

# Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Jan. 7, 2021

## COVID on the rise; schools adapting

By Brittney Lofthouse

COVID19 cases continue to soar across the county and in Western North Carolina.

The Macon County Depart-

ment of Public Health reported a total of 1,820 positive COVID19 cases since March in Macon County, with 526 of those cases currently active.

More than 160 of those cases have occurred since the county's December 31 report. There have been a total of 12 deaths in Macon

•See COVID page 6

### • INSIDE THIS ISSUE •

Mayor on Duty .....	2	DogSpeak.....	8
Weather.....	2	Investing at 4,118 Ft.....	10
Letters.....	4	Police & Fire.....	14
Obituaries.....	4	Classifieds.....	14
Life on the Sunny Side.....	6		

## Reeling in the New Year!



On Saturday, Jan. 2, Pat Gleeson of White Oak Realty Group landed this brook trout on Harris Lake. The 40 trout he and friends caught that day were part of the 900 trout being released over the winter into private lakes open to the public by NC Wildlife Resource Commission. Gleeson opted to catch and release the 40 caught but as Mayor Pat Taylor said at the December Town Board meeting, anglers can catch and eat!

## COVID break-out at ELC explained; Vaccine rollout outlined

The first shipment of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine arrived and was also administered at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital on Saturday, Dec. 19. A total of 210 people received the vaccine during the four-hour clinic. This included 47 residents of Eckerd Living Center and 163 frontline healthcare workers from across Mission Health.

Up until last week, the Eckerd Living Center (ELC) was the only skilled nursing center in the Mission Health system and in other systems in Western North Carolina to be COVID-free.

However, on Dec. 28, the Macon County Health Dept. announced six cases at ELC – one staff person and 5 residents.

This was concerning since on Dec. 19, all healthcare workers and the 47 residents whose families gave them permission, were administered the first dosage of the vaccine.

“The staff at Eckerd Living Center has worked tirelessly to care for themselves and their

residents during the course of the pandemic,” said Nancy Lindell, Director Public and Media Relations HCA Healthcare North Carolina Division. “Unfortunately, on Dec. 28 we have had residents and staff test positive for COVID-19. Residents and staff are being tested daily and those who are positive are being quarantined away from other residents.”

Lindell said though the system is grateful that many of the residents and staff chose to get the first dose of the vaccine administered on Dec. 19, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination.

“That means it’s possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick,” she said. “This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.”

Furthermore, the COVID-19 vaccine requires two doses for its optimum effectiveness.

“We are hopeful that the ini-

tial dose of the vaccine will help to minimize the impact of the illness on residents. Once they have recovered, they will have the opportunity to get the second dose.”

Relatively recently, Mission allowed one-on-one visitation with distancing and masking, in ELC. However, as of Monday, Dec. 28, that was suspended.

Concerning widespread vaccinations, Lindell said Mission Health will follow the state’s vaccination schedule.

North Carolina and Macon County are currently in Phase 1A of COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. This phase includes healthcare personnel fighting COVID-19 and long-term care facilities residents.

North Carolina will advance to the next phase of vaccination when NCDHHS determines that all interested persons within the Phase 1A priority group have been vaccinated.

At this time, Macon County Public Health and NCDHHS are

• See VACCINE page 9

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### The status of the COVID vaccine

I started the New Year with optimism, especially with the prospect of a robust vaccination program that would finally get us over the Coronavirus pandemic. We all long to return to a normal lifestyle. I am still hopeful, but like many of you have concerns about the vaccination program.

A number of people began calling me just before New Year's Eve asking when they could get the COVID-19 vaccination. Several pointed out that folks in Florida were already being vaccinated, so when would that program begin in Highlands?

I have been making inquiries about the status of an area vaccination program. As I have said before, the town does not have a public health department. We rely and work with the Macon County Public Health Department. North Carolina has a county public health network that serve communities. Our county department is apart of a system that involves state and federal health agencies. Therefore, Macon County is allocated vaccine doses based on a complex federal and state formula.

The county has received an initial allo-



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

cation of Moderna vaccine. Area hospitals were sent the Pfizer vaccine for their critical workers and nursing home residents. The feedback I have received is that the extreme temperatures required for the Pfizer vaccine presents major challenges in distribution in an isolated area like here. Extreme cold storage facilities are limited or nonexistent. On the other hand, Moderna's vaccine has less stringent cold storage requirements, so it is the vaccine of choice for this area.

I know folks don't like to hear this, but some patience is needed when it comes to getting vaccinated. The vaccination program at the national and state levels has major distribution problems that have impacted local communities. The Macon County Health Department has been working this week to resolve these issues, but the challenges of vaccinating thousands of people will not be solved overnight. Those early reports of folks getting vaccinated in Florida were not that accurate. In Florida, senior residents have experienced long, long lines for the shot, and many have been delayed.

