weekend August 28th and 29th. Previously known as the Village Square Shows, these premier events are known for outstanding art and hand-made crafts.

This talented group of artisans are bringing an amazing variety of products to Highlands...fine art, rustic furniture, home decor, pottery, turned wood, jewelry and much more.

Rotary is dedicated to making this fun event also safe by following Covid-19 protocols. Masks will be required by all vendors and shoppers. In addition, hand sanitizer will be at every booth, the walkways will be one way, and social distancing will be encouraged.

Find the show in downtown Highlands at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park on Pine St. from 10 to 5 both days, rain or shine.

There is no admission charge, but donations to Rotary will be much appreciated to help their many civic causes. For more information, call (828) 318-9430. Visit the Mountaintop Show Facebook page for a map and more information.

First day of school 2021-'22 - August 23



Photos
by
Kim Lewicki



...PLAYHOUSE continued from page 1

of Music, Annie, White Christmas, and The Wizard of Oz.

"This is a glimpse into the history of Highlands Playhouse through the lens of musical theater," said Carby. "Odds are audience members will know most of the songs performed, as they are classics.

In addition, Curtains Up! includes contemporary Broadway hits and recent Playhouse favorites such as Guys & Dolls, Into the Woods, Buddy; the Buddy Holly Story, Mamma Mia, and many more!

"The artists who came together for Curtains Up are amazing," said Carby. "Each of them has an incredible amount of talent. However, the thing that may not be as clear to the audience is how these artists collaborate. The harmonies in this show are complex and the performers sound like they have been singing together for years. In reality, they have only been working together for the last six weeks. This is a special group of people."

Curtains Up! features the talents of some returning favorites, including Baily Baker, Andrew Harvey, and Jimmy Lewis who performed in Oklahoma! and Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story.

Baker grew up in Highlands and is thrilled to be spending her 8th season at the Playhouse.

"This show has golden age favorites and also introduces our audience to new works from contemporary musical theatre," said Baker. "We hand crafted this show around what our community loves and what our performers love about being here in Highlands."

Curtains Up! delivers over 30 songs throughout the 2-hour show and Baker tackles some iconic numbers, including Somewhere Over the Rainbow.

"It can always be difficult to perform such iconic numbers because people have strong memories of hearing the original work," said Baker. "I think the goal is to do justice to the original composer while also bringing your own authentic voice to the stage."

Lewis has returned for his 7th season at the Playhouse and reprises one of his most memorable roles as the Big Bopper in Curtains Up!

"Playing iconic roles and singing these

well-known songs is so much fun because you know they have such a deep history with our audience and people enjoy them," said Lewis. "It also is a bit nerve racking because the bar for how the performance has to go is set much higher than on songs that are less well known. But singing incredible songs just makes the work that much more enjoyable!"

Lewis has been performing at the Playhouse since 2013 and said it's an honor to return to such a special place.

"I fell in love with this town in 2013 because of the quality of the productions, the team that has been created to produce the shows, and the people in this town being so friendly and inviting every year," said Lewis. "I feel honored to perform for this town and that they allow me back every year. I've also stayed here in the off season back in 2015 as the Outreach Coordinator and at the end of 2019 was promoted to Assistant Artistic Director when Marshall Carby became Artistic Director. I feel like Highlands has truly become my summer home!"

Set Designer Sarah Klocke said the primary goal for the design of Curtains Up! was capturing the magic of Broadway.

"Our limited production budgets helped us find creative solutions, such as reimagining past scenic units and incorporation theatrical lighting in never before seen ways at the Playhouse," said Klocke.

Live theater was hit hard in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, and Klocke said it was generally understood going into this season that all elements of tech and design would need stretch their creativity as well as their budget.

"Each designer was aware we were working with limited resources and funds," said Klocke. "We were all on board to create the highest quality possible within these parameters. To be honest, it was exciting to approach this season's scenic designs with a limited budget. I felt challenged and fulfilled by the task of operating in limitations surrounding COVID. However, I do look forward to bringing larger scenic designs to Highlands Playhouse in the near future.

Performances of Curtains Up! run through Sept 5. To purchase tickets, visit www.HighlandsPlayhouse.org or call the box office at 828-526-2695.

...STRs continued from page 6

Many against STRs, are OK with renting houses in the residential districts for more than 90 days because those renters don't pay occupancy tax or sales tax. They

do, however, have to report the income derived from 90+ days on their income taxes.

Bill Clarkson, of the Webbmont neigh-

• See STRs page 17

Friday Night Live

OUTDOOR CONCERT SERIES

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6pm

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Silly Ridge Roundup

SEPT 17

Southern Highlands

SEPT 10

Curtis Blackwell

SEPT 24

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Saturdays on Pine

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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

Local couple says 'thanks' with ice cream



Last week John and Ann Tate treated Highlands essential workers – health-care professionals, EMS personnel, Highlands Fire & Rescue volunteers and police officers to free ice cream from Sweet Caroline's ice cream truck which was parked at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.

