

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 19, Number 17 Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com Thurs., April 28, 2022

Hehn wants an apology to his wife

During the commissioner reports section at the beginning of the April 21 Town Board meeting, Commissioner Marc Hehn asked Mayor Pat Taylor to apologize to his wife for the angst she has experienced while the red-line docu-

ment issue was being addressed by the Town Board.

“I know you want peace and I want peace, too. It’s been a six-month process requesting the red-line documents and I appreciate the board honoring my request

and locating them,” said Commissioner Hehn. “I want to be kind to each other and transparent. It’s really important that we listen to each other, so we don’t have run-ins like this again.”

• See APOLOGY page 30

Hurricanes win big at Spring Finale

On Saturday, April 23, the Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team hosted the North Georgia Rapids (NGR) and the Jackson County Swim Team (JCST) for their annual Spring Finale. The Hurricanes dominated the event scoring 484 points to NGR’s 198 and JCST’s 39.

All 25 of the Hurricanes in the meet scored on the way to the win.

They were led by Junior Olympians Finneas Garner and Aniah McKim, brand new Junior Olympic qualifier Tate Wilson and Annie Wilkes all who scored 28 points and won all four of their races. McKim broke pool records in the 100 breaststroke and the 100 butterfly.

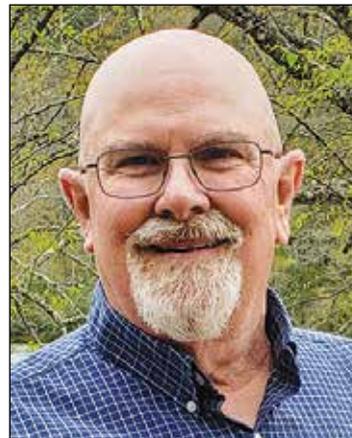
Also swimming especially

• See HURRICANES page 20

Primary Candidate Forum – Part 3



Clay Bryson



Bob Cook



Brent Holbrooks



Dereck Jones

5 Republican candidates want to be MC’s next Sheriff

This is the 3rd part of our Primary Candidate Forum.

Part 1 featured the two Republican candidates running for District 1 in the County Commission race. (See www.highlandsinfo.com/PDFs/22april14.pdf)

Part 2 featured five Republican candidates running for 2 seats in District 2. (See www.highlandsinfo.com/PDFs/22april21.pdf)

Early voting begins today, Thursday, April 28. The primary is Tuesday, May 17.

The Early Voting Polls are at the Franklin Community Building on the Georgia Road and at the Highlands Civic Center on N. 4th Street in Highlands.

The Early Voting polls are open 7:30a-7:30p Monday-Friday and 7:30a to 3p on Saturday.

The Primary is Tuesday, May 17 at regular polling places.

There are five candidates running for Sheriff of Macon County – Chris Browning, Clay Bryson, Bob Cook, Brent Holbrooks and Dereck Jones. As of press time, candidate Chris Browning didn’t submit material for the series.

Since there isn’t a Democrat candidate, and if there isn’t a run-

off, whoever wins the Republican Primary will be Macon County’s next Sheriff.

But to win, a candidate must garner 30% plus one vote.

Less than that means a runoff between the top two candidates.

For the Q&A, each candidate was asked the same questions.

• See SHERIFF page 8

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Keeping the peace

Last Friday afternoon the weather was warm. Sallie was on the front porch listening to the birds. She asked me to join her. We began to hear voices talking over the Billy Ray Cyrus 1992 hit song, Achy Breaky Heart. We realized it was coming from a nearby neighborhood house.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

We are not “no noise freaks,” so the music wasn’t a major concern late in the afternoon. Living in a residential neighborhood does not guarantee freedom from noise generated by neighbors. On weekends we hear lawn mowers, leaf blowers, traffic, dogs barking, and children playing in yards. All those routine sounds are a part of community life.

But, there are limits to noise and nuisance levels. As it became dark the music continued from the house in question. In fact, it seemed to intensify as well as shifting from country to more contemporary hip-hop selections.

We were faced with two options, call the police or ask the people to turn the mu-

sic down. Like many residents I don’t like to involve the police if at all possible. I decided to go to the house, and ask them to turn the music down.

The doors and windows were open and the music was very loud. I had to knock rather hard to get the attention of the people inside.

A young man came to the door. I told him I was the mayor and that I lived in the neighborhood. I asked him to turn down the music. As I was speaking, a woman came up and informed me that they were having a wedding party, as if that was justification for the blaring music. She seemed offended by my demeanor and request.

I responded that they were in a residential neighborhood and that the music was disturbing the peace. I informed them that they could either turn the music down, or I could call the police. The music was turned down and the problem was resolved.

I know my transient neighbors did not like my visit, and me messing up their weekend celebration. They were from out of town and were coming to the mountains for a fun weekend.

Here lies the problem, full-time residents want the simple and peaceful enjoyment of their property, but some visitors want to celebrate, kickback and have a good time. Some folks who embrace the STR model would tell me I just have to call the police when there is a noise issue or other violation of the peace. My response is that I should not have to be a constant vigilante of the peace as the transient residents come and go.

There were two short term rental houses occupied in my neighborhood this past weekend. One house was absolutely quiet while the other was the party house. I guess we should be thankful that both were not party houses.

We should have known Billy Ray Cyrus foreshadowed a problem. Next weekend it might be Miley Cyrus singing Party in the USA!

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 28-Apr	Fri, 29-Apr	Sat, 30-Apr	Sun, 1-May
 64°F 41°F	 63°F 46°F	 65°F 50°F	 68°F 50°F
Mostly sunny	Cloudy	Mostly cloudy with a t-storm	Cloudy with a thunderstorm
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High: 74° Low: 48°	High: 65° Low: 48°	High: 70° Low: 49°	High: 69° Low: 55°

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The Godfather – Sopressa salami, shaved ham, pepperoni, red onion, smoked provolone, shredded lettuce, banana peppers, onions with Italian dressing on baguette. \$13

The Muff – Turkey, Sopressa salami, ham, cream cheese olive spread, smoked provolone cheese and shredded lettuce on sub roll. \$13

The Porker – Shaved ham, Jarlsberg cheese, DJs pickles with homemade honey mustard on ciabatta. \$12

The Hudson – Turkey, Provolone cheese (Have it your way - cucumber, lettuce, onion, banana peppers, black olives, DJs pickles). \$13

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• LETTER •

With grateful thanks to the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital

Dear Editor,

On Sunday afternoon two weeks ago, I watched the Master's tournament final round, had dinner and went to bed feeling fine. I woke up Monday morning feeling poorly and by Tuesday night, I had a nice Highlands Police Sargent leading two wonderful EMT's to the bedroom to take me to the hospital.

I arrived about 11:30pm and after a complete work up, the diagnosis was Type A influenza with pneumonia in both lungs. They debated a few hours about whether to keep me or send me to a critical care hospital but thank goodness, they allowed me to stay.

I can't thank the ER doc, Dr Burt, and all his staff enough for all they did for me while in the ER. I wish I had their names but those first few hours were just a blur.

Once admitted, I had an amazing group of people who took over my care. The NPs Michelle and Mike, and a whole host of great nurses, nurse assistants, etc. Holly, Sarah, Bella, Kassi, Tami, Valerie, Chelsie, Savannah, Milton, Rinny, were all just wonderful and I will never forget the dedicated care they gave me.

Of special note was Marissa, the respiratory therapist, who worked with me several times a day to help me clear the fluids from the lungs and restore my blood oxygen levels back to near normal. She was exceptional.

Thank you, thank you, thank you all for your excellent care and careful consideration. Rosemary and I feel blessed that you all were there.

**Bill Stiefel
Highlands**

Tickets are still available for Bear Shadow Base Camp Main Stage April 29-May 1

The Bear Shadow Music Festival Base Camp shows are scheduled for Fri., April 29 and Sat., April 30 from 5– 10:30 p.m. and on Sun. May 1 from 12 noon – 5:30 p.m. Additional events are scheduled at various locations throughout the weekend. For a full schedule, visit <https://bearshadownc.com/>.

The Base Camp main stage and festival grounds are located at Winfield Farm, 250 Winfield Farm Road, Scaly Mountain, 28775. Additional events are scheduled at various locations in the Highlands area throughout the weekend.

General Admission tickets are available for \$300 for a three-day pass. A limited number of single-day General Admission (\$125) and VIP tickets (\$250) are also available.

Free shuttles will run continuously between Kelsey-Hutchinson Park and Winfield Farm on Friday and Saturday from 4-11 p.m. and on Sunday from 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Limited on-site parking passes for Base Camp are available for \$20 per car, each day.



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...SHERIFF continued from page 1

Clay Bryson

Please give our readers a brief bio. Personal, Professional, Education.

Captain Clay Bryson was born and raised in Macon County and has spent half of his life, 21 years to be exact, as a Law Enforcement Officer with the Macon County Sheriff's Office.