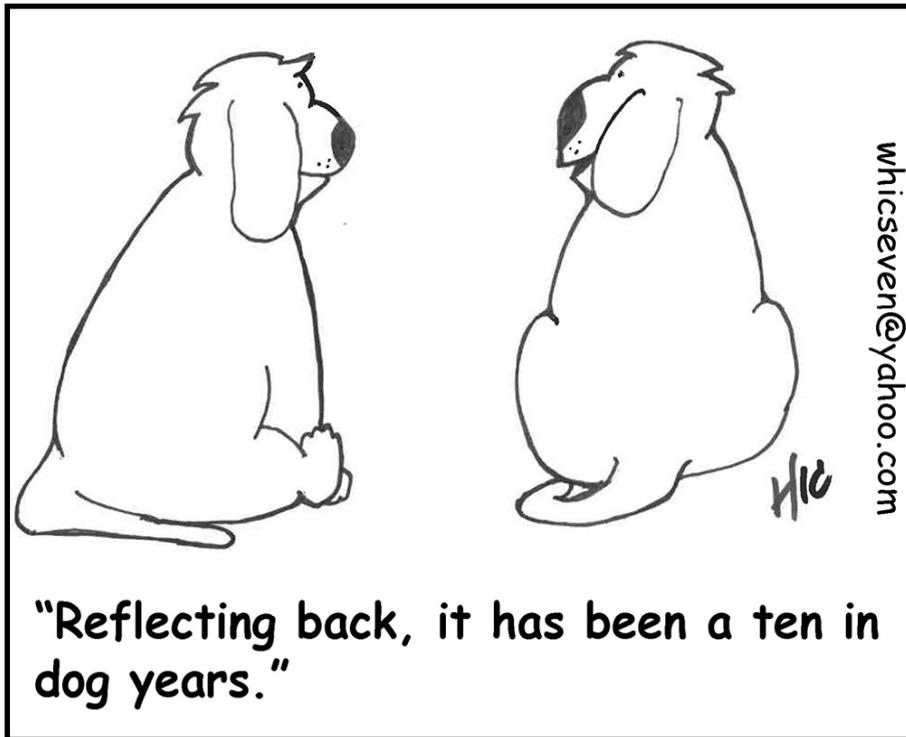
I don't believe the local health departments will have the capacity and resources to meet the vaccination needs for a short-term response. Local pharmacies, doctors and hospitals across the nation will have to become involved in the process. I know major pharmacy chains are planning to become vaccination sites, but they too are encountering delays within the distribution chain. I am aware that potential local providers are also exploring possibilities. Vaccinating on a large scale is a problem that the nation has not done before. So, it gets back to patience and the continued practice of wearing masks, socially distancing and washing hands frequently.

I have a few ideas about how to speed up the vaccination process, but they are just my thoughts. We need to quickly train additional professionals how to give the shots. We also need to create large vaccination centers where folks can get a shot without red tape. Maybe the national guard and first responders could be involved?

Finally, there may be a game changing vaccine just around the corner. Johnson and Johnson has been developing a one-shot vaccine. It doesn't require the extreme cold

• See MAYOR page 8

## • HIC'S VIEW •



"Reflecting back, it has been a ten in dog years."

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 7-Jan	Fri, 8-Jan	Sat, 9-Jan	Sun, 10-Jan
			
46°F 28°F	37°F 27°F	44°F 20°F	45°F 23°F
Showers of rain and snow	Morning snow. 2-4"	Mostly sunny and not as cold	Mostly cloudy
RealFeel®	RealFeel®	RealFeel®	RealFeel®
High: 47° Low: 25°	High: 35° Low: 22°	High: 48° Low: 22°	High: 50° Low: 19°

For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to [www.highlandsinfo.com](http://www.highlandsinfo.com) and click on Weather

### Highlands Newspaper

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# • LETTERS •

## Beware: The barbarians are at the gates

Dear Editor,

Regarding the article in the Dec. 24 edition entitled “A petition opposed to Cashiers Hillside project is circulating,” I have seen this movie played over and over again in my native state of Florida.

Most developers only want the money and do not care about the results – lower quality of life for existing residents.

#1 Growth does not pay for itself in new taxes.

#2 Traffic will be worse;

#3 Environment will be degraded;

Your small town ambiance will be out the window.

A developer will join another country club. They will bring in lawyers and experts to convince you of the benefits of their plan. They will attempt to bribe officials and contribute to their campaigns. They will threaten expensive

lawsuits. They will get their own people appointed or elected to the government.

They or the next one will be relentless. It will never stop from here on out.

The barbarians are truly at the gates. Be prepared to continually face this in the future. Don't let your guard down.

**David Stearns**

**Otto**

## Is Cashiers way of life worth losing?

Dear Editor,

Regarding the article in the Dec. 24 edition entitled “A petition opposed to Cashiers Hillside project is circulating,” I did not know Cashiers was in trouble and needed urban renewal. But someone must think so, and now protestors are squaring off against an experienced big-city urban re-

newer, McCauley LLC, who sees in Cashiers that mythical pot of gold.

I'm reminded of the ancient fable of the goose that laid the golden egg. People being people, the farmer who bought the magic creature grew rich, but at the rate of one egg per day, he couldn't get richer fast enough. So he reasoned that the eggs being in the goose, if he killed her he would get them all. As a farmer he should have known better: he killed her and never got another one.

If you think of Cashiers as the goose, the golden eggs are the natural environment, the small town charm, the calm, the amenable population, and the reputation the town has garnered due to these inviting factors.

If the citizens allow the farmer, in this case McCauley and those supporting him, to wreak havoc and spoil the town's most precious, and irreplaceable, native attractions, they will have killed the golden goose. Never again will the environment, the charm, and the population be as they were.

The Village Green, the town's central anchor, has 13 acres. The proposed construction is almost five times as large and would dwarf the crossroads. It would become the town's signature, the impression that sticks in everyone's mind. Cashiers would never recover its essential values. It would, in short, have sold itself out.

