

Highlands Newspaper

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Phase 2 vaccine begins in Highlands

MC Health announced five more COVID deaths since Dec. 31 - now at 17

Though unexpected, NC Governor Roy Cooper's orders for prioritization of vaccinations, jumped to Phase 2 the end of last

week for anyone 65 years or older. Highlands Cashiers CEO/CNO Tom Neal quickly orchestrated the first vaccination initiative

for Highlands area and Cashiers area residents.

The first COVID-19 vaccine
•See VACCINE page 4

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HCLT protects green corridor on Highway 28 entering Highlands

Twenty-eight acres of greenspace that borders the entrance to Highlands from Cashiers have been permanently conserved by Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust (HCLT). The tract lies along the south side of Highway 64 extending from Sherwood Forest Road nearly to Poplar Road, a distance of a mile. This property is not only beautifully forested but it contains some cliff face that provides habitat for a rare salamander species.

In the fall of 2019, the Liz. Development Corporation, the developer of the Sherwood Forest subdivision, conducted an online auction where numerous lots and one large 28-acre tract were put up for sale. At that time, a group of Little Bear Pen homeowners, headed by Cantey Davis, were successful in acquiring that tract. To insure that the 28 acres remains undisturbed and undeveloped, the LLC recently donated the property to the HCLT.

Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust helps landowners perma-

nently protect their property in two primary ways. Often they utilize a legal tool called a conservation agreement or easement and in this case, the landowner retains ownership of their land but donates some or all of their development rights. Alternatively, they sometimes accept donations of land. Some donated lands like this one will be conserved to protect the green space that lines the entrance to the Town of Highlands.

Despite the challenges 2020 brought, HCLT was able to conserve 38 acres of donated lands, accepted the transfer of four conservation easements from The Nature Conservancy and worked with the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy to acquire two tracts totaling over 200 acres that will ultimately be sold to the US Forest Service.

"All in all it was a good year for land conservation," said HCLT Ex. Dir. Dr. Gary Wein, but we have more work to do in 2021."



Highlands Cross Country Team. Front row from left are Aiden Dendy, Stephen Pierson, Francisco Gooch, Leela Chrestman, Nicole Taylor, Claire Worley, Blaine Dendy. Back row from left are Coach Derek Taylor, Claire Sherwood, James Moore, Timothy McDowell, Cayden Pierson, Isaiah Vilardo, Jim De La Cruz, Coach Blakely Moore.

Highlands takes 3rd in middle school cross country championship

By Brian O'Shea
 Plateau Daily News

Highlands boys and girls cross country teams both took

third place at the Smokey Mountain Conference Middle School Championship on Wednesday in Swain County.

Athletes ran 2 miles and on the girl's team Claire Worley placed 5th, Claire Sherwood placed 9th,
• See CROSS COUNTRY page 4

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Vaccine is here; TB meeting is tonight

Tonight is the January meeting of the Highlands Town Board. It will be a ZOOM meeting that starts at 7 pm. The ZOOM access information is on the town website. We will begin the meeting with public comment. If anyone wants to make a public comment, or a comment for the public hearing on the agenda, please call in advance town hall at 526-2118, or email me at mayor@highlandscnc.org. We will place folks on a list so we don't miss anyone wishing to speak.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

At the beginning of the meeting, I will publicly thank Tom Neal and the staff of the Highlands Cashiers Hospital for their work in quickly setting up a COVID-19 vaccination program at the Highlands Recreation Center.

Vaccinations began yesterday and will continue for possibly two months. I will ask Tom to give us an update on the vaccination program. I have been amazed at how quickly the vaccinations have started.

I am reluctant to provide vaccine information in the limited space of this column. The newspapers have published this

information. Also, Macon County website and the Highlands Cashiers Hospital websites have the information. People who are not internet active can call the Macon County COVID-19 Vaccination Call Center at (828) 349-2517 for assistance.

I do encourage all residents 65 and older to get the vaccination during this new phase. Even with the vaccination we will still need to wear masks, socially distance and frequently wash our hands for several more months. I'm still optimistic that 2021 will be the year we turn the corner on this virus and go back to some kind of normal living.