– Photos by
Brian O'Shea

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Opening in
September

...STRs continued from page 6

borhood – one of the neighborhoods in the coalition against STRs explains it this way.

“With the exception of occasional trash mishaps (unsecured and available to bears), we’ve had no problems with wild parties or excessive noise. My primary objective in this whole matter is to foster a closer community within our neighborhood.”

He said rentals longer than two or three nights would enable neighbors to get to know each other and thereby fit into the community.

Side effects of some STRs – noise, trash in the street, overflowing septic systems and traffic – are issues of most concern for those against STRs, as is what they call the “hollowing” out of neighborhoods where houses are purchased primarily by investors who want to rent, not be a part of a neighborhood.

Bryan Baldwin’s name was given as the contact for the Satulah neighborhood. He has owned his home for 32 years and like others, his views are mixed.

“I am not officially representing anyone but myself and my family. However, I was authorized to express opposition to the STRs by eight other neighbors (four homes) near me on Satulah Mountain. If I did a survey, I am sure that number would increase dramatically. Our neighborhood is in the process of attempting to organize and form a Homeowners Association. This should take another six months. I think many of the homeowners up here are summer residents and may not be aware of the issue or are as sensitive to the issue as the people of Dog Mountain. Satulah doesn’t have the number of STRs as Dog Mountain. Nevertheless, this issue needs to be resolved, and I hope the town government continues to work toward a solution.”

The use of Homeowners Associations (HOAs) has been named as one way to police STRs in residential areas. But Charles Nalbhone who lives on Dog Mountain, and whose le-

gal expertise is being used by the Dog Mountain neighborhood says HOAs won’t help.

“Not every neighborhood that is within the town limits has an HOA, and even among those neighborhoods that do have HOAs, not all of the HOAs have the power under their HOA documents to regulate things like STRs,” he said. “In addition, some HOAs are voluntary, so not all homeowners in a given subdivision choose to join.”

Nalbhone also said many of the older neighborhoods within the town limits fall into that category, and thus have always relied on the town’s zoning ordinance to protect them from illegal uses in residential zones.

“And even if there is an HOA within the town limits that currently prohibits STRs, that fact does not eliminate or waive the town’s obligation to enforce its law,” he said. “Our position is not based on our definition of commercial, nor as it is used in the zoning ordinance which is very broad. Highlands UDO classifies overnight accommodations as a commercial use. Commercial uses of any kind (including overnight accommodations) are totally banned in R-1 zones.”

But the HOA issue is even up for debate.

According to Mike Stonestreet, co-owner/president of Community Association Management Services, in North Carolina, HOA provisions can address STRs, the neighborhood just has to address it.

“The advent of services like Airbnb and VRBO have brought into question rental regulations in communities as there has been an uptick in short-term rentals. Many members may not like unknown persons coming and going each week and seek to limit the number of rentals or put a rental cap in place. This is an issue that it is appropriate to address, but it must be addressed in a clear manner to be effective. Vague provisions such as ‘no lot shall be used for commercial purposes’ probably isn’t going

to successfully reduce the number of short-term rentals in the community. However, enacting a provision such as ‘all rental leases must be at least 6 months long’ would be appropriate in this scenario. Overall, it is important to keep in mind that any amendments or rules that seek to limit an owner’s use of their property must be explicitly stated, enforceable, backed up by good reasons, and properly explained. Amending covenants most often requires a 67% affirmative vote of the membership,” he said.

And of course, there is the Vacation Rental Act that was adopted in 1999 that outlines rental agreements and the handling and accounting of funds for Vacation Rentals, which legitimizes STRs.

§ 42A-2. Purpose and scope of act. The General Assembly finds that the growth of the tourism industry in North Carolina has led to a greatly expanded market of privately owned residences that are rented to tourists for vacation, leisure, and recreational purposes. Rental transactions conducted by the owners of these residences or licensed real estate brokers acting on their behalf present unique situations not normally found in the rental of primary residences for long terms, and therefore make it necessary for the General Assembly to enact laws regulating the competing interests of landlords, real estate brokers, and tenants. (1999-420, s. 1.)

Definitions: Residential property. - An apartment, condominium, single-family home, townhouse, cottage, or other property that is devoted to residential use or occupancy by one or more persons for a definite or indefinite period.

Vacation rental. - The rental of residential property for vacation, leisure, or recreation purposes for fewer than 90 days by a person who has a place of permanent residence to which he or she intends to return.