Clay Bryson enrolled in Basic Law Enforcement Training at Southwestern Community College in the Fall of 1999 to begin his career and on April 11, 2000, Bryson's 21st birthday, he took his Oath of Office with the Macon County Sheriff's Office. In January of 2005 Bryson received his first promotion within the agency and has spent the last 21 years working in various capacities and now serves as Lieutenant over Patrol.

Throughout his career, Capt. Bryson has served in many roles within the Sheriff's Office. First as a patrol deputy. From there, he then began working his way through the ranks as a corporal, sergeant, first sergeant, narcotics investigator, SWAT commander, K9 Supervisor/ Trainer, and now as Captain over Patrol.

Bryson and his wife Ariel have been married since 2014 and currently reside in the Cullasaja Community of Macon County. Bryson is the proud father of four daughters and in 2019 became a grandfather for the first time. Bryson attends Community Bible Church in Highlands and is an active member of the community.

Why are you running for office?

With Sheriff Holland's announcement that he will be retiring at the end of his current term, after much prayer and with the support of my family, I decided that I wanted to be part of progressing the sheriff's office forward. I have been asked many times by many people why I don't go somewhere else to make more money and the answer is simple... Macon County is my home. This is where I grew up; where my children and grandchildren are growing up. As a father, my goal has always been to protect them, love them, and defend them to the best of my ability. I know that I can't always be by their side, so what better way to protect them than to work for an agency that allows you to face the evil in our communities head-on.

I want to further our agency just as Sheriff Holland has worked to do for many years. The honest truth is, no, we aren't exactly where we need to be, but I want to continue to build on what so many in this department have worked hard to create. Just like criminal enterprise is constantly evolving, so is Law Enforcement and I want to

ensure that we evolve quicker and smarter for the betterment of my friends and neighbors.

Now that the office is fully staffed, would you continue or possibly increase deputy availability in Highlands and Nantahala?

At the moment we are currently not fully staffed throughout. Our Patrol division is full for the first time in a couple years, however we still remain short in other areas of the agency which requires patrol officers to assist as needed. My goal as your next Sheriff is to continue to work on bringing the agency to full capacity and to repurpose a few positions placing six officers on a shift. This will give your Sheriffs Office the ability to keep an officer in Highlands and Nantahala every shift.

The war on drugs has been touted in many campaign slogans as of late. Exactly how would you wipe out the drug problem in Macon County.

First of all, you can't wipe out a drug problem without stopping the source. The drugs aren't originating here in Macon County so we will continue to address the problem here while working alongside Federal and State agencies in combating this horrible problem. I promise all of you that my number one priority to the citizens of Macon County, if elected as your next Sheriff, is to protect you and your families with the same vigilance I protect my own. And I am confident that one of the most important ways of doing that is to continue fighting the war on drugs. For most of my entire law enforcement career, I have prioritized combating this horrible epidemic and I assure you I will continue to do so as long as I serve Macon County. My approach to attacking Macon County's drug problem centers around pooling resources and looking at all angles. Incarceration isn't going to solve the tragedy impacting our friends and neighbors struggling with drug addictions. That is why I plan to constantly seek out grants and funding opportunities to make mental health resources and substance abuse treatment more readily available and accessible in Western North Carolina. We need to offer our community members an alternative to turning to drugs and the power and knowledge to break free from addiction.

What would be the first thing you would change within the agency, if elected?

I believe one significant area of improvement within the Sheriff's Office comes with building community relations. At over 500 square miles, the majority of Macon County sits outside of the Franklin

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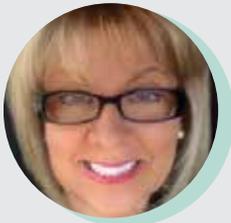
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...SHERIFF continued from page 8

town limits. Macon County's rural nature, paired with geographical challenges puts the outlying areas of the county just as Nantahala and Highlands at a disadvantage. Those residents deserve the same response and service from the Macon County Sheriff's Office as someone who lives in the center of town. I am a member of the Cullasaja Fire Department and have seen firsthand the integral role our volunteer fire departments and community centers have within our communities. I believe it is imperative as Sheriff to visit these departments and the various community clubs throughout Macon County on a regular basis to bolster community relations and hear from citizens about what needs to be done and how we can better serve the county. I don't want this to be one occurrence — I want to be a regular face at these events in these various communities because I believe you the citizens know what is best for your neighbors. What Otto needs from me as Sheriff may be different from what Highlands needs and I want to hear that from those who work and live in those communities every day. That increased presence and visibility will only benefit the county as a whole. I can't be successful as Sheriff without you, which is why I promise to work alongside you to continue to improve the quality of life here in Macon County, together.

Lastly, anything else you would like voters to know about you?

Having the unique advantage of experiencing first-hand the multitude of ways law enforcement serves Macon County, I promise to lead the Macon County Sheriff's Office with experience and integrity to best serve the community as Macon County's next Sheriff.

Bob Cook

Please give our readers a brief bio. Personal, Professional, Education.

My name is Bob Cook. I am fairly recently married to my wife, Jennifer. Together we have five daughters, two sons, 12 grandchildren and one on the way plus one great-grandson.

I was born and raised in Newton, Iowa. I joined the Navy in August 1972 during the Viet Nam War and remained in the Navy until August 1992 during the Gulf War. I retired after earning the rank of Chief Petty Officer with Surface Warfare Qualifications.

I have three years of college through the Columbia College, Columbia, MO and an Associates in Arts degree through the Los Angeles Community College.

Upon retirement from the Navy, I went to the Police Academy in Jacksonville, FL

after which I was hired by the Jacksonville Beach Police Department, Jacksonville Beach, FL. After approximately two and a half years, I applied to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office where I remained for approximately 20 years.

As a law enforcement officer, I have experience in Patrol, Evidence Technician, Traffic Officer, Burglary, Scrap Metal Task Force, Economic Crimes (Food Stamp Fraud), Gang Unit, Homicide Unit as a member of the Aggravated Battery Squad (Violent Crimes Task Force). The majority of my law enforcement career (14 years) I was assigned to the Narcotics Unit where I was also on the Major Crimes - Violent Crimes Task Force and the DEA Task Force.

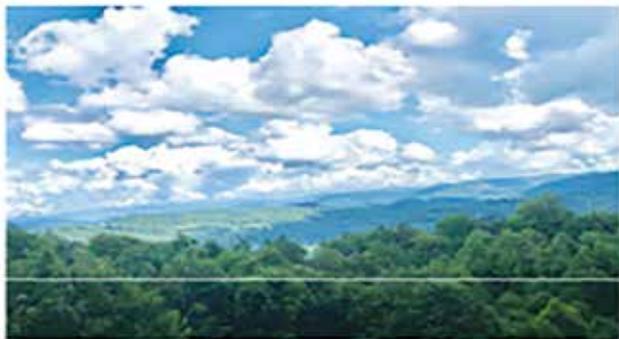
Why are you running for office?

I am running for office because I see a need for a course correction. Prior to my announcement in April 2021, I had been approached by several citizens in Macon County who related their concerns to me. Most of these concerns centered around the drug problem in Macon County. Additionally, I was told by several citizens they wanted a change in leadership at the Sheriff's Office and would never vote for a member of the Sheriff's Office again. They felt disenfranchised and saw what they considered as the "good old boy club" being treated differently than everyone else. I felt that the only way to ensure these concerns were addressed properly was to no longer sit on the sidelines. I decided to enter the race as a candidate to make a difference not only in the lives of the citizens of Macon County, but also in the operation of the Sheriff's Office.

Now that the office is fully staffed, would you continue or possibly increase deputy in availability in Highlands and Nantabala?

The fact that the agency is or is not fully staffed is irrelevant to someone who may be in need of emergency services in the more rural areas of our county. In 2007, the Macon County Sheriff's Office was given four Deputy positions specifically for the Nantahala area. They were never stationed out there. In 2017, once again it was promised they would get some officers out there for coverage and to this day, the only time they get a patrol unit out there is in response to a call for service.

Since April 2021, I have made the proposal to get patrol coverage to not only Nantahala, but to Scaly Mountain, Otto and the Cowee area among others. I spoke to an MCSO Street supervisor and asked



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How important is having a house in Highlands?

Historically low levels of inventory have created havoc, not only in Highlands, but across the country as Buyers try to secure primary residences or vacation homes for themselves.

Recently a friend of mine who happens to be a Realtor told me of a new listing she was getting. It was a small but cute cottage, a 2/2 in a good neighborhood at a good price (by today's standards). I was excited to tell some of my prospects about it, because I just knew that someone would rush right up here and scoop it up! Wrong.

I contacted five of my prospects, all of whom I thought were earnestly searching for a home in Highlands. I got responses like, "We really want walk to town," or "We just can't get there right now" or "We're still learning the market," even, "We'd really prefer a fixer-upper."