Also, at tonight's meeting there will be a public hearing concerning an annexation petition from a resident on Arnold Road. A board decision will follow after this hearing.

On another note, the data collected from the Highland Community Plan survey is now being reviewed and discussed. The steering committee recently met with the plan professionals to conduct a first review of the information. Information about the Highlands Community Plan can be accessed through the town website.

Some items at the top of the priority list were short-term rentals and the environment. Many full-time residents want the Town Board to address the short-term rental issue. An overall impression that I got from the survey results is that people are very concerned about the preservation of this unique environment and the appearance of the town. Many people worry that the pressure for development will destroy of the beautiful Highlands area.

The folks in Cashiers are also engaged in this discussion as a review of a proposed large-scale development in Cashiers is now underway. Issues such as traffic congestion and water and sewer resources are primary concerns. Ironically, some of the most outspoken advocates for limited development are our most recent residents. It is a recurring narrative, "I'm here, so now no more development or growth, except I do want all the amenities of the large city I fled."

Preservation versus progress will continue to be an ongoing balancing act on the plateau.

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



a group of Mountaintop Rotarians gathered to split wood and delivered two cords of red oak to the Emergency Council where it will be given to those who need wood to heat their homes this winter. More wood splitting will be done through the winter months.

Need help staying warm?

The Highlands Emergency Council (H.E.C.) will be accepting applications from those requesting financial help for the cost of propane gas, fuel oil, and wood.

Monday, January 25, Tuesday, January 26, Wednesday, January 27 and Thursday, January 28

Please come by H.E.C. from 10 am to 2 pm located on Poplar Street (next to Wilson Gas). Proof of income is required. No applications will be accepted after these dates. Applications must be filled out in person; no applications will be taken over the phone.

• WEATHER •

Thu, 21-Jan	Fri, 22-Jan	Sat, 23-Jan	Sun, 24-Jan
			
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... VACCINE continued from page 1

rollout for those in Phase 2 was at the Highlands Recreation Center on Wednesday, January 20, from 1 to 6 pm during which 350 people were vaccinated with the Moderna vaccine. The vaccination clinic will continue each Wednesday 1 to 6 p.m. for the next eight weeks as long as the vaccine continues to be available.

Those who want the vaccine have to jump through a few hoops, but it is pretty easy.

First applicants have to register with the NC State CVMS (COVID-19 Vaccine Management System). To begin the registration process, applicants have to go to <https://bit.ly/highlandsvaccinepreregistration> and submit their name, email and phone number. This system is being used to track and allocate vaccines across North Carolina.

Then, applicants get an email from the state that requires additional information to complete the registration. Once the CVMS registration is completed, a "code" is generated which means that appointments to receive the

vaccine can be made by emailing highlandscovidvaccine@gmail.com. It should be noted that the "code" is not a code of numbers, it's a "email phrasing" that proves the applicant is registered with the state.

Those who make an appointment to receive the vaccine are automatically given an appointment for the second dose – usually in the same time slot as the first one but four weeks later; Feb. 17 for those who were vaccinated on Jan. 20. A booster shot is required for the vaccine to be considered effective.

"We are planning to run the clinic every Wednesday from 1-6 as long as we have the vaccine available for at least the next 8 weeks," said Neal. The call center will also assist with registering people with the state's Covid Vaccine Management System (CVMS). Additional vaccine sessions will be scheduled, including an on-site location in the Cashiers area in the near future."

For additional assistance, e-mail: highlandscovidvac-

cine@gmail.com or call 828-526-1310.

Applicants are encouraged to register with the North Carolina Covid19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS) as soon as they can which will allow them to take advantage of future clinics or to receive the Covid19 vaccine at other locations., said Neal.

The pre-registration Link for CVMS: <https://bit.ly/highlandsvaccinepreregistration>. The next clinic is Jan. 27.

Other Locations to obtain the Covid19 vaccine:

Macon County Public Health: 828-349-2517 and Jackson County Public Health: 828-631-HELP. (See more on page 8.)