There are many pervasive ideas that most folks recognize as destructive, like racism and sexism; some are even codified as hate crimes. A word to consider adding to the list in this case is progress.

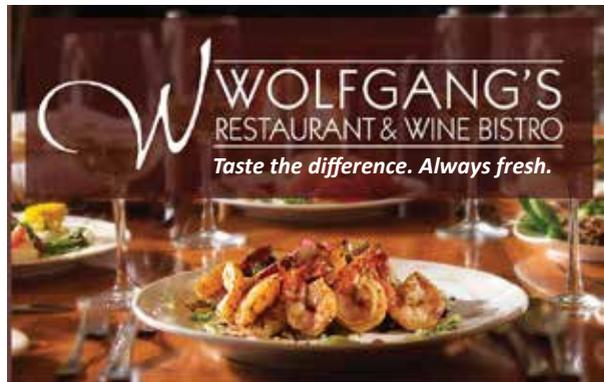
In what way would the development represent progress for a town like Cashiers, which until now seemed content to unfold naturally?

Would people ever hold the development in their hearts the way they do the present town? Indeed the development would cost Cahiers its cachet, its distinguishing mark of identity and respect.

My argument is by now obvious. Cashiers should look inward, assess all it has, and ask whether that way of life is worth losing once and for all. If the answer turns out yes, they may as well rename the town Babylon.

**Ricks Carson  
Franklin**

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# • OBITUARIES •

## William A Berry

William A Berry “Paw,” 92 of Franklin passed away Monday, December 28, 2020. He was born in Macon County, NC on March 29, 1928 to the late William Jack Berry and Anna Gertrude Coggins Berry. William liked hunting and playing the French Harp, but most of all he loved spending time with his family. William served in the Army in the Korean War and later worked at Champion Paper Company. He was a Deacon for Yellow Mountain Baptist Church and Walnut Creek Baptist Church for many years and was a Mason for the Glenville Chapter.



William is survived by his loving wife of 62 years, Geraldine Henderson Berry of Franklin; a daughter, Sheila

## ... OBITUARIES continued from page 4

Regina Berry Keever (Danny) of Sylva; a son, Ricky Dean Berry (Misty) of Cullowhee; three grandchildren, Brittny Keever Stevens (Jason), Emily Berry Milligan (Dustin) and Nathan Berry; three great-grandchildren, Will Milligan, Ella Milligan and Ava Milligan; two sisters, Mattie Berry Devlin of Candler and Virginia Berry Dills of Franklin. In addition to his parents, William is preceded in death by his twin brother William J Berry and brothers, William Edward Berry and William Jack Berry, Jr.; sisters, Lora Berry Hedden, Edlay Berry Pruitt, Marie Berry Hedden, Elmira Berry Hedden and Martha Berry Dowdle.

A funeral service was held Saturday, January 2, 2021 at Bryant-Grant Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Carson Gibson and Rev. Jason Stevens officiating. Burial was at the Pine Creek Cemetery, Cullowhee, NC.

Pallbearers were Nathan Berry, Jeffrey Stewart, Dustin Milligan, Larry Dills, Sammy Hedden and Jason Stevens.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory served the Berry family. Online condolences can be made at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com)

### Agnes Marie Gibson Crowe

Agnes Marie Gibson Crowe, 78, of Highlands, NC passed away on Friday, December 25, 2020. She was born July 26, 1942 in Macon County to

the late James Thomas Gibson and Tina Savilla Henry Gibson.

Agnes was such a gracious and caring soul. Working in the office at Highlands School, Agnes left a lasting impression with all that knew her, and she loved each student as her own. She will be missed by many in our community. She liked gardening, working with her flowers, canning and could

bake the best chocolate and coconut cakes. Most of all, she loved her family. Agnes was a member of the First Baptist Church of Highlands.

Agnes is survived by a daughter, Tina Rogers (Michael) of Highlands; two sons, Christopher Mack Crowe (Melissa) of Athens, Ga. and John Stephen Crowe (Marjorie) of Highlands; seven grandchildren, Maggie Barden (Christopher), Courtney Welch (Josh), Tyler Crowe, Travis Crowe (Amy), Ann Marie Crowe, Emily Crowe and Gypsy Boulden; two great-grandchildren, Statten Barden and Haven Barden. In addition to her parents, Agnes is preceded in death by her husband, Merlin Mack Crowe; siblings, Myrtis (Corbin) Talley, James (Genevieve) Gibson, Alice Crane, John Gibson, Peggy (George) Erskine, Clyde (Linda) Gibson, Charlie (Betsy) Gibson, Harold (Noreen) Gibson, and Emily Lyons.

A Celebration of Life will be held in the spring and will be announced.

Honorary Pallbearers are her cheerleaders: Mary Allyson Chauvin, Francine Montgomery, Carla Zoellner, Parrish Calloway, Sarah Stottlemeyer, Tonya Clontz, Leah Ferree, Ashley Aspinwall, Jessica Ochoa, Robin Armstrong Neil.

The family asks in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Rathbun House, 121 Sherwood Road, Asheville, NC 28803. Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Crowe family. Online condolences can be made at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com).