I learned something important. Not everyone who says, "Please keep us in mind if something comes up," means they're ready to buy right now.

It's great to learn the market and everyone should. There's no pressure from me to do something before you're ready. It's also great to hold out for exactly what you want, though your chances in this market of being able to connect with your dream home before someone else does are slim.

Not impossible, you understand, but you'll most likely have competition, bidding wars, and extra funds to pay. Sometimes I send listings to people that aren't exactly what they want because it's a way to get them here – if it's that important. Buyers need an extra dose of courage just to tackle this market. After that they need perseverance and a Realtor who has their back!

I decided to send out an email out to my list of prospects asking which camp they were in. If a perfect house for them came available, would they be able to drop everything and come see it? Some said yes! (It applies to Realtors as well. We have to drop everything, go take pictures or videos, then be available when the client comes.)

Some said they were not in the accel-



Betty Holt
Betty@bhhsmmr.com

erated camp.

This is the toughest market I've seen in my 30+ years in the business. All aspects of it are challenging, from being able to find the house, get it under contract, survive the inspection, the loan process and appraisal. As Realtors we are used to persevering through problems, but many of our clients have not been in this situation. It separates the wheat from the chaff, the Buyers from the Dreamers.

I'm sure it's no help to say that the majority of my time as a Realtor has been spent in Buyer's markets. Only one other time, around 1999, can I ever remember it being a Seller's market, and it doesn't compare to today. Sellers are having their day in the sun, and though they are due for it, the current situation is creating substantial hardships for Buyers, and I'm very sympathetic.

If you're truly a Buyer in this market, then be ready to take the plunge. Sellers prefer cash, so if there's any way you can work that out, do.

One couple I represented last year took out a home equity loan on their primary home so they could pay cash for their vacation home here, then converted that into a mortgage after closing. Others have had conversations with their bankers to assure them they could put cash on the contract and still get a loan but not make it subject to the loan. If you are getting a loan, it's mandatory to have a pre-approval letter.

Be willing to adjust your list of "must haves." I know you would like to have a view, but how important is it to be in Highlands and out of the heat? The main challenge may be just to get here so you can make a different decision when the market changes.

Finally, find a Realtor you can have a good relationship with, who will let you know when something in your category comes available. Be ready to jump when you receive that call! And of course treat your realtor like a treasured new best friend!

• *Betty Holt is a Highlands native with over 30 years' experience in this market. She works with both Buyers and Sellers and loves listings! She can be reached at Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Meadows Mountain Realty at 488 Main Street, or at 828-526-4218 or Betty@bhhsmmr.com.*

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• HIGHLANDS SCHOOL SPORTS •

Highlands MS girls soccer team takes down Jackson County

Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Highlands Middle School soccer team hosted Jackson County in the second round of the Little Smoky Mountain Conference Championship on April 25 and won 3-1.

The win comes after Highlands tied Rabun Gap at home 2-2 on April 20.

Highlands takes on Rabun Gap on the road tomorrow at 4:30 p.m.



Highlands Tate Wilson works to clear the ball against Rabun Gap at home.



Highlands Heidi Doerter works to clear the ball away from Highlands' goal against Jackson County.

Story and photos
by Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News



Highlands Magnolia Cunningham on a fast break against Jackson County.



Highlands Nicole Taylor races to stop Rabun Gap's offense.



Eight-graders are playing their last season of middle school soccer before transitioning to high school.

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Per Highlands/Cashiers MLS and County Recordings.

• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

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Rec Pool Schedule:

- Lap Swim Monday-Friday 6am-10am, Monday and Thursday 11:15am-7pm and Tuesday and Wednesday 11:15am-3:30pm 6 lanes AND 3:30-7 (shared Pool) and Saturday 10-11am 6 lanes. Adult Swim Monday-Thursday 11:15am-7pm. Call ahead for Public Swim Weekend schedule due to staff shortages. 828-526-1595.

Pickle Ball

- There are three indoor Pickle Ball courts and six outdoor Court open once again. Pickle Ball will be played in the gym every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10am-1:pm (days and times have changed).

Nature Center Spring Hours

- Friday & Saturday: 10 AM to 4 PM. Closed: Sunday - Thursday

Mondays

- ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 5:30-6:30pm. No registration required – just show up and participate. Questions? Visit www.maconncliteracy.org, call 828-526 – 0863 or email info@maconncliteracy.org

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 10:15-11am.

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.

- New Mobility Class with Anna Norton It's all about movement. 5:30-6:30pm and Wednesday 6:45-7:45. For more information, call Anna 267-825-0716.

Mon. & Thurs.

- Drive-thru flu clinics at the Public Health Center at 1830 Lakeside Dr. in Franklin from 1-4 pm \$36 for the regular dose and the \$73 for the high dose (recommended for those 65+). Insurances will be filed; please bring your insurance card with you. Questions? Call 828.349.2081.

Mon, Wed, Thurs

- Indoor and outdoor Pickle Ball 10:30 am-1 pm.

Mon, Wed, Fri

- Heart Healthy Exercise Class 8:30-9:30am. \$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 am.

Tues. & Thurs.

- Pilates-Strength and Stretch with Autumn Lucas

- New Zumba class with Gay Chalpin from 4:30-5:30p.

- Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with many different types of exercise.

1st Tuesdays

- Indivisible Highlands from 5-6:30 pm at the Hudson Library.

Tuesdays

- Strength Training 8:15-9:15am. Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone.

Thursdays

- Kickboxing 8:15-9:15am. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout.

- Free Covid vaccination clinics – 9 am to 5pm at the Rec Park. (Closed for a half-hour lunch break) Location subject to change. please check <https://myspot.nc.gov/> for the latest location information. Walk-ins are accepted, however we encourage residents to pre-register and schedule an appointment at <https://myoptumserve.com/covid19> or by calling (877) 505-6723 if you do not have internet.

Every Fri., Sat, & Sun.

- 1st run movies at the Playhouse on Oak Street. 1 and 4 p.m. www.mountaintheatre.com

2nd Saturdays

- The Western North Carolina Woodturners Club meets in Highlands at The Bascom at 10 a.m. March and November.

3rd Saturdays

- The American Legion Post 370 meets on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in their Community Room/ 909 Chapel. We serve breakfast at 9AM and hold our monthly meeting at 10AM We invite ALL Veterans to attend. Contact Ed McCloskey, Commander for any information @828-787-1660.

Thurs. April 28

- Wildflower Walk at the Highlands Nature Center from noon to 1 p.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

April 29-May 1

- Bear Shadow Music Festival. For tickets go to bearshadownc.com.

- First-run movie at The Playhouse.

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore, 1pm & 4pm. www.mountaintheatre.com

Sat. April 30

• Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org.

• Women's Fellowship Brunch. A time for fellowship and encouragement. 10 a.m. at the Highlands Community Center on N. 4th Street in Highlands. For more information email womensrefillandrefuel@gmail.com

• Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Free Public Concert at the First Presbyterian Church at 5 p.m., featuring Rasa String Quartet. Sponsored by the Cullasaja Women's Outreach.

Sun., May 1

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take the Warwoman Dell hike, a moderate 3 mile hike on Sunday, May 1, in Warwoman Dell. We will meet in the north end of Ingle's parking lot in Clayton, Ga, at 1pm and carpool to Warwoman Dell, about 5 miles from Hwy 441. Bring gear and fluids as needed. There should be lots of Spring wildflowers still blooming. Call hike leader David Stearns, 828-349-7361, for more information or in case of foul weather. There is no

charge. Reservations are not needed. Visitors and well behaved dogs are welcome. • Dixon Pond BioBlitz with Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust from 1-3pm. Learn about pond life and contribute to science. Free, family-friendly program. To sign-up or more info contact: Sarah Pursel, hclt_ed@earthlink.net, 828-526-1111, www.hicashlt.org.

Thurs., May 7

• Family Bird Walk at the Village Green in Cashiers with Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and Highlands Plateau Audubon Society from 9:30-11:30am. Free, family-friendly program. To sign-up or more info contact: Sarah Pursel, hclt_ed@earthlink.net, 828-526-1111, www.hicashlt.org.

Thurs., May 12

• Winter stories will be held at the High Dive from 2-4, a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

Sun., May 15

• Chef Dinner at OEI's The Farm, May Day Celebration with Celebrity Chef, author and lifestyle expert Chadwick Boyd. Book at OldEdwardsHospitality.com/chefdinners

Tues., May 17

• Brushy Face to Satulah Hike – Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust (HCLT) Member EcoTour from 10am-3pm. \$50 per person PLUS HCLT membership (any level). Con-

tact Sarah Pursel, hclt_ed@earthlink.net, 828-526-1111, www.hicashlt.org.