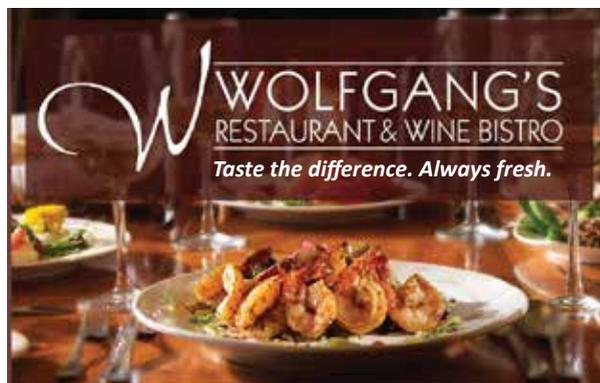
Neal said it took a village to make Highlands Cashiers Vaccine Initiative to happen.

"We want to thank the growing consortium of community partners who are making this Highlands-Cashiers Plateau Vaccine Initiative possible," he said.

The consortium is the Town of Highlands, Jackson

• See VACCINE page 10

• HIGHLANDS DINING •



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... CROSS COUNTRY continued from page 1

and Cayden Pierson placed 12th. On the boy's team; Jim De La Cruz placed 11th and James Moore placed 12th.

Runners faced off against 8 other schools, including Andrews, Cherokee, Hayesville, Hiwassee Dam, Martin's Creek, Murphy, Robbinsville, and Swain.

Highlands Coach Blakely Moore said the girls had their best race of the season.

"Claire Worely and Cayden Pierson ran great races that were very consistent with their training and previous performances throughout the year," said Moore. "Claire Sherwood and Nicole Taylor exceeded our expectations. They were much further up in the pack than they have been in other meets and ran amazing races. Leela Chrestman has consistently improved throughout the season and showed that yesterday as she was significantly faster than in other competitions."

Moore added that the boys did not have their best performance compared to other competitions. Timmy McDowell, one of Highlands' top runners had surgery over the Christmas break, which impacted his performance.

She said the other boys fatigued quickly from not training enough over the break. However, Jim De La Cruz, Blaine Dendy, and Francisco Gooch had their best performances of the season.

De La Cruz was Highlands' top team runner at Wednesday's meet for the first time this season, Dendy had an almost 4-minute PR, and Moore said Gooch was further up in the pack than he has been at previous meets.

"The other boys ran well, it just wasn't a stand out performance in comparison to other competitions," said Moore. "Derek (Taylor) and I were both very happy with how close together our runners were. Many of them finished within a few seconds of one another. This consistency was key to our team score."

Highlands Coach Derek Taylor said he thought the runners did a great job.

"The girls were actually tied for second and were third because the tiebreaker goes to the displacer and we

• See CROSS COUNTRY page 5

... CROSS COUNTRY continued from page 4



Teams running the 2-mile stretch in Swain County.

didn't have enough girls for a displacer," said Taylor. "Everyone's performance had improved for the year and we had five all conference runners, and I'm pretty sure the boys were undefeated during the season. The season was long, but we are the only sport so far to have finished our season."

All-conference runners include Claire Worley, Claire Sherwood, Cayden Pierson, James Moore and Jim De La Cruz.

The season was long because of the adjusted calendar due to COVID-19.

"COVID changed everything," said Moore. "We would have been done with the season in October if not for the new COVID sports calendar. This pushed us into cold winter months. The kids frequently trained in subzero temperatures, throwing snowballs at one another in between reps."

Athletes were required to wear masks anytime they were not actively running and practice social distancing, which was particularly challenging on long bus rides to competitions, said Moore.

Several of Highlands' runners also had quarantines throughout the season, missing weeks of practices and competitions at a time.

While COVID may have complicated the season, Moore said she's proud of the athletes for staying focused throughout the extended season, running in the cold, and doing their part to social distance.

"We were very happy with the season

and proud of our athletes," she said. "We constantly adapted to new schedules, quarantines, new social distancing, and mask wearing protocol. Somehow it all came together, we were able to finish our season and saw significant improvement in each athlete throughout the year."

Moore added that running was a great outlet for middle schoolers who missed so much in the spring because of the pandemic, and the team has already begun planning for track season.

"Everyone was content with third place but hope to improve this placement next year," she said. "The athletes were already making plans and setting goals for track season on the bus ride back!"