At the meeting, however, commissioners focused solely on the current R1 ordinance and nothing else – no other legal opinions or legislation regarding the issue was considered.

– Kim Lewicki

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Another school year



Rev. W. Bentley Manning
Episcopal Church of the Incarnation

I still remember, like it was yesterday, the start of another school year. I remember tying up new pairs of shoes, organizing all the perfectly sharpened pencils, and carefully arranging the subject tabs of my binder. But what I remember, maybe more clearly than the items I packed into my backpack, were the emotions I carried with me on the first day of class. I'm sure you can recall those same feelings of anticipation, uncertainty, excitement, and every other emotion that accompanied you to school after the long days of summer.

While I'm not sure I want to relive those first days of class again, I do find myself longing for that great sense of anticipation that marked so much of my childhood. The kind of anticipation born from the knowledge that there is still more of the world to experience and discover.

Part of the loss of such anticipation is born, I think, from the false notion that growth, discovery, and development are categories largely reserved for children and youth alone. To put it another way, it is the misguided idea that we adults have already "grown up."

Thanks be to God, that life in Christ doesn't allow for such narrow ways of thinking! The Christian tradition, like many other faith traditions, doesn't assume we will ever stop growing, learning, or discovering more about God and the world he has made. There is a verse in Psalm 27 in which the psalmist declares "You [God] speak in my heart and say, 'seek my face.'" The psalmist replies: "Your face, Lord, I will seek." This verse affirms and tells us that the Spirit of God is always reaching out to God's people in order to draw us out of our own selves and into the fathomless depths of God's life and love.

Saint Augustine, one of the great Church Fathers, observed that "we seek [God], because [God has] already found us." What a remarkable claim! But Saint Augustine also asked, "How can you draw close to God if you are already far from your own self?" It seems if we are not in touch with ourselves, it will be very difficult to be in touch with God.

As our children and grandchildren head back to school may we strive to rediscover the great anticipation of our childhood. The first step to such recovery might be getting in touch with our own hearts - what we fear, what we love, what we hope for, and what we most deeply desire. Reading the scripture of our own lives, and an openness to the next human moment, might allow for the kind of anticipation that prayerfully looks for God's life and action in the world around us.

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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

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CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel, Pastor 828-743-5298

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Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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Tues. Guys study 8am, Gals 10am.

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Testimony Meeting: 5:30 p.m. on the 3rd Wed.

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

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10:45am Children's Program, Youth-12:15 - 2:30pm Tues:

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Thurs: Men's Bible Study 7:30-8:30 a.m.

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Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

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

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Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m., Choir: 6p

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Aug. 13. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Aug. 13

• At noon, officers were notified about damage to a rock wall at a residence on N. 4th Street.

Aug. 14

• At 10:45 a.m., officers were notified of an incident of indecent exposure by a man in Highlands Plaza.

Aug. 16

• At 8:20 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 west near N. Cobb Road.

Aug. 18

• At 5 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 east near Foreman Road.

Aug. 22

• At 2:55 p.m., Josimar Sanchez Chavez, 26, of Highlands, was arrested for DUI and driving without a license. He was issued a \$500 secured bond. His trial date is Sept. 10.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Aug. 16.

Aug. 16

• At 4:27 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital.

• At 5:34 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Cullasaja Club Drive.

Aug. 17

• A little past midnight, the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Mack Wilson Road.

• At 7 a.m., the dept. provided public assistance at the hos-

pital.

• At 2:43 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance to a location on Main Street where a person was stuck in an elevator.

• At 4:29 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Big View Drive.

• At 5:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Main Street.

Aug. 18

• At 9:35 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to the hospital.

• At 10:11 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on NC 106.

• At 1:43 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible gas leak at a location on Old Edwards Lane.

• At 4:16 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Queen Mountain.

• At 4:32 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on N. 4th Street.

Aug. 19

• At 8:06 a.m., and at 12:07 the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Naiad Terrace.

• At 12:38 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Oak Street.

• At 1:36 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance to a location on Oak Street.

• At 3:20 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Many Road.

• At 9:39 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Naiad Terrace.

• At 9:44 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

...FRAUD continued from page 11

cached on May 18.

“A copy of that check was provided,” the search warrant states. “And the physical appearance of the checks was significantly different from the appearance of the check issued. Additionally, the check numbers were not similar to those on the legitimate check.”

Fake businesses

During the investigation, detectives discovered Betances had numerous alias surnames including Chilson, Wallace, Leffler and Gilman.

Investigators also found she and Gilman were connected to several front businesses.

“JCSO investigators were able to execute search warrants at several business locations associated with D&P Concepts in the Cashiers and Highlands areas,” Wike said.