• Free state-mandated sports physical for rising 6th-12th graders at 2 p.m. at Highlands School. All students who will participate in NCHSAA sanctioned sports, must undergo a state-mandated sports physical prior to trying out for any sport. Parents/Guardians should plan to attend the sports physical, to answer questions the medical team may have during the exam. For more information please contact Will Mathiowdis at William.Mathiowdis@HCAHealthcare.com

Fri., May 20

• First-ever Justice Matters Tours at our Highlands/Cashiers office to find out how you can join Pisgah Legal Services in standing for justice. This interactive in-person tour is 1:30 - 3p.m. and delves into how Pisgah Legal addresses domestic violence, housing, immigration, access to healthcare and community economic development and explains how community members can get involved. Tours take place at Pisgah Legal Services, 209 Hospital Dr., Suite 203, Highlands, NC. Limited space available. RSVP to Megan Quattlebaum at 828-575-1353 or email Megan@pisgahlegal.org.



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Tommy Jenkins

Tommy is a North Carolina native and longtime resident of Macon County. As a licensed Realtor since 1978, Tommy has over 40 years of experience in real estate sales and development. Prior to entering the real estate brokerage business, Tommy served as the Macon County Economic Development Commission Director.

An active community member, Tommy has served in the North Carolina House of Representatives, the North Carolina State Senate, the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission, Chair of the Advantage West Economic Development Group, the advisory council of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, and the Macon County Airport Authority.



thomas.jenkins@sothebysrealty.com
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Spring Home Improvement 2022

4 Tips for Preparing Your Home to Sell in Today's Market

(StatePoint) In the current market, houses are selling fast – meaning there's typically no need to spend time and

money on large home repairs and renovations to get an offer. Instead, homeowners should focus on quick, easy DIY projects to give their space a facelift before listing – here's how.

cutting the grass, planting flowers and greenery, raking leaves, watering the grass and flowers, or removing snow and ice.

If the home's exterior is in need of a little more TLC, consider adding a pop of color to the front door with a fresh coat of paint, installing unique shutters for visual interest or updating to a new mailbox. Pull it all together with a seasonal wreath or welcome mat.

Paint As Needed.

Moving into the interior, spruce things up by refreshing walls with new paint. Rather than redoing every room, focus on painting over bright, bold colors with a neutral palette more likely to appeal to the masses.

To get started, tape off the room with FrogTape Multi-Surface Painting Tape. The tape is made with Paint-Block Technology, a super-absorbent polymer that instantly gels to form a micro-barrier that seals the edges of the tape. This will prevent bleed and leave the walls with crisp, clean lines that won't need touch-ups.

Make Minor Repairs.

As you're gearing up to sell, pay close attention to minor things that may need to be updated or repaired. For example, leaky faucets, loose cabinet handles or doors that stick are all minor fixes – but ignoring them could leave potential buyers assuming that there are larger problems within the home. Do a careful walkthrough before listing to look for any small fixes that need to be made.

Declutter and Clean.

A messy house is a major turnoff for potential buyers, so prioritize decluttering and cleaning. Start by eliminating as many personal items as possible, including toiletries, kids' items and personal décor like family photos, fan memorabilia and religious and political objects. It's also important to spruce up the appearance of beds, couch pillows and counters in the kitchen and bathrooms.

"If you have a small closet and your clothes are jammed into it, take out half so it looks like there is room to add more," Mahoney recommends. "You don't want your buyer's first thought to be that they won't be able to fit their belongings in the bedroom closet."

Once things are organized, each room should receive a deep clean, including wiping surfaces, floors and base-

• See TIPS page 17



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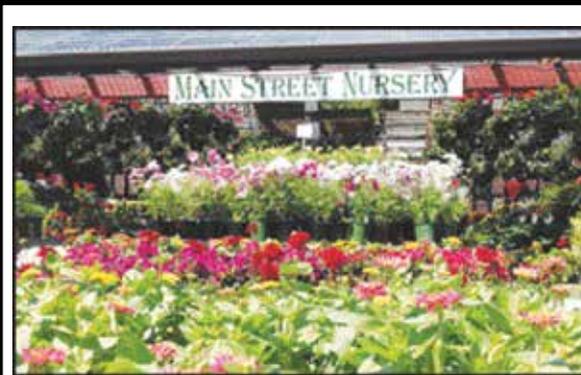
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Spring Home Improvement

Affording a Down Payment May Not Be So Hard

(StatePoint) If you're ready to buy your first home but are short on the down payment, you're not alone. Affording a down payment is the number one barrier to homeownership, and rising housing costs are presenting even bigger hurdles.

The August 2021 Freddie Mac Housing Price Index

...TIPS continued from page 16

boards, as well as cleaning any appliances, sinks, toilets and showers. As the open house approaches, open doors and windows for fresh air and natural light, leaving the home looking and smelling pleasant for potential buyers.

If you prioritize the right projects, preparing to sell is painless. By taking these four simple steps, your home will be in its best shape to hit the market – and maximize your potential profit.

showed a 19.67% year-over-year increase in home values. At the same time, more than 35% of non-homeowners say they do not have enough money to put toward a down payment, according to NerdWallet. Among millennials, the figures are even more disheartening, with 63% having set aside no money for a down payment.

But there's good news. Down payment assistance programs, an often-overlooked resource, could be the missing piece of the financial puzzle to make your dream of homeownership a reality, and there are more than 2,500 such programs nationwide. According to Freddie Mac, here's how to take advantage of down payment assistance:

- Understand the different types of help. Down payment assistance can take many forms, including grants from federal agencies, employers, community organizations, state and local housing finance agencies, and state and lo-

• See **AFFORDING** page 30



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...SHERIFF continued from page 10

what it would take to get coverage into those areas. I was advised they would need seven road deputies, including the supervisor. Currently they have five on a shift including the supervisor.

My plan would be to first meet with the Chief of Police in Franklin to discuss turning over the School Resource Officer positions from Franklin High School, East Franklin Elementary School and Macon Early College. These schools are physically located inside Franklin's city limits and should be their responsibility much like Highlands PD handles their own SRO right now. That would give me one more per shift for a total of six. Next, I would take the four K-9 Officers and place one per shift. The K-9 Officers would be stationed in a zone that would enable them to be mobile in the event of a requirement for their services. Additionally, they would be primarily a backup officer to keep them free for K-9 duties. That would result in seven

per shift. Lastly, I would look at the manning in the courthouse and other areas to see who may be able to move to this vital area.

The war on drugs has been touted in many campaign slogans of late. Exactly how would you wipe out the drug problem in Macon County?

First, I need to correct a perception. We will not "wipe out" the drug problem in Macon County. However, I believe we can make it so unprofitable for them to do business here that those I don't catch will seek new territory to do business in. Do not misinterpret what I just said, I will put every drug dealer in jail anytime I have probable cause to do so!

I am uniquely suited to address the drug epidemic in Macon County. As I have noted, I have spent approximately 14 years as an undercover Narcotics Detective. As such, I have experience in making hand-to-hand drug buys for a \$20 crack or heroin purchase to as much as multiple kilogram amounts of methamphetamine. I also have been the affiant on 99 separate telephone facility wire intercepts. I have arrested cartel affiliated drug and gang members as well as serial killers. As such, I have had to learn to step back and look at whatever the situation is and think outside the box to develop a successful plan of attack. I feel that my experience in that area coupled with my leadership and management experience makes me uniquely and more qualified to address the burgeoning drug problem.

We can strengthen the response in several ways. I intend on installing a drug-tip hot-line and making the supervisor over narcotics responsible to ensure there are responses to the complaints.

Many people in our county do not have smart phones or internet service and this will ensure they are all able to register a complaint.

Next, I will meet with the Assistant Supervisor in Charge of the DEA as well as other federal authorities to discuss our needs. I intend to ask for a partnership with our federal partners who will

work with us and the U.S. Attorney's Office as well as the District Attorney's Office to ensure we are getting the sentences we need in order to rid our community of those who supply the poison to our families.

To reduce the demand side of the drug trade, I will concentrate on inmate rehabilitation programs to provide the tools to beat addiction. I have also spoken to DA Ashley Welch and expressed my desire to see the establishment of a drug court in Macon County. DA Welch was successful in establishing a Veteran's Court which is similar but with a narrow application to veterans only.

What would be the first thing you would change within the agency if elected?

Once elected, I will immediately begin the process of reorganization of the Agency. I feel it is too top heavy and does not lend itself to efficient and effective completion of the mission of the Agency. I will begin this process within days of the election being settled so that when I am sworn in, the change will be seamless and efficient.

Lastly, anything else you would like voters to know about you.

I would like the voters to know I am not one that is used to failure. I will also will not lie to them. The proposals I have made thus far are not new ideas. They may be new to Macon County, but they are tried and true methods used in most areas in the country. If I say I will accomplish something, I will make every effort to get it done. That is something the military instilled in me. I will hold every member of my agency to the highest standards for themselves and an even higher standard for me. They will be able to count on me and I will not let them down.