Highlands Leela Chrestman going head to head with a Hiwassee Dam runner sprinting for the finish line

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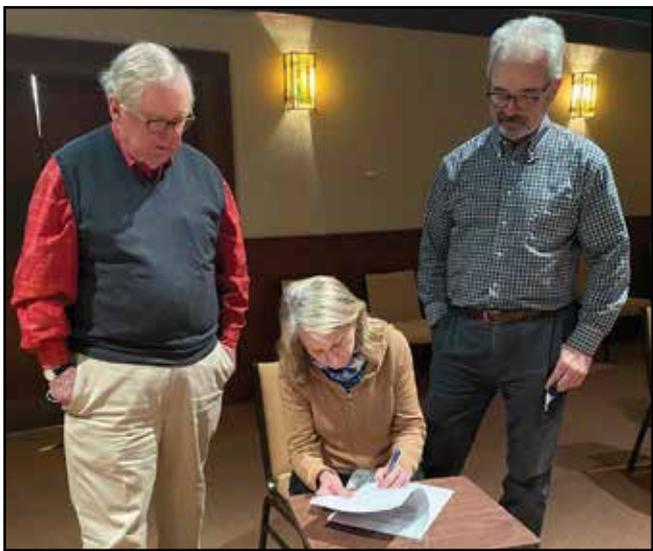
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The revisioning of the Performing Arts Center takes a crucial step

Nancy Harrison, PAC President signing the Architect's contract for the renovations and restructuring of the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street. Also shown, left is Wade Coleman, Building Committee Chairman and Jim Ward, PAC Board Member and Construction Owner's Representative. "We continue working on the final planning for the site," said PAC Director Mary Adair Trumbly. "The construction will begin June 2021 and the target date for completion of the building is June 2022."

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Know the signs of potential issues when purchasing a home

Buying real estate is an endeavor. Key steps in the process include getting to know the area and the market, solidifying a budget, and understanding priorities prior to starting a property search. While selecting a home may sound easy in theory, in practice it can be quite daunting. Once the ideal home is found the real work begins. Understanding potential issues and recognizing red flags is helpful. A REALTOR® is an invaluable asset thought this process, helping ensure a solid investment is made.

Signs of potential issues in a home are many and varied. Additionally, these signs may not be glaringly obvious. After all, homes that are listed for sale are typically dressed to impress. As such, a fresh coat of paint could be hiding water damage. Likewise, a floral smell could be hiding the scent of mold and mildew. It is possible



Lynn Kimball
Broker

Berkshire Hathaway
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that a sparkly appearance could be masking issues or symptoms of issues. Be on the lookout for the signs and avoid purchasing a money pit.

What are some common signs of bigger issues? As men-

tioned before, fresh paint and fresh scents can be hiding issues. Additionally, furniture can be hiding issues with the flooring underneath. This operative word here is "can". Not every paint job, scented candle, or armoire is hiding something. However, paint on wood trim can be covering healthy wood or rotted or water-damaged wood. A bulky dresser could be hiding a stained or torn carpet, and potpourri could be hiding cigarette smoke or mustiness. A buyer should always take off the rose colored glasses and try to see a home at face value. Any suspicions should always be noted.

Every home purchase should have a Home Inspection. This means that a home inspector will conduct an inspection and deliver a list of issues. It is important to realize that every inspection will reveal issues but not every inspection reveals big issues. It is critical that homebuyers understand the overall health and condition of a home prior to closing day. While your REALTOR® will ensure that a home inspection is done, but it never hurts to have a general awareness as the buyer.

• Lynn Kimball has over 48 years of real estate experience, with over 35 years serving the Highlands Cashiers area. She has gained Emeritus Status with the National Association of Realtors and previously served as a Director and Vice President for the Highlands Cashiers Board of Realtors. Whether you are interested in searching properties or comprehensive information about our area, you are invited to visit her user friendly website at www.signature-properties-nc.com. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices BHHS Meadows Mountain Realty has three locations: 488 Main Street in Highlands, 132 Hwy 107S in Cashiers or visit Lynn at her 2334 Cashiers Road location in Highlands across from Highlands Falls Country Club. Lynn Kimball may be reached at 828-421-8193 or by email at Lynn@bbhsmmr.com

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Macon County Public Health COVID-19 Vaccination Registration Updates

Macon County Public Health is now registering individuals to receive the COVID-19 vaccination at two Call Centers as well as online. The options are as follows:
Option 1: Individuals may access a

web link on the right side of the Macon County homepage at maconnc.org and complete the form to include their last name, first name and email address.