### Virginia Marie Gould Reynaud

Virginia Marie Gould Reynaud MD of Highlands, NC died peacefully in her sleep on December 16, 2020 after being sharp as a tack for 99 years. Virginia was born in Rochester, NY on November 16, 1921 to Patrick Stephen Gould and Frances Fien. She graduated from Nazareth College where she was valedictorian and the May Queen. She enlisted in the Navy in 1943 and was a WAVE until 1946 where she attained the rank of Lt. JG. She was a radar specialist and also helped serve on the Manhattan Project. After the war she was one of a handful of women who attended the University of Maryland Medical School. There she met her future husband across her cadaver, Louis Favrot Reynaud. Virginia was always the smartest person in every room and was a women's libber before the term was invented.

After their wedding, Louis and Virginia moved to Atlanta where they practiced Pediatrics together for 40 years. Along with working full time, Virginia raised three children and always read at least two books a week. Her books were not the top best sellers; they were more like The History of the Byzantine Empire and other light reads.

When the Reynauds retired to Highlands, Virginia had a chance to do all of the civic minded activities that she never had time for while practicing medicine. She was president of the Garden Club, on the board of the Watershed advisory, a trustee of the Biological Station, on the board of Reach, etc. She and Louis hiked daily and in her spare time she created a wildflower garden that many made a special trip to see.

She is survived by her three children, Louis (and Kelly), Christine Dunn (and John) and Suzanne King (and Thad), seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Virginia was one of those special people who didn't act like she was any smarter or better than anyone else. If a problem needed to be solved, she just got to work, figured out a solution and got it done. She was the person who always told you that you could do anything if you just put your mind to it. Louis was the love of her life and they had 67 incredible years together. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Reynaud family.

Online condolences can be made at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com).

### Albert Gene Webb

Albert Gene Webb, 63, of Zirconia, NC passed away Thursday December 31, 2020 at his residence.

Jackson Funeral Service Hendersonville, NC is assisting the Webb Family.



### Clara Stephanie Lewicki

Clara Stephanie Lewicki, 97, of Highlands, NC, died peacefully Christmas Day, Dec. 25, 2020, in Highlands at the Eckerd Living Center where she had lived for 6 ½ years.

She said she was very comfortable at the Eckerd Living Center, that it was a good place, and everyone took good care of her.

Being sequestered from her family since March due to COVID restrictions weighed heavy on her ... she missed going out to lunches and dinners and interacting with her family and great-grandson who made her laugh out loud.

Clara was born Nov. 21, 1923, the daughter of Kajetan Cetner and Stella Adamczewski Cetner who immigrated to Brooklyn, NY from Poland in the early 1900s.

She was educated at Girls High School in Brooklyn, NY through the 12th grade. She was of the Catholic faith. She worked at various jobs throughout her life – as a bookkeeper, and library assistant and personnel assistant for the Three Village Central School System in Stony Brook, NY and also as an apartment manager in Mt. Pleasant, SC.

Clara was a voracious reader devouring 2-3 books a week. She was artistic and was always creating something whether cooking a meal, painting a watercolor scene, cross stitching, knitting or crocheting. She could identify trees and shrubs, plants and flowers even before they bloomed. She and her husband Alex cultivated gardens to accentuate their homes wherever they lived.

She loved to travel by car and orchestrated many trips for her family.

In younger days, she and her granddaughters made the Polish Christmas dessert – Chrusciki and at Christmas and Easter there were always pierogi and kielbasa with sauerkraut and mushrooms as well as sweet Babka bread.

She loved to entertain and always presented a spread complete with appetizers and dessert.

She was preceded in death by her parents Kajetan and Stella Cetner; her two sisters; Marianna Cetner Bialobzeski and Severa Cetner Wilk, all of Brooklyn, NY and husband Alexander F. Lewicki who died February 21, 2008 in Highlands also at the Eckerd Living Center.

She is survived by two sons, William (Barbara) Lewicki of Tucson, AZ, and James (Kimberly) Lewicki of Highlands; two granddaughters, Rachel Lewicki of Highlands and Megan Lewicki Axelrod (Joel) of Nashville, and great-grandson Hudson Alexander Rosser Tilley of Highlands.

A family service is planned for a later date.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory served the Lewicki family.





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# • ON THE SUNNY SIDE •

## Laugh and The Whole World Laughs with You

*“Laugh and The Whole World Laughs with You; Weep and You Weep Alone”*

The lines first appeared in “Solitude,” a poem written in the February 25, 1882 issue of the New York Sun.

The Author was Ella Wheeler Wilcox, who received \$5.00 for her work.

It’s important not only to laugh but also smile.

“A smile is a very inexpensive way to improve your looks instantly”

“A smile is the best makeup any girl can wear” -- Marilyn Monroe

“If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours. It will make a positive difference in both parties”

“Don’t forget to smile, it builds trust - However, some may

wonder what you are up to”

“Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy”

“A smile is contagious. It can make a positive impact in any situation”

A smile with love behind it has so many positive effects on us: It stimulates the brain, makes you come across as friendly, and brings joy to the people around you.

Whether you say hello to a stranger you pass in the grocery store or wave to your neighbor while you’re on the run, adding a smile to these simple acts of kindness can make someone’s day go from drab to fab. Try it. It works.

“A smile will do so many things,



**Kenny Youmans**

It seems almost divine;

I wish they all had angel wings,

And everywhere could shine

A smile is cheer to you and me

The cost is nothing – it’s given free

It comforts the weary – gladdens the sad

Consoles those in trouble – good and bad

To rich and poor – beggar or thief

It’s free to all of any belief.