Brent Holbrooks

Please give our readers a brief bio. Personal, Professional, Education

My name is Brent Holbrooks and I am running for Sheriff of Macon County 2022. I was born 45 years ago and raised right here in Macon County. Growing up in

• See SHERIFF page 23



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BACKGROUND

EDUCATION

Franklin High School

High School Diploma, 2000

Southwestern Community College

Pre-major Criminal Justice, Associate of Arts, 2008

Western Carolina University

Criminal Justice, Bachelor of Science, 2012

EXPERIENCE

Highlands Police Department, 2005

Macon County Sheriff's Office, 2005-Present

Detention Officer, 2005

Deputy Sheriff - Patrol, 2005-2007

Special Response Team Operator, 2006-2011

Patrol Corporal / Field Training Officer, 2007-2008

Patrol Sergeant, 2008-2015

Detective - Juvenile Investigations, 2015-2016

Detective - Criminal Investigations, 2016-2018

Lieutenant - Jail Administrator, 2018-2021

Captain - Jail Administrator, 2021-Present

CERTIFICATIONS

Basic Law Enforcement Training, 2004

Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificate, 2010

General Instructor Certification, 2011

Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate, 2013

General Instructor Orientation Certificate, 2013

Axon (Taser) Instructor, 2014

Specialized Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor, 2015

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Instructor, 2015

Concealed Carry Handgun Instructor, 2015

Hostage and Crisis Negotiator, 2015

Criminal Investigation Certificate Program Certification, 2017

Department of Corrections Certification, 2018

In-Service Training Coordinator Certification, 2020

Field Training Officer Instructor, 2020

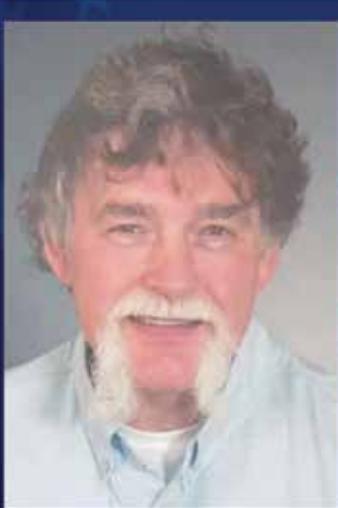
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Dereck E. Jones Macon County Sheriff*



LIGHTNER FOR MACON COUNTY COMMISSIONER

“35 years as Macon County
Tax Administrator prepared me
for dealing with the
complex challenges that face our
citizens. We need a vision for
today that will become a reality
tomorrow.”

SUPPORTS:

- School Funding Solutions
- Enhanced Senior Services
- Law Enforcement & EMS Services
- Strong County and Town Relations
- Transparent Government with Citizens' input.
- Office for Grants and Economic Development

“I appreciate your support and vote in the upcoming election.”

– Richard Lightner

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Richard Lightner

...HURRICANES continued from page 1

well were Ian Batista, who with Elizabeth Burnette and Charlie Wilkes were singled out for spectacular improvement and time drops by Assistant Coach Jordan Kenter. Batista scored 26 points and won three events, E. Burnett scored 23 points and won two events, and C. Wilkes scored 12 points and got a 3rd place in the 100-freestyle.

Continuing his winning ways, Junior Olympian Chase Kenter scored 25 points, won three events and set a pool record in the 100-freestyle. Alyse Remery and Trinity Hernandez-Faust both scored 23 points, won two events, got a 2nd and a 3rd. Jaycee Powell scored 22 points won an event and brought home 3 2nd place finishes. Junior Olympians Jehenna McKim and Corena Dearth scored 21 points. J. McKim won three events, Dearth two. Junior Olympian Justin Powell and Bo Curcuru scored 19 points. Powell won an event and Curcuru won two. Junior Olympian Jack Sumner and Emilina Hernandez scored 18 points. Hernandez won the 100 IM (Individual Medley), and worthy of note, Sumner swam the 2nd fastest 13-14 100-butterfly ever in the Highlands Pool Complex and would have set the pool record had not A. McKim beat him to

the wall and taken that record.

Chris Burnette scored 17 points and won the 50-backstroke. Blake Kenter qualified for Junior Olympics for the 1st time in the 50-backstroke and won the 50-butterfly. New swimmer Natalie Nadzorau scored 15 points and received 3 2nd place ribbons. Mason Johnson contributed 13 points and won the 50-breaststroke. Penelope McRae, Max Justin and Bella Batista scored 12 points each. William Burnette scored 5 points.

The Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team will be having their end of season party Monday, May 2. Then they will take most of May off and start summer practice on Tuesday, May 31. The summer season will culminate at AAU Junior Olympics July 28-31. This year JO's are in Greensboro, NC.

The Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team is a Highlands Recreation Park Team that practices at the Highlands Recreation Park Pool in the evenings. The only requirement to join the team is that a prospective swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards (one length of the rec park pool) unassisted.



HIGHLANDS

ELEV. 4118 | THE HEART OF HAPPINESS

Plateau Pickup

Highest Volunteer Turnout Ever!

visithighlandsc.com

Thank you to all who made the 2022 Plateau Pickup a shining success!

Because of you, approximately 15 tons of garbage
was collected from roadways around Highlands.

Special thanks for partnership and logistical support to:

Macon County Sheriff's Office

N.C. Department of Transportation

N.C. State Patrol

Town of Highlands

Town of Highlands Police Department

The Plateau Pickup is organized and hosted by the
Highlands Chamber of Commerce / Visit Highlands, NC.

You remember us on Main Street but WE MOVED!

... 2 miles south of Main on the Dillard Road

**Please stop by and celebrate our re-opening in our new digs
with lots of parking!**

- Nancy & Bob



2060 Dillard Rd, Highlands, NC 28741

We still carry all your favorites and now so much more!

...on Nancy's side • 828-526-5029

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Lior

Krazy Larry

Lisette

Thea

P-Jamas

...on Bob's side • 828-526-1029

Ballin

St. Croix

Saxx

Hickey Freeman

Castaway

Pantherella

Samuelsohn

Haupt

Alberto

We will beat anybody's prices!



Meander in May
THE ART OF HIGHLANDS, NC

MAY 14
11^{AM} × 8:30^{AM}



HIGHLANDS
NORTH CAROLINA

THE HEIGHT OF HAPPINESS | ELEV. 4118

Highlands Chamber of Commerce
dba Visit Highlands, NC
visithighlandsnc.com

...SHERIFF continued from page 18

Franklin, I attended public school in the Franklin area until my late high school days; when I chose to attend and graduate from Military School; I graduated from the Academy in 1994. I moved back to Macon County eager to pursue a career in law enforcement and was very focused on attaining my goals. I worked for the town of Franklin while I eagerly awaited my 21st birthday when I could begin the BLET program.

I obtained my law enforcement certification from Southwestern Community College and I began working at the Macon County Sheriff's Department in 1999. I left in 2004 to learn a new trade, but I knew that I would return to the law enforcement; and I did just that in 2008.

I returned back as road patrol officer and shortly thereafter, I was promoted to Corporal. In 2010, I transferred from road Corporal to Corporal over Civil Process and Courthouse Security. I was promoted to Sergeant in 2016, and just recently promoted to Lieutenant over Civil Process and Courthouse Security. I've served as team leader on the SWAT team for 15 years, while employed at the Macon County Sheriff's Office. I also worked the Multi-Agency Narcotics Unit a little less than a year, where I bought an array of drugs in western North Carolina. Though I left around 3 1/2 years from 2004 until 2008, I bought back all of my time, which makes me the candidate with the most years of service at the MCSO; 22-years of service (23-years in May 2022).

Why are you running for office?

As you would expect, there were a number of things that contributed to my decision to seek election for Macon County Sheriff, not the least of which was my belief that I could make a difference for the people of Macon County. Serving the public through law enforcement is my life, inspired and influenced by my father and grandfather, both having served Macon County in law enforcement for decades.

I take great pride in building personal and professional relationships here in Macon County and have become known over the years as a person who listens carefully to what people have to say. It is from this perspective that I have learned a great deal about how our residents view and interact with the Sheriff's department. I certainly do not know it all, but I do know what our communities are thinking, invaluable in the role of Sheriff.

My ability to make a difference in Highlands, Franklin, Nantahala, Otto and

throughout the entire County, is based on our resident's vision for the County and not just how I see it – the reality is this is OUR Macon County.

I also have a deep commitment to our next generation of children and young adults. This is evidenced by my direct involvement in our schools and churches and by my passion as a coach, mentor and volunteer. Serving alongside others that are dedicated to our youth and their future will be a cornerstone of my run for Sheriff and a purposeful strategy of the Sheriff's Office overall. I will press for community-related policies that prompt our Deputies to work

with other stakeholders as role models so that, together, our investment in the younger generation yields solid and measurable results. The fact is nothing "made" me decide to run for Sheriff. I like to think of it as more of a "calling" – it is what I was meant to be and the timing is perfect.