Once this information is submitted,

Macon County Public Health will be able to upload the information into the state COVID-19 Vaccination Management System (CVMS).

After CVMS receives the submission, an email will be sent to the address provided allowing the individual to complete the registration process and set-up their password. Following confirmation that their registration is complete and their phase confirmed, individuals may call 828-349-2517, Option 2 to schedule their appointment once we begin vaccinating their eligible phase/group.

Option 2: Individuals may call 828-349-2517, Option 2 and speak with a representative who will get them registered in the state COVID-19 Vaccination Management System (CVMS) after completion of a brief questionnaire. Once the registration has been completed, an appointment will be scheduled. No additional steps are needed.

Option 3: Individuals may call 828-524-1500 and speak with a representative who will get them registered in the state COVID-19 Vaccination Management System (CVMS) after completion of a brief questionnaire. Once the registration has

been completed, an appointment will be scheduled. No additional steps are needed.

Call Centers are operating 8am – 5pm Monday through Friday. As of this week, NC DHHS transitioned from vaccination phases to groups. In accordance with NC DHHS's Vaccination Plan, Macon County is currently providing vaccinations to individuals in Group 2, individuals 65 and older regardless of health status. An updated graphic has been provided with this release.

The entire state of North Carolina is under a "Safer at Home" executive order, currently under phase three with masks required to be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19; however, anyone of any age can become infected with this illness.

Therefore, we ask that community members strictly follow the governor's orders and continue to practice social distancing, as well as safe hygiene measures such as hand washing and frequently cleaning touched objects and surfaces.



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• FINANCIAL MATTERS •

2020: An Incredibly Strange Year in Review

Hello Highlands, I hope you had a great holiday celebration to cap off one of the strangest years ever.

I'm writing this on the afternoon of January 6, 2021, as the "alternate reality" of U.S. politics and the rise in markets continues. Right now, our Congress is debating whether to accept the votes of the Electors in Arizona. Thousands of pro-Trump protestors have descended on DC and are standing on the steps of the Capitol. The GOP has mostly lost control of the government, Covid 19 is still ramping up and the vaccine rollout has been slow so far. Yet the S&P 500 is up 1.2% and the Dow is up nearly 2% just TODAY! For 2020, the S&P 500 was up 16.11% and the Dow 30 Industrials Average was up 7.69% (not including dividends for either). This after a 35% plunge in February and March of 2020 which was the fastest 35% drop in history - and was followed by the fastest recovery in history!

2020 saw violent protests and anarchy in parts of the U.S., lockdowns, and a reduction in the size of our economy by over 30% in the 2nd quarter (on an annual basis). Record high employment followed by massive layoffs and unemployment. Huge numbers of people moving from California and the Northeast to Texas and Florida, along with corporations like Schwab, Tesla, Oracle. The most divided government since perhaps the Civil War, and many of our friends and loved ones stricken by a virus that didn't exist two years ago.

As I've said to many of you, if you had told me in February we would be here, I would have never believed you.

In this incredibly strange time, what is going on? The short answer is the Federal Reserve. If you recall in 2008, our government nearly choked to death over providing \$780 billion in stimulus to re-capitalize the banks. According to Forbes, as of October 18th, the government has provided close to \$4 trillion in stimulus and spent a total of \$6.5 trillion in 2020* (this doesn't include the most recent spending that occurred over the holidays). When the Central Bank of the U.S. pumps this kind of liquidity into



Michael P Henderson,
CFP® CKA®
Founder/Wealth Advisor

the economy, it's going to have an effect and we've seen it as asset prices rose in 2020 and so far, have continued into 2021.