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Cheers on the faint – disarms the bold

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It’s one thing we keep when we give away.”

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## ...COVID from page 1

County to date, with the three most recent occurring over the Christmas holiday.

To protect patients and staff, Mission Health elevated its visitor restrictions to Level 3 at all locations, including Angel Medical Center, Blue Ridge Regional Hospital, CarePartners, Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, Mission Hospital McDowell and Transylvania Regional Hospital. The exception will be for pediatric patients, who will be allowed to have one adult visitor with them at a time.

Limited other special situations will be reviewed on individual cases.

Meanwhile, the health department halted testing around December 19 and is currently working through backlogs of testing for the county due to the holidays. Despite an increase in cases, the health department has decreased testing availability to two days a week to be able to begin scheduling vaccinations for COVID19 as well.

According to case demographics from the health department on Dec. 30, a little more than 8 percent of the county’s positive cases are from the Highlands area.

On Jan. 1, 2021, North Carolina reported its highest one-day number of COVID19 cases with 9,527 new cases reported, exceeding the state’s previous highest day set on Dec. 18, 2020 by more than 1,000.

Records were also set for the percent of tests that were positive and hospitalizations.

On Jan. 2, 15.5 percent of tests were positive, the highest rate since the start of the pandemic. In addition, 3,479 people were hospitalized with COVID19 and 783 people were in the intensive care unit on Jan. 2, and by Tuesday, Jan. 3, hospitalizations reached 3,635 people with 96 percent of hospitals in the state reporting.

As of 8:30 on Jan. 4, Mission Health System reported that

• See COVID page 11

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VARIETIES AND SIZES MAY VARY BY STORE

Customer Photo provided by Cottage on Tupelo Ridge

## PREFINISHED ACACIA FROM VIETNAM

2 COLORS: HONEY AND ESPRESSO  
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HONEY                      ESPRESSO

## CAMBARA, MARA MACHO, CURUPAU, AND ALISO FROM BOLIVIA

8' x 26" x 1" \$139                      8' x 36" x 1" \$189



CAMBARA                      MARA MACHO



CURUPAU                      ALISO

## BIRCH FROM ESTONIA

8' x 25" x 1 1/2" \$179    6' x 36" x 1 1/2" \$189    10' x 25" x 1 1/2" \$239    8' x 36" x 1 1/2" \$259



BIRCH                      MAHOGANY

HANDSCRAPED MAHOGANY FROM BOLIVIA 8' x 26" x 1 1/4" \$349

## HEVEA FROM THAILAND 1" AND 2" THICK

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 8' x 26" x 2" \$173    8' x 30" x 2" \$199    10' x 26" x 2" \$216    8' x 36" x 2" \$239

## HEVEA BUTCHER BLOCK TABLE TOPS

32" x 48" x 2" \$119    42" x 42" x 2" \$145



HEVEA                      ACACIA

## ACACIA FROM THAILAND 1" AND 2" THICK

8' x 26" x 1" \$109    8' x 30" x 1" \$119    10' x 26" x 1" \$139    8' x 36" x 1" \$145  
 8' x 26" x 2" \$229    10' x 26" x 2" \$279    8' x 30" x 2" \$299    8' x 36" x 2" \$319

## ACACIA BUTCHER BLOCK TABLE TOPS

32" x 48" x 2" \$145    42" x 42" x 2" \$165

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## ...MAYOR continued from page 2

storage requirements. Early clinical reports indicate it may have a high efficacy level. The company intends on asking for emergency authorization sometime in February. There may be multiple vaccination options as we move into the new year. I will muster up more patience, while at the same time advocating for the best outcome for Highlands.



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## • LORD BANJO REFLECTIONS •

### What a month

It all started with Dad having knee surgery. It wasn't unexpected. He just has to space out having all these new parts installed. In May, he got a new hip, and Mom's called him the bionic man ever since— whoever that is.

In early December, he went in as planned for his new part. Easy, peasy. He didn't even have to spend the night. By week two, he was walking with a cane. He was pretty impressed with himself. Me? I didn't have time to be impressed with him. I had issues of my own.

That's right. I had to have surgery too. Now, that was unexpected. I tend to chew my belly when the seasons change. I get itchy, dang it. The vet says I'm allergic to inhalants which I think means all that stuff that floats around in the air when the season change. So, right on schedule, I started chewing my belly, except this time, I also chewed one of my knees or elbows, depending on who you ask. Mom gave me Benadryl, but the chewing didn't stop. I can't explain it. I can't help myself.

Imagine her surprise when she took me to the vet for a shot to stop the chewing, and they said I needed to have a lump cut off my elbow. Imagine my dismay when she said okay. She didn't want to do it because she was busy taking care of Dad, and didn't want two patients at once, but she had no choice 'cause I kept chewing even after the shot to stop the itching.

Dad was still using his walker when Mom loaded me in the car and took me for surgery. If you can believe it, she had them clean my teeth the very same day. I think that was overkill, but no one asked me. The good news is I didn't have to spend the



Lord Banjo

night. The bad news? They sent me home in the cone of shame. You know what that is, right?