Now that the office is fully staffed, would you continue or possibly increase deputy in availability in Highlands and Nantahala

I've already spoken to several people in both of these communities about increased offer presence. The movement of officers, in order to provide proper coverage, is one of my top priorities.

The war on drugs has been touted in many campaign slogans of late. Exactly how would you wipe out the drug problem in Macon County?

I don't think local law enforcement is ever going to completely wipe out the drug problem. However, I do know the necessary steps in order to decrease drug activity in Western North Carolina. I plan to develop a Multi-Agency Drug Task Force comprised with the far western counties. I've already reached out to several surrounding Sheriff's in order to begin those necessary early conversations. I also plan on increasing youth and young adult support and

• See SHERIFF page 24

Effective leaders live by strong values that shape and guide their decisions and behaviors. As a 9th generation Macon County resident and 3rd generation law enforcement officer, I have always remained connected to Macon County roots through direct involvement with church, the school system, volunteer services and involvement with youth activities. As Sheriff, my passion for direct, hands-on, community-based policies would be a constant throughout the department. My wife and I take pride in our public servant household who values community involvement and the youth of Macon County.

1. Increased DIRECT Involvement with our Community

- Community contact/face-to-face interactions
- MCSO Sponsored Events - Community Patrols
- Local Business Checks

2. Youth & Young Adult Support

- SROs continue to serve teachers & students through the county
- Presence in the schools across the county
- Continued Shop With A Cop
- Encouragement of local law enforcement to volunteer with community youth organizations; making a positive impact with younger generations
- Creating a partnership with various outreach programs throughout the county (i.e. Literacy Council, Rotary Clubs, youth sports, Big Brothers Big Sisters, etc.)

3. Officer Retention, Sustainability + Support

- Positive Work Culture - Build Rapport
- Support LEO families - Exit Surveys
- Continue to fight for equitable pay for local law enforcement

4. War on Drugs

5. Macon County is not a safe haven for criminals!
6. Protect our citizens and youth
7. Multi-Agency Narcotics Unit
8. Increased community presence
9. Increased involvement with the youth of Macon County
10. Availability of Rehabilitation programs and resources

**Elect
BRENT
HOLBROOKS
FOR SHERIFF 2022**



**Early Voting begins
Thursday, April 28
The Primary is
Tuesday, May 17**

PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT BRENT HOLBROOKS

...SHERIFF continued from page 23

continuing rehabilitation services for those individuals that struggle with addiction(s). My children and my grandchildren are being raised in our communities and I want to drug dealers to know that this is not a safe haven for them!

What would be the first thing you would change within the agency if elected?

I feel there needs to be a reconstruction of a few divisions within the office, to properly provide the coverage and services to the communities.

Lastly, anything else you would like voters to know about you.

I'm humbled by the amount of community support and the support coming from my co-workers at the Sheriff's department for my candidacy. I am very thankful and I promise to make you proud.

I am not a politician but I know, as an elected official, that I work directly for the citizens of Macon County – I've been looking forward to serving in this capacity ever since my father held

the role for 16-years

I am a lifelong and 9th generation resident of Macon County. I want to preserve and protect Macon County and its Citizens.

Finally, I will come at this role with heart and compassion – I'll bring my family values to the Sheriff's Department. But if you are a criminal, don't confuse my demeanor with weakness. I will serve to protect the law fairly and without compromise and work to ensure every citizen is proud to live in Macon County.

Derek Jones

Please give our readers a brief bio. Personal, Professional, Education.

My wife Jessica who works as a public health nurse and I have three children and three dogs We are members of Pine Grove Baptist Church.

I have served as a law enforcement officer since 2005, first with the Highlands Police Department and presently with the Macon County Sheriff's Office, totaling over 17 years. I am the only candidate who has experience in

every division under the Sheriff's Office running for this position and the only candidate who has hands on experience with a multi-million-dollar budget.

I have served as a detention officer, deputy sheriff, corporal/field training officer, patrol sergeant, juvenile investigator, criminal investigator, lieutenant, and currently captain - jail administrator who oversees a budget of at least \$2.5 million dollars and was tasked with updating the detention center policies and procedures in 2019. I am a member of the Macon County Mental Health Task Force, Macon County Substance Abuse Task Force, and Vice President of No Wrong Door for Support and Recovery.

I graduated Franklin High School in 2000, Southwestern Community College in 2008 with an Associate of Arts degree, and Western Carolina University in 2012 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice. I hold an Advanced Law Enforcement Certification from the NC Sheriffs' Standards and completed the

Criminal Investigations Certificate Program through the NC Justice Academy in 2017. I am also employed as an adjunct instructor of law enforcement training at Southwestern Community College where I instruct Basic Law Enforcement Training cadets, General Instructor Training, National Park Service cadets, in-service training, CPR, and anything else at the request of the college.

Why are you running for office?

Macon County is my home. This election and change of administration is not about reinventing the wheel, but about putting the RIGHT person in office to move this county forward. I want to see the best for Macon County and feel that with my extensive experience, education, leadership, and communication skills, I am the candidate that will move this agency forward. This isn't something that I take lightly, as I have been preparing for this day for many years.

Now that the office is fully staffed, would you continue or possibly increase deputy in availability in Highlands and Nantabala?

I have spoken to many residents across the county who share the same concerns as the Highlands and Nantahala communities whether they live there or not. I believe in adequate coverage for all citizens. Many citizens make the comment that they are told that it depends upon call volume. I have stated before and will state it again, the agency will be reorganize and all areas of the county will have adequate coverage at no additional cost to the taxpayer.

The war on drugs has been touted in many campaign slogans of late. Exactly how would you wipe out the drug problem in Macon County?

If I told you I was going to "completely wipe out the drug problem in Macon County" I would be telling you an absolute lie. However, I have been blessed to have worked with some really good law enforcement professionals over the years while on patrol and in investigations. I have worked large scale drug cases involving federal and state agen-

cies. We are all fighting the same problem and dealing with many of the same offenders across jurisdictions. I have said from the time I announced my candidacy for sheriff that we must work together to fight this issue and fight it in full force. I want to work with other agencies around the area (city and county), state, and federal agencies and pool our resources to combat the ever-growing drug problem. We must continue to educate the public on what to look for and be a part of the solution through stronger community partnerships. At the same time, we must continue to expand upon mental health and substance abuse programs within the detention facility and beyond to help those in need that request assistance. I have a proven track record of doing just that while being the jail administrator since 2018.

What would be the first thing you would change within the agency if elected?

As aforementioned, the first thing I would do would be reorganizing the agency, but after much discussion with my command staff. There are areas within the agency that need to be expanded upon and some reallocated. All of this will be accomplished with existing personnel and done so to increase the efficiency of the agency while still providing the best possible services to the citizens.

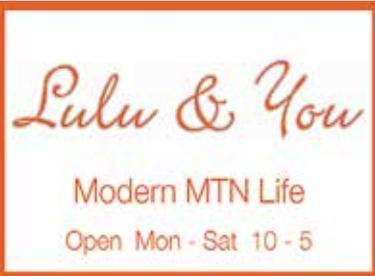
Lastly, anything else you would like voters to know about you?

I am not a politician. I am a dedicated and passionate law enforcement professional with the education, training, and experience to lead the Macon County Sheriff's Office into the future. I have continued to educate myself, learning all facets of the profession, to better equip me to change with the times. It just happens to be a political position, but I am elected by the people and always for the people.

• Next week Part 4 of the Primary Candidate Fourm will feature the candidates for Clerk of Superior Court.



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Brazilian Cowhides



PLANET
BY
Lauren G



142 HWY 107, Cashiers, NC 28717 • 828-482-5011 • Open Year Round

Submitting my resume to be YOUR Sheriff



Clay **BRYSON** for Macon County Sheriff

Leadership driven by experience & integrity

GET IN CONTACT



www.ClayBrysonforSheriff.com



Clay Bryson For Macon County Sheriff

WORK EXPERIENCE

PATROL OFFICER

- Joined Macon County Sheriff's Office on April 10, 2000
- Promoted to Corporal on January 1, 2005
- Promoted to Sergeant on December 12, 2005
- Promoted to First Sergeant in 2012
- Promoted to Lieutenant over Patrol in 2021
- Promoted to Captain over Patrol in 2021

SPECIALIZED RANKS

- SRT Commander since 2012
- K9 Supervisor/ Trainer since 2012
- State certified General Law
- Enforcement Instructor
- State certified Firearms Instructor

MISSION STATEMENT

Having the unique advantage of experiencing first-hand the multitude of ways law enforcement serves Macon County, I promise to lead the Macon County Sheriff's Office with experience and integrity to best serve the community as Macon County's next Sheriff.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Narcotics Investigations
- Operations & Training
- Crisis Intervention
- Unit Supervision & Management
- Specialized Law Enforcement Instruction
- Drug Interdiction

OTHER SKILLS

- The ability to analyze complex technical information
- Can analyze, design and implement problem solving methods
- Detail oriented
- Community focused

EDUCATION*

SOUTHWESTERN CC

- Basic Law Enforcement Certification – 1999 – 2000
- Drug Interdiction – May 2000
- Community Policing – May 2000
- Basic SWAT– 2002
- Tactical/Combat Firing – April 2002
- Intermediate SWAT– October 2002
- Defensive Driving – July 2003
- Tactical Woodland Operations – May 2005
- Ethics– June 2003
- Juvenile Gang – June 2003
- Meth Investigation – July 2006
- Haz–Mat response – July 2006
- General Instructors Training– April 2017
- Ethics Off–Duty – December 2007
- Domestic Violence – December 2007
- Interacting with special populations– Dec. 2007
- Response to critical incidents– February 2008
- Lidar Operations Certification – May 2009
- Crisis Intervention Team Training – Dec.r 2010
- Victim Management – July 2011
- Basic SWAT Operator Certification– July 2012
- Advanced SWAT Operation Certificate– Nov. 2013

North American Police Work Dog Assoc.