At the same time, we've seen interest rates at never-before-seen lows, which has also acted as stimulus. Home sales and housing starts have exploded as more people are able to afford a home (if they're working) and because millions are working from home - along with taxes, quarantines, and civil unrest - a migration out of American cities to the suburbs

is occurring, too. The "millennials" many never thought would leave home, have decided to start families, and move to the burbs.

So, what about moving forward? First, it appears the Dems are going to be in complete control of the Executive and Legislative branches of government and the markets are betting on big spending bills including infrastructure and more stimulus. This is why we're seeing this unrelenting move up right now. Also, the adoption of technology has been accelerated by at least five years during this pandemic and tech stocks have benefited. However, most of this has been the growth of the FAANG stocks, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, Google plus Alphabet, Tesla and Microsoft. While the bull market was somewhat broad, 200+ of the 500 stocks in the S&P 500 finished negative for the year. Market participants are simply betting on more stimulus, the vaccine and full employment. I think it's likely we see much of that. But the dollar is losing value, Bitcoin is on a tear and it's possible we see structural changes in the currency markets where other types of money may challenge the U.S. as the dominant reserve currency in the world. And, with all the printing of money our Fed is doing, it's probable we'll see inflation return in a bigger way in 2021.

How do we proceed? With caution, but fully invested. This time last year, the stock market was lower, corporate profits were higher, and many experts thought the market was overpriced. If it was then, it certainly is now. Profits will need to catch up for stock prices to remain at these levels. All the best in 2021.



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• PAST & PRESENT •

Journal of a Plagued Year (2020)

Anyone recalling Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1665) surely would be struck by similarities between that year and our current one, the wealthy fleeing cities and buying up pricey properties in exclusive neighborhoods in a frantic bid for safety, the poor condemned to the most unsafe yet critical jobs of all, namely caring for the old

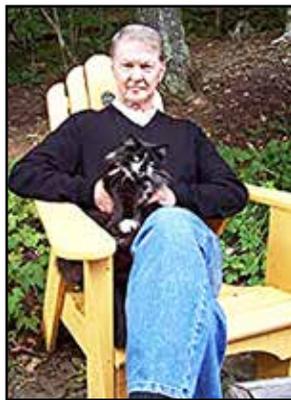
and sick, hauling the dead to overflowing morgues for cremation, cleaning our hospitals and homes, guarding us, stocking essential supplies and standing behind plastic shields as if they offered much protection, then returning to lodgings they might soon lose all the while waiting for some deliverance.

Yet we additionally understand the powerlessness and ineptitude of government and the grudging relief it sometimes delivers. Wouldn't you like to veto them?

Finally, as in 1665, there is the anticipated joy of liberation, as if we finally will be free of all this and enjoy the Renaissance that is sure to come. Sadly, our historical memory will be as short and aberrant as this plagued year.

Like Defoe, most of us act as spell-bound witnesses to this plague, watching the rising numbers of those dying, taken ill, hospitalized, and, occasionally, someone we know personally who has covid, a new word we all have learned.

Yet unlike previous plagues, this coro-



Milton Ready

navirus has an immunizing feature. While Defoe walked past plague victims screaming inside their pitiful row houses while a watchman stood guard lest they come out, saw a madman run naked and throw himself into the Thames while he casually bought eggs and butter for his family on the bankside, and dodged a dead cart careening out of control down Aldergate Road, scattering bodies as the driver desperately tried to grasp reins fallen from his

hands, most of us go about our daily lives as if there is little wrong at all, some even upset that their liberties and freedoms somehow have been infringed, the extent of our outrage. There is no one coming down Main Street with a shrill siren yelling "Bring out your dead" or a policeman painting a red X on your door.

Unlike previous plagues, the horrific effects of covid are felt and seen by only a few, mainly those working in hospitals and nursing homes. Most of us only observe stores shuttered, those masked or not, and occasional inconveniences of spot shortages or our favorite venues closed.

We're largely isolated from covid's worst effects. Yet now and then a harried, tearful, and perhaps terrified doctor or nurse gives us a window into the true nature of this plague if allowed to go unchecked. Covid might even resemble an avenging angel who begins in large, densely packed cities, doesn't look all that bad at first, then breaks out into suburbs and finally surges everywhere even in Macon County.