It was awful. It was so big, I couldn't get my head down into my food bowl, and Mom had to hold my water bowl up so I could get to it. Could there be anything worse? Well, yes. I figured out how to chew my elbow even with the cone. Fooled them, didn't I? At least I thought I did until they came home with

an even bigger cone. It seems me pulling out my stitches isn't allowed. I had to go back to have the stitches checked, and that's when the wonderful vet tech made a highly intelligent suggestion – put me in a long-sleeved teeshirt instead of a cone. Wow! That was a huge improvement in comfort, not to mention, I looked quite spiffy in my red teeshirt. It was Christmas time, after all.

My stitches came out right before Christmas so Mom took my teeshirt off. I kinda missed it, so I figured I'd chew my elbow some more so she'd put it back on. It worked like a charm, and now I have a spiffy black shirt in addition to the red one. We royal dogs enjoy being fashionable, and I haven't gotten to dress up in ages. Perhaps after this virus thing goes away, my royal purple robe will come out of storage, and I'll get look even spiffier. Meanwhile, I'll take a new teeshirt – maybe a purple one.

• Lord Banjo lives in Georgia with his mum, Kathy Manos Penn, author of the Dickens & Christie cozy animal mystery series available on Amazon and at Books Unlimited in Franklin. Find Lord Banjo's book locally at Highland Mountain Paws and write him at [inkpenn119@gmail.com](mailto:inkpenn119@gmail.com).

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## ... VACCINES continued from page 1

not scheduling individuals for vaccination in vaccine phases other than Phase 1A.

In addition, currently Mission Health does not have a specific plan to vaccinate the general public, however, depending on vaccine allocations from the state, if the hospital completes a defined phase and has additional vaccines remaining, the general public will be able to receive the vaccine at the hospital, otherwise the vaccines will be available at the Macon County Public Health Department.

The plan is to have vaccines distributed to the state on a weekly basis – the state will then distribute the vaccine to counties for distribution.

After the first group of individuals has received the vaccine, (1A - Health care workers fighting COVID-19 and long-term care staff and residents) Macon County Health Director Kathy McGaha said the county will move into the second group – 1B – which includes adults at highest risk of severe illness and those at highest risk for exposure such as adults with conditions like cancer, COPD, and heart conditions.

The next phase of vaccina-

tions - 1B - will open in groups.

**Group 1:** Anyone 75 years or older regardless of medical condition or living situation. People do not have to have a chronic health condition.

**Group 2:** Health care and frontline essential workers who are 50 years of age or older.

**Group 3:** Frontline workers of any age and health care workers of any age, regardless of whether they work directly with COVID-19 patients. This phase is anticipated to begin in early January.

The CDC defines frontline essential workers as first responders, firefighters, police, educators including child care, teachers, and support staff, manufacturing, corrections officers, public transit, grocery store, food and agriculture, and US postal workers.

**Phase 2** is for adults at high risk for exposure and at increased risk of severe illness.

In this phase, vaccinations will also open in groups.

**Group 1:** Anyone ages 65-74 years regardless of medical condition or living situation.

**Group 2:** Anyone 16-64 years with a medical condition that increases risk of severe dis-

ease from COVID-19.

**Group 3:** Anyone who is incarcerated or living in other close group living settings who has not already vaccinated due to age, medical condition or job function.

**Group 4:** Essential workers as defined by the CDC who have not yet been vaccinated.

**Phase 3:** Students – college, university and high school students 16 or older.

*Younger children will only be vaccinated when the vaccine is approved for them.*

**Phase 4** is for anyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccine will be able to get one.

All vaccine providers are expected to ensure that vaccine is administered equitably within each group.

Individuals who fall in the Phase 1A can call the Macon County COVID Call Center at 828-349-2517 to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine.

Those who are not in Phase 1A are not able to schedule an appointment at this time.

As of January 5, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services reports that a total of 174 vaccinations have been distributed in Macon County; 109,799 given across the state

with 461 doses being completed (second dose) in NC (individuals with first and

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### 2021 Forecast

*"There is no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather"*  
— John Ruskin

Happy New Year one and all! It's the time of year when everyone and their brother is making predictions, goals, and forecasts. This is especially true when it comes to Real Estate prognosticating. Honestly, most of what you hear and read ranges from an educated guess to a bunch of malarkey (some would call it bull \_\_\_\_).

To prove my point here's a few excellent examples. Who predicted a year ago that the real estate market in Highlands and Cashiers would increase by 73% during 2020? Similarly, who forecasted the crash & burn of the real estate market back in 2008-2009? Life does not always follow a forecast. Did anyone forecast that China would send us a pandemic, the shut-down of the national economy, tumbleweed blowing across the streets of New York City, or Clemson losing to Ohio State (actually, I did put my money on the Buckeyes)?

In order to accurately forecast the Highlands-Cashiers Real Estate market in 2021, there's a lot we can learn from the Farmer's Almanac, which has been in the forecasting business since 1792. According to the Almanac, Winter this year will be warmer than normal, with the coldest



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

weather occurring between now and the end of January (well duh). You should really read the Farmer's Almanac. It predicts the exact time that the sun will rise, the precise day of every full moon, and the best flowers to plant in order to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. The same "unknowns" and "knowns" are true as we forecast the Real Estate business this year.

The knowns are these. We know that you deserve to live in a place like this. The weather is cooler; the mountains call your name; the water is crystal clear; the streets are safe; the people are friendly and smile even while wearing a mask. Just as sure as the time of the sunrise and the day of the full moon, we know you'll eventually want to be here.