- K9 Legal Updates and Testimony – January 2011
- K9 Trauma & First Aid– March 2011
- Tactical Obedience, Level II– November 2012
- Advanced K9 Training February 2013
- Decoy Development & K9 Training March 2019
- Nationally Accredited Police K9 Trainer in both Narcotics & Utility Phases– 2021

NORTH CAROLINA JUSTICE ACADEMY

- Street Officers' Legal – April 2001
- Police Law Institute – July 2001
- Criminal Interdiction for Patrol– Dec. 2001
- Case Preparation – April 2002
- Basic Anti–terrorism Awareness – June 2014
- LE Sniper Course – November 2004
- Specialized Firearms Instructor Training – Sept. 2008
- Early Stage Street Encounters – May 2012

BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Drug Enforcement for Patrol Officers – Dec. 2001

Haywood Community College

- Alcohol Sensor Testing Certification – March '08
- K9 Law – March 2010
- Police Dog Scenario Workshop – October 2019

Miscellaneous

- US Department of Justice/FBI–Survival Awareness – May 2004
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center – Rural Policing/Drug Interdiction– February 2012
- Federal Law Enforcement Training Center – Suspicious Activity Reporting Training – Feb. '12
- Shallow Creek Kennels– Dual Purpose Police K9 Trainer's Course – April 2020
- Shallow Creek Kennels– Narcotics Detection & Patrol Police Service Canine– April 2020

*This is NOT a complete list of training and certifications, just a highlight of specialized areas

– Paid for by the Citizens to Elect Clay Bryson for Sheriff –

Weeping Willow



**Sr. Pastor
Gary Hewins**
Community Bible Church

The knock on our front door could be heard way back in our kitchen. The owner of a tree service was canvassing our neighborhood looking for dead trees that needed to be taken down and removed. He had noticed the huge willow in our back yard. At one time it had been a beautiful mature tree, strategically planted, providing a bit of privacy between our house and our neighbors. My wife, Angie, opened the door; after a brief introduction he shared his diagnosis which sounded more like an autopsy result. Our weeping willow was dead, so said the tree service man.

Well, he shared his results with the wrong person in my house if he desired to pick up some extra cash. Angie proceeded to let him know that she appreciated him calling our attention to the situation, but she assured him that not only was our weeping willow not dead, but it would soon be flourishing.

In all honesty, the tree looked dead to me. Was I going to disagree? No. We as a couple and as a family had already seen in our life and in ministry the resurrection of dead finances, dead relationships, and dead dreams. A dead weeping willow seemed like a piece of cake to her. The tree service guy was invited to come back.

Angie faithfully sat by the tree, prayed for the tree, tended it daily, watered it gently and God brought the tree back to life. In a few weeks the tree was green, growing and a model weeping willow in all its glory. Seeing that tree thrive again from the depths of death was a drop-the-mic-and-walk-off moment. Don't tell my wife that something is dead.

What meaneth this? We live in a world that deeply warrants tears. We also live in a world so frantic and frenetic that few rarely have time to really sense another's pain. As a result, we may pray for others more out of duty than love or empathy. Sometimes, as my wife is teaching me, we need to "sit in it". Maybe we don't have the emotional bandwidth to truly grasp the despair in Ukraine, but we can try to "sit in a bomb-shelter", imagine what it's like to grow used to sirens or even what it's like to wonder, if you survive, how you and your fifth-grade daughter will go forward without dad.

Perhaps this "spiritually speaking" article can be used to prompt you and I both to evaluate where we are in terms of our passion for others and our empathy for those in pain. I heard some people praying for those in Ukraine the other day, mostly because it was their turn in the prayer circle so to speak. The intensity in which they prayed rivaled the intensity and passion one would muster to choose a can of soup at the supermarket. That hit me hard.

I live each and every day of my life with a heart cry to love, know and bless Jesus Christ in word and in deed. After three decades of loving Him, it only seems expected that I would have a tenderized heart for the hurting. I deeply want

• See **SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING** page 27

Proverbs 3:5

PLACES TO WORSHIP

John 3:16

BLUEVALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

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

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

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

CHAPEL OF THE SKY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship

Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

CHRIST ANGLICAN CASHIERS

828-743-1701 • 464 Hwy 64E. Cashiers, NC 28717

www.christanglicancashiers.com

Sun. - 9:30am Worship (no music); 10:30am Sunday

School; 10:30am Worship Service.

Mon. Night Bible Study & Dinner: 6pm. call for details.

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

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

Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands, NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun.: 9:30am - Adult Sunday School; Worship Service 10:45am;

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

Women's Bible Study 10am-noon

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

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706. 746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

Worship: Sun. 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

Sunday Services Chapel: Rite I spoken, 8a. Rite II with Choir in

Sanctuary 10:30a; Morning Prayer Mon-Thurs 8:30a in Chapel

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands

Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.

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

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS

Non-Denominational-Contemporary Worship

242 Hwy 107N. 1/4 miles from Crossroads in Cashiers

www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter 743-9814

Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville, NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson

Sunday: School 9:45a. Worship 11a & 7p. Bible Study 6p

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed. Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street

Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily

sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

Sunday Worship is at 9a. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376

In-Person and live-streamed Worship Services

909 Bluegrass and 10:50 Traditional

www.highlandsmethodist.org

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

Rev. Angie Ballard • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.

We wear masks and social distance.

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Zane Talley

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11. Choir: 6 p.m.

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

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

Franklin • 828-634-1312

Services 2x/month May-Sept.; 1x/month Oct. -April

mountainsynagoguewnc.com.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church.

4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone - 526-2418

Mass: Wed. noon (Latin); Thurs. noon; Sun. 11a

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

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

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Tues. noon (Latin). Thurs. 9a.; Fri.. noon;

Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 S.. Office: • 743-2359 • Rev. Rob Wood

June-Sept: Sunday Services: Rite I. 8a. Rite II. 9:15 & 11a

Nursery available for Rite II services

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • ufranklin.org

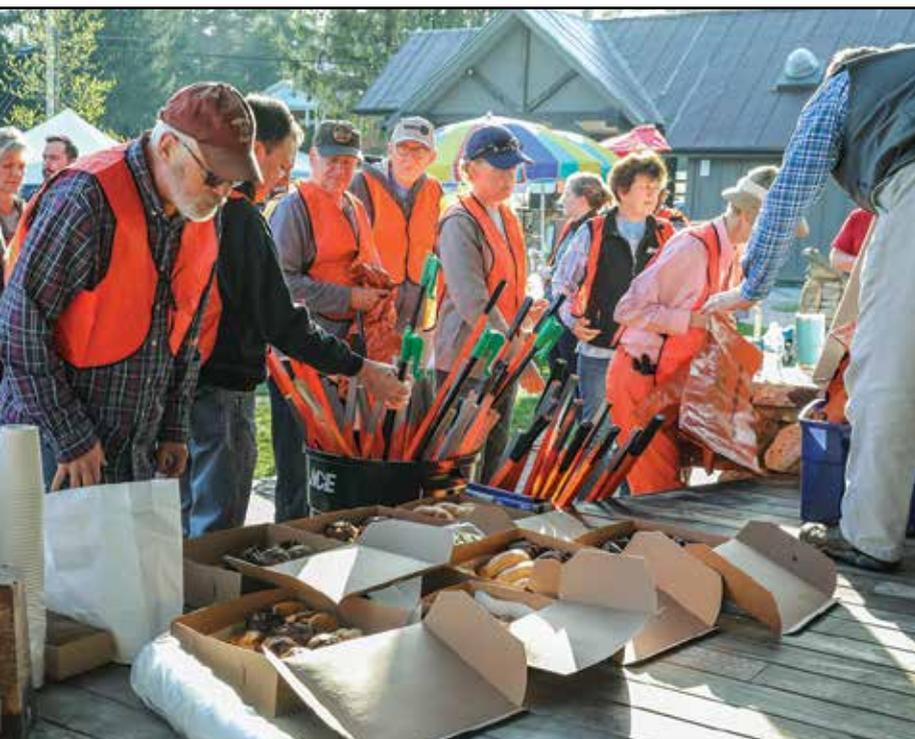
Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •



It all started at K-H Founders Park for a quick breakfast.