The alleged bogus businesses listed in the warrant are Magnum Roofing, New Horizon Concepts, Chilson Enterprises, Betances Enterprises, RPW Enterprises and Leffler Company, none of which appeared to be operational.

“Deputies went to those businesses and found them to be unlocked,” the warrant states. “It appeared as though they were open; however, no one was at these locations.”

One of the businesses owned by Gilman Enterprises was Ganilla’s Fine Vanilla Products where the computer investigators believe Betances used to print the fake checks was located.

During their searches of the businesses and Gilman and Betances’ home on Audubon Trail in Cashiers, depu-



Dustin Gilman



Piper Betances

ties seized assorted documents and paperwork, computers, laptops, computer tablets, 13 credit cards, numerous cell phones, external digital storage drives, checkbooks and “a stack of check paper” all believed to be connected to the fraud.

Betances is also accused of a similar scam in February. Kenneth Steffan alleges he paid Betances with a check for \$550.

In April his account received a request for a wire transfer in the amount of \$7,800. The bank declined the payment and notified Steffan.

During the investigation, JCSO learned Betances was wanted in Nueces County, Texas for more than 80 financial fraud crimes committed between 2012 and 2015 and had been charged with more than 21 similar crimes in Florida between 2001 and 2007 leading to a number of convictions.

Betances is currently serving 18 months probation for felony obtaining property by false pretense in Jackson County. She has a violation hearing on Sept. 13.

Both Betances and Gilman have been assigned public defenders.

Betances is being held in Jackson County Detention Center in lieu of a \$550,000 bond.

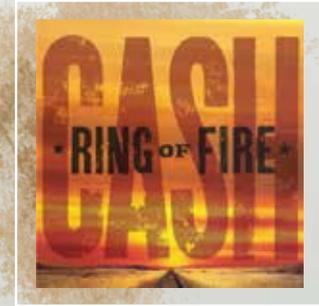
Gilman is free after posting a \$25,000 bond.

Anyone who has used D&P Concepts, or done business with Betances or Gilman and believes they have been the victim of fraud is asked to contact Jackson County Sheriff’s Office at 586-8901, Wike said.

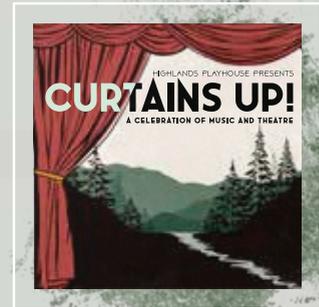


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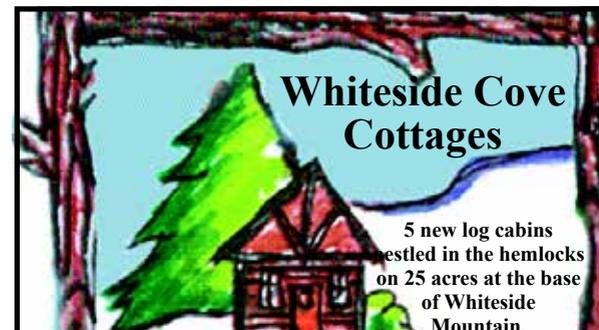
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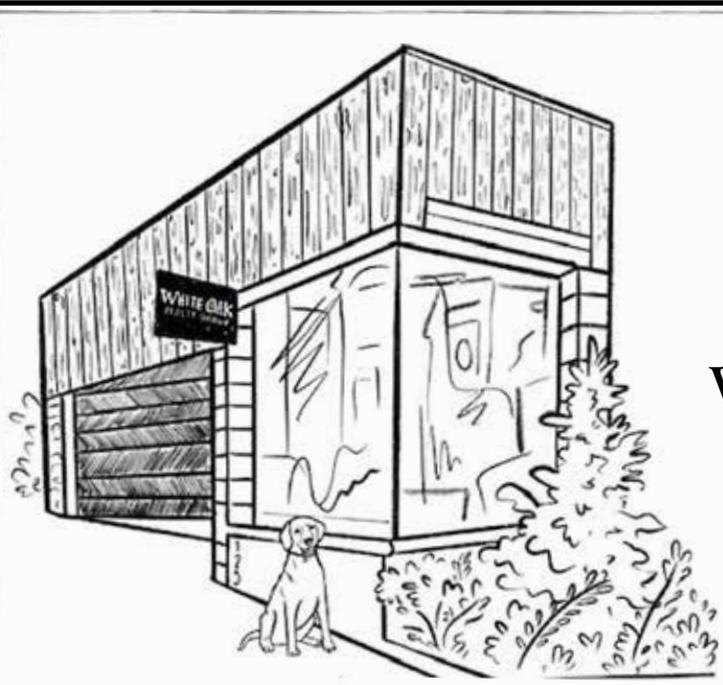
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