The unknowns are these. You may not know if the timing is right; you may not know if you can go back to your office this year; you may not know if the right mountain property is available in your price range; you may not know if it's the right time to sell, or hold; you may not know the investment opportunities; and you may not have all of the answers in your life right now. So just as unsure as the weather forecast or the depth of the next snowfall, you need to ask some questions. I recommend that you seek the good counsel of a Real Estate professional in the Highlands-Cashiers area. We're here for you!

A wise man gave me some sage advice once when I'm contemplating the big decisions. He said Pat, ask yourself this question; "In light of my past experiences, my current circumstances, and my future hopes and dreams, what's the best thing to do?"

According to Farmer's Almanac, Spring will arrive with the Equinox on March 20th, at 5:37AM EST. You can bet on it, so C'mon Up!

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

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# White Christmas keeps emergency crews busy

By Brian O'Shea  
Plateau Daily News

The mountains were blanketed in snow over the holiday weekend in what is believed to be the first white Christmas the Plateau has seen in a decade.

A winter wonderland in the mountains may look gorgeous, but road and emergency crews had their hands full responding to calls over the holiday, including a landslide on Highway 64 and Chowan Road near On the Verandah restaurant.

The landslide was reported around 7 p.m. on Christmas Eve and is believed to have started with a falling tree that ended up bringing down several large rocks and a powerline along with it, leaving everything strewn throughout the road.

"A large tree fell due to winds and saturated soil, causing the embankment to slide with the stump," said Highlands Public Works Director Lamar Nix.

Nix added that a contract crew has been working to clean up the location throughout the week.

In preparation for the winter weather over the weekend, Nix said Town crews began treating the roads early afternoon on Christmas Eve.

He said the snow came in waves and made the roads slick, and soon the sidewalks had to be treated as well.

Highlands Fire & Rescue Chief Ryan Gearhart said they were busy throughout the weekend, including reports of car accidents, and downed trees and power lines. He added that icy roads contributed to the car accidents.

## ...COVID continued from page 6

there were 166 lab-confirmed positive COVID-19 patients in Mission Health system; 140 at Mission Hospital; 4 at Angel Medical Center; 4 at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital; 1 at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital; 10 at Mission Hospital McDowell; 7 at Transylvania Regional Hospital.

Because of the increase in COVID-19 cases, and to account for travel and gatherings that may have occurred over the Christmas holiday, Highlands School is spending the first week of the Spring semester in virtual learning.

The rest of Macon County Schools returned for in-person learning on Tuesday.

Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, Macon County Schools announced that one positive case of COVID-19 has been confirmed within the Macon County Schools Administrative staff as well as positive cases at the following locations: Highlands School-1, Macon Middle School-2, Macon Early College-1, Franklin High School-2, Cartoogechaye Elementary School-1, E. Franklin Elementary-1 and Mountain View Intermediate-1.

If the number of active positive cases continues to increase, an emergency meeting of the MC Board of Education may be scheduled to determine if schools need to consider virtual learning.

The H-C Health Foundation is hosting a free testing clinic at The Village Green in Cashiers on January 11 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and at the Highlands Rec Center from 2:30-4:30 p.m. People must register prior to arriving. Call the foundation office at 828-482-6510 or go to the website [www.hchealthfnd.org](http://www.hchealthfnd.org)

## Proverbs 3:5

# PLACES TO WORSHIP

## John 3:16

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

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

### CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

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Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

Sun. 10:45am, S.S. 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.

Tues. Guys study 8am, Gals 10am.

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Pastor Jim Kinard

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

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

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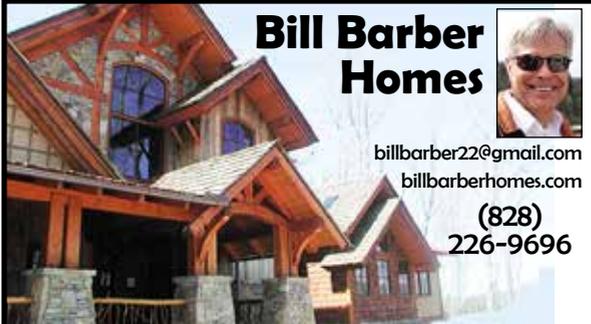
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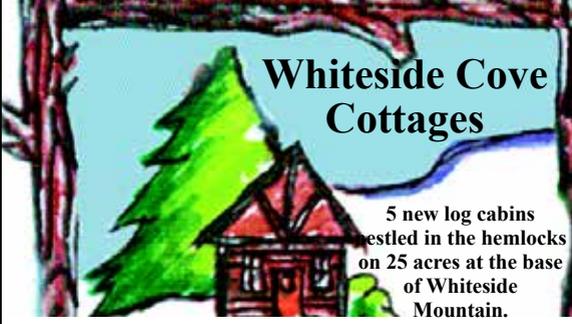
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## FOR SALE

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**LOCAL RESIDENT LOOKING** for small, 1 or 2 bedroom rental while I build house. No pets. 828-200-9777.