If physically most remain unaffected, then socially that is not the case. Some Midwesterners have bragged that it was urban populations, cities like New York and San Francisco with their crowded tenements of minorities and immigrants that justifiably

were feeling the shock of the pandemic as if they somehow deserved it.

In 1665, they cursed London. Midwesterners had no time or patience for masks, lockdowns, or Anthony Fauci, all unnecessary since they somehow were no like "the others." Most had few if any cases, a situation now reversed. That avenging angel again.

Then, too, everything from masks to church attendance became divisive and politicized. Who wore them? Why? We reflexively feared and hated strangers even as we became one. Did effete city-dwellers don masks while bearded, cud-chewing, macho, Harley-Davidson types shun them even as they came together in Sturgis, South Dakota, for their annual biker rally held "no matter what." Was it an urban/rural divide further deepened by a virus? Or the boorish Romanesque luxury of living in Mar-a-Lago or San Francisco and golfing or partying while thousands died daily? Or class divisions and resentments exacerbated by growing inequalities of wealth, opportunity, and risk? Or just a form of tribalism accentuated by a pandemic? Does it matter?

You could make a film of this plagued year, but we already have. It's called the evening news, a daily compilation of chaos and disaster where we're all seemingly headed. Why worry about marauding zombies, George Clooney roaming an apocalyptic landscape, or some vague conspiracy to take over the White House and government when everyday life is a documentary for disaster?

If you read Albert Camus's *La Peste*, ostensibly an existentialist classic about how helpless and powerless ordinary people are in the face of a plague, then you'll understand that this pandemic has cremated faith in some of our most basic institutions, namely government, religion, education, sports, and in something called America. Be assured none will be the same if ever afterward.

... VACCINE continued from page 4

County, Highlands-Cashiers Health Foundation, Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, Highlands Rotary, Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley, Highlands Pharmacy, the Community Cares Clinic, the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic and Macon County EMS.

Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor said full credit has to be given to Tom Neal and the hospital staff for making this vaccine clinic a reality in a such short period of time.

Neal said he only learned that he had enough vaccine and that the phase had

moved into Phase 2 Thursday night of last week.

"I am amazed at how fast Tom has set-up the vaccination clinic now that the hospital has access to the Moderna vaccine," said Taylor. "There may be some unanticipated problems with this first rollout of the clinic. But, I know Tom and his staff can quickly address and correct any problems that may arise."

— Kim Lewicki

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Out of the mouths of babes

By Gary Hewins

Sr. Pastor, Community Bible Church

I have a new granddaughter. There is a dynamic going on between her and me that is somewhat different than what I remember happening with my on babies decades ago. I think I am different now. I am sure of it; I am different now. I can sing to her and giggle with her and I find it incredibly medicinal. There is something about the way she mimics my goofy expressions, that to me, is therapeutic. She has a way of captivating my attention. She seems taken by my singing voice. She seems to be trying to move her lips into positions to say a word. She's ready for that, but she has no idea what words are yet. She is fascinating.

My latest granddaughter is very special to me because of who she is and who she is becoming. I also think that her "adorableness" is only accentuated by the backdrop of all that I see happening in this cultural moment. Little babies can provide a perspective almost extinct in our culture. She is the embodiment of promise and hope. She is innocent and content with so little. She just wants love and affection and to be alive. She knows the security of a hug and the safety of deep familiar voice. She only knows to be brimming with curiosity and adventure. Is there more?

I see grown men and women acting so childish on the news and I see my granddaughter being so childlike. Christ likes children. He wanted them around. Jesus was a big proponent of being childlike and a big adversary of being childish. He knows that children can teach us a lot. He knows that we are His children, and we represent Him and should do so with joy.

Maybe you and I could benefit more from being childlike. Maybe the violence and the divisiveness will still be there if we were to schedule in childlike time in our days. Life can be too serious too often. You and I can only do so much. You and I can only change others and circumstances so much. When was the last time you laughed so hard you cried? When was the last time you played with toys? When was the last time you were captivated by something God created?