**FULL HOUSE GALLERY** in Highlands Plaza is accepting CONSIGNMENT FURNITURE. Please call or text Susan at 828-526-6004. (st. 3/19)

## HELP WANTED

**GEORGIA WHOLESALE SPORTS** – Wholesale distributor of fishing & Hunting supplies is looked for Sales Reps. Very attractive commission program. If you love the outdoors and would like to sell fishing & hunting products we would like to hear from you. No Phone Calls. Send resume to: Georgia Wholesale Sports, Box 298, Manchester, GA 31816. (st. 11/19)

**OLD EDWARDS INN & SPA, HIGHLANDS NC** -- \$500 sign-on bonus for Housekeeping and Dishwashing! Now recruiting for Dishwashers, Housekeepers, Turndown Attendants, Cook, Pastry and Bread Cook, Assistant Farm Manager, Servers, Bussers, Catering Manager, Host/Hostess, Reservation Specialist, Front Desk, Bellman, Night Audit, Fitness Manager. Benefits

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**CHESTNUT HILL IS AN UPSCALE ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY** in search of a CNAs, and Med Techs. Send resume to [Lindabtiff@aol.com](mailto:Lindabtiff@aol.com) or call 828-526-5251. (st. 2/13)

**SALES ASSOCIATE HIGH END RETAIL CLOTHING STORE IN HIGHLANDS AND CASHIERS, NC.** Full time, part time and seasonal. Inquire to 828-200-0928. (st. 3/38)

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**GUTTER CLEANING, METAL ROOF & FABRICATON** roof repairs, chimney flashing, debris removal, pressure washing. Call 371-1103. (st. 9/17/20)

**HIGH COUNTRY PHOTO/KEVIN VINSON:** scanning photos, slides & negatives to CD or DVD for easier viewing. Video transfer to DVD. Everything done in house. Leave message at 828-526-5208. (st. 6/4)

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**HIGHLANDS CONDO** – 1 bed plus bonus room with 2 bathrooms, activity room, one-car garage. 239-597-2959. (st. 7/16)

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**2/2 CLAYTON HOME IN LOWER CLEAR CREEK.** 1+ acre, Private. View. \$118,000. Call 706.782.9728 (st. 9/5)

# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from Dec. 10. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

## Dec. 10

• At 10:20 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on US 64 west at 2nd Street.

## Dec. 21

• At 8:50 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on US 64 west at Naiad Terrace.

• At 9:02 a.m., officers received a report of an illegal dumping of vegetation in the woods near Netsi Place.

## Dec. 22

• At 8 a.m., officers received a report of littering in Highlands Plaza.

## Dec. 23

• At 12:10 p.m., officers received a report of a person trespassing on Log Cabin Lane after being told to leave the property.

## Dec. 29

• At 4 p.m., officers received a report of sterling silver items valued at \$350 being stolen from cabinets at a residence on Paul Walden Road.

## Dec. 30

• At 9:02 a.m., officers were called to a residence on Sequoyah Drive concerning an attended death of an 83 year old man.

• At 7 p.m., officers received a report of a firearm stolen from a vehicle parked at Highlands Plaza.

## Jan. 1

• At 1:17 a.m., Rutilio Valencia Venegas, 24, of Frank-

lin, was arrested for DUI and driving without a license. He was issued a \$1,000 unsecured bond. His court date is Feb. 16.

• At noon, officers received a report of a suspicious person at a residence on Spruce Street.

## The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Dec.

### 23.

#### Dec. 23

• At 3:15 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Oak Street.

#### Dec. 24

• At 9:06 a.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Morewood Road.

• At 3:08 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

• At 5:52 p.m., the dept. was called about a power line down on W. Knoll Drive.

• At 6:53 p.m., the dept. offered public assistance to a motorist on US 64 west.

• At 6:57 p.m., the dept. was called about a tree on a power line on Hickory Lane.

#### Dec. 25

• At 10:21 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Hudson Road.

• At 11:58 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 east.

• At 1:12 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Horse Cove Road.

## Dec. 26

• At 3:54 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

• At 8:23 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Valentine Lane.

• At 3:31 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Chelsey Lane.

## Dec. 27

• At 11:43 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Country Club Dr.

• At 12:08 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Foreman Road.

• At 6:04 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on US 64 west.

## Dec. 29

• At 10:29 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Cottage Lane.

## Dec. 30

• At 11:23 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers Fire Dept.

## Dec. 31

• At 4:53 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on N. 4th Street

## Jan. 2

• At 3:43 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

• At 7:21 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Big View Drive.

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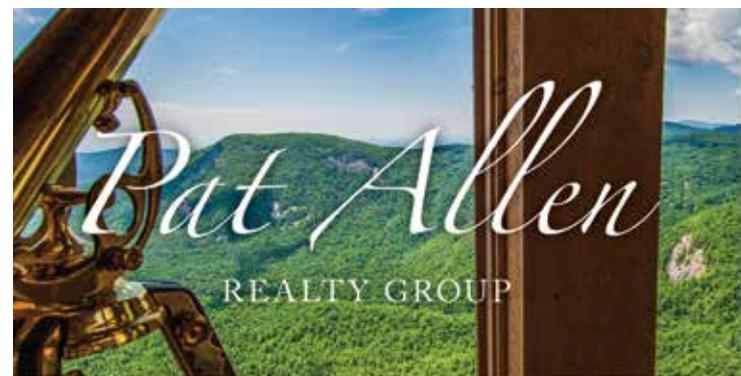
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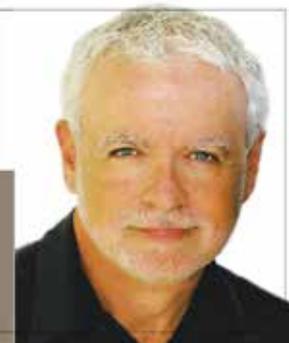
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