The time has come, and now is, where boundaries have to be placed on influencers in the world. People, I don't care who they are, are no longer going to be allowed to affect my demeanor and priorities without my permission. God placed an adorable little baby in my arms to remind me that He is in control, He is sovereign, He has battles He is fighting, He is Lord, He is our rest and peace, and He knows our frustration. He has also placed limits on ridiculousness, and I wouldn't mess with Him too much. The Bible says a lot of things, but this little nugget seems right for me lately:

Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. Psalm 8:2

God uses the vocal praises of babies to thwart the movement of enemies. Who am I to question that? I know of one baby in my life that has put a stop to my whining. Maybe babies are all God needs to get the world straightened out. After all He was born in a manger, right? Acting like babies doesn't seem to be working. I wonder what God is up to?

I encourage you to take a childlike break today. Too much intensity!

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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

Wed: Choir: 6p

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

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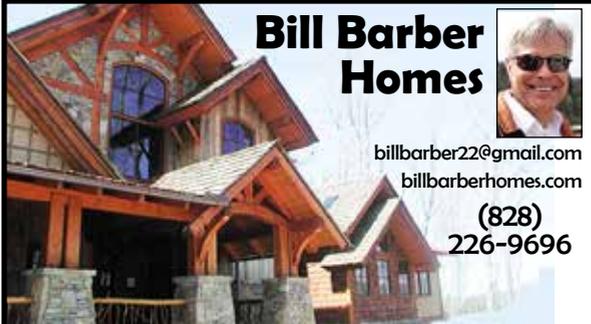
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• BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION NEWS •



From left: Lester Norris, Highlands Recreation Director; Marsha Moxley, HL Trustee; Andy Chmar, HL Board President

Little Free Libraries are sprouting all over Highlands

The Trustees of the Hudson Library of Highlands announce the recent installation and dedication of three Little Free Libraries located in and around Highlands, including at the Literacy Council/Highlands Plaza; Community Care Clinic/Zachery Park; and, Highlands Recreation Park.

By offering a variety of free books to anyone visiting these libraries, they serve to further the Board's mission "To make available to everyone the recorded knowledge of civilization and thus promote and encourage the free flow of information, the enjoyment of reading, and an appreciation of the challenge of ideas."

They join other Highlands Little Free Libraries already located at Founder's Park, Highlands Biological Station, and the Recreation Park's playground.

Members of the Hudson Library Board ordered, as-

sembled and installed the book-sharing houses, but this project would not have happened without generous grants to purchase each of the Little Libraries by Hudson Library Trustees Marsha Moxley and Helene and Ricky Siegel, and the Rotary Club of Highlands. Little Free Library.org is a nonprofit that builds community, inspires readers, and expands book access for all through a global network of volunteer-led little libraries.

Residents and visitors to Highlands are encouraged to use all the Little Free Libraries, and although the motto is "Take a Book, Share a Book" everyone is encouraged to just take a book when they pass by, and hopefully share with others after reading. More information about Little Free Libraries and a map of their locations, both locally and around the world, can be found online at www.littlefreelibrary.org/

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

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

Dec. 31

• At 5:26 p.m., Luis Guillermo Cruz, Jr. 21, of Waynesville, NC, was arrested for DUI and driving without a license. He was issued a \$1,500 unsecured bond. His trial date is Feb. 24.

Jan. 7

• At 10:14 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on NC 28 south near Shelby Circle.

Jan. 8

• At 8:10 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on NC 28 south at Many Road.

Jan. 11

• At 10:23 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Lower Brushy Face Road.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Jan. 13.

Jan. 13

• At 2:39 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance on the Cashiers Road.

Jan 14

• At 9:40 a.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke on NC 106.

• At 10:26 a.m., the dept. provided public assistance on Big Bear Pen Road.

Jan. 16

• At 11:14 a.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke on View Point Road.

• At 12:39 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Queen Mountain Road.

• At 2:46 p.m., the dept. was called about a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west but it was unfounded.

• At 3:05 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance on Lower Lake Road.

Jan. 17

• At 7:54 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Queen Mountain Road.

Jan. 18

• At 9:44 a.m., and again at 10:20 a.m., the dept. responded to a Co2 alarm at a residence on Highgate Drive.

• At 9:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

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