Plateau Pickup sees highest-ever turnout of volunteers

Breaking previous records, approximately 130 volunteers helped spruce up Highlands and surrounding highways this past Saturday, April 23, as part of the annual Plateau Pickup, organized and hosted by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC. Volunteers collected approximately 15 tons of garbage along the roadways.

Again this year, Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor provided transportation to collect the bags of garbage, as did Steve Mehder, Rick Siegel and James Farrish. Organizations that provided partnership and support to make the event possible included Town of Highlands, Town of Highlands Police Department, N.C. Department of Transportation, the Macon County Sheriff's Office and the N.C. State Patrol.

Groups that participated with a sizable number of volunteers include Highlands School Interact Club, Old Edwards Hospitality Group, Highlands Methodist Church, Highlands Plateau Greenway, Mountain Garden Club, Highlands Biological Station, Mountain Top Rotary, Highlands Rotary and Scaly Mountain Community Association.

"We're incredibly grateful for our project partners and the record-number of

volunteers – groups, families and individuals – who spent a gorgeous Saturday in the mountains collecting garbage discarded along our roadways," says Kaye McHan, executive director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC. "We treasure our beautiful mountains and charming town, and it is wonderful to see the area clean and green as a result of this community effort."

Dressed in the provided safety vests and gloves, and carrying pick-up tools and garbage bags, the volunteers canvassed stretches of U.S. 64 towards Cashiers as well as Franklin,

N.C. 28, N.C. 106 and most of downtown Highlands. Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park served as the event's starting and ending destination.

The Highlands Chamber/Visit Highlands, NC provided two meals for the volunteers – breakfast from Calders Coffee Cafe and lunch from Secret Garden Market. As a token of appreciation, volunteers received a t-shirt.

For more information about Plateau Pickup or other Highlands events, visit highlandschamber.org.

First-ever Highlands Volunteer Fair to take place May 19

The Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC will connect organizations that need volunteers with those who wish to help.

Are you looking to get involved with a Highlands community organization? Could your nonprofit agency use some helping hands? If so, then mark your calendar for the first-ever Highlands Volunteer Fair on Thursday, May 19, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Highlands Civic Center, 600 North 4th Street.

The free event will bring together those willing to volunteer with the nonprofit organizations that need them.

Those looking to get involved are invited to stop by any time during fair hours, browse the tables of information provided

by the organizations, and speak with representatives who can share more about the volunteer opportunities. Light refreshments will be served.

Organizations that would like to participate in the event are encouraged to contact the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC. Email businessservices@highlandschamber.org or call 828-526-5841.

For more information about the Volunteer Fair and other Highlands events, visit highlandschamber.org.

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from April 23. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

April 23

- At 2:01 a.m., Hannah Marie Carbone, 20, of Cullowhee, NC, was arrested for DUI when stopped on N. 4th Street. She was issued a \$1,000 unsecured bond. Her trial date is June 15.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from April 21

April 21

- At 8:51 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hicks Road.

- At 11:59 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Carolina Way.

April 22

- At 2:09 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Webb Branch Road.

- At 11:21 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of an electrical problem at a residence on Morewood Road.

April 23

- At 3:25 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Half Mile Dr.

- At 6:04 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Sassafras Gap Road.

April 24

- At 4:10 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

April 25

- At 4:50 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a vehicle fire in Highlands Plaza.

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 26

my now pliable heart further softened. After all, Jesus was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Out of His compassionate heart people were redeemed, restored, and healed.

Regardless of our upbringing, our generational influences, what we were taught or conditioned to do or not do, we should all weep for one another as is warranted. Gender aside, personality aside, we are never more human, and made in the image of God than when we weep. Jesus wept. In this ever-devolving sociopathic, desensitized world we must pray for, long for the recovery and sustainability of God's love for our neighbor. We already know that within our nation, we currently cry out against one another. Far less

often do we cry for one another. We are being conditioned by our cultural institutions to tear one another apart rather than tear up (weep) on behalf of one another. What is happening to us? We have continued to objectify one another to the point where the most special part of who we are is slowly drifting down river into a sea of indifference.

What is the answer? Religion? Sort of. Beyond ritual, ceremony, and tradition we each need an earnest life-infusing and life-changing friendship with Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God. Is His absence not evidence enough? Jesus wept and so should we. Don't let your weeping willow die!



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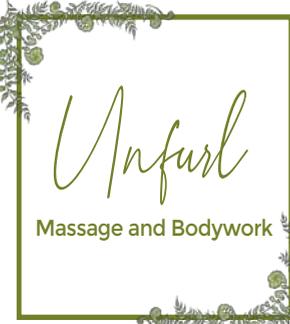


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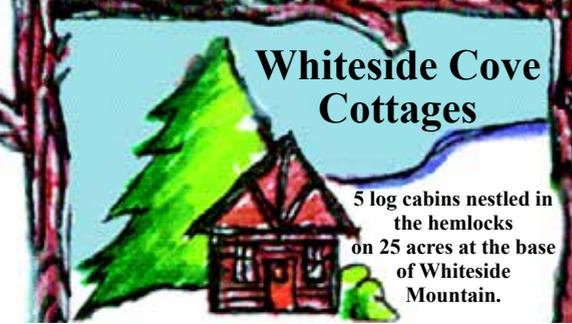
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...APOLOGY continued from page 1

Hehn went on to say that his wife has borne the brunt of these “run-ins.”

“I am used this – I had 37,000 customers and 120,000 people who were always unhappy about something, so this doesn’t bother me particularly. But when you see my wife, I hope you will apologize to her,” he said.

Over the last few months several things were outlined concerning the Hotwire contract red-line documents Commis-

sioner Hehn had been requesting.

First, by all accounts the red-line documents are transitory draft documents.

Second, according to the NC School of Government (NCSG) red-line versions of documents are not public documents, to which Hehn agreed in public session.

Third, also according to the NCSG, commissioners have the right to ask the Town Board to ask the Town Manager to share red-line documents.

...AFFORDING continued from page 17

cal governments. There are also a number of down payment assistance loans available with attractive terms. For example, deferred payment second loans. These are secondary loans for which payments are not due until you sell, refinance or pay off the first mortgage loan. And for those looking to live in a rural area, USDA rural home loans are a favorable option, because they have no down payment requirement.

Tax credits are another form of assistance. Certain states and local governments, including housing finance agencies, issue mortgage credit certificates that reduce the amount of federal income tax you pay. This makes more money available upfront for your down payment or closing costs.

Freddie Mac offers consumer financial education, through its free CreditSmart online training course, that can help you learn about and qualify for other down payment assistance and help you purchase a new home.

- Determine your eligibility. Although eligibility requirements vary depending on the program, most down payment assistance programs have income eligibility

requirements based on you as an individual borrower or your household. In addition, you usually must use the funds for your primary residence and be a first-time homebuyer.

- Get started. Identify available programs by checking out trusted resources, including HUD’s directory of state programs and Down Payment Resource. Your housing counselor or lender can also help you determine which programs you’re eligible for and work with the program’s administrator to help you secure financial assistance.

- Get help. The homebuying journey is complex, so don’t be afraid to seek expert help. Freddie Mac Borrower Help Centers and HUD-certified housing counselors can help you navigate the homebuying journey, make informed decisions along the way and ensure you’re financially prepared for long-term, successful homeownership. In addition to being trained to provide budget and credit advice, housing counselors can also provide guidance on the different types of mortgage assistance programs that may be right for you. To learn more, visit myhome.freddiemac.com.

...CLASSIFIEDS continued from page 29

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However, none of the Town Board members had copies of the red-line draft documents; nor did Town Manager Josh Ward and according to Town Attorney Jay Coward, he didn’t have them either.

“The redline version is simply a draft that you work on. I worked on the Hotwire contract myself for many pages with our attorneys in Washington, DC. We had many drafts and when we finally got to the last draft we agreed upon we signed it, and I threw away my drafts and I am assuming the other lawyers did as well,” said Attorney Coward.

Furthermore, Coward mentioned a memo that Hehn forwarded him and the board from the NCSG that states that there is no requirement under public record law of NC to keep a redline draft.

Therefore, at the February Town Board meeting, the board voted 4-1, not to require Ward to find red-line documents.

However, on March 9 Commissioner Hehn filed a request for a pre-litigation mediation of public records dispute giving Ward 21 days to settle the matter.

The idea that Ward was being dragged into the courts on his own dime when he was just doing his job as directed by the Town Board enraged the mayor and other commissioners and they agreed to pay attorney fees for Ward if necessary.

Moving forward, at an April 12 closed session meeting, the Town Board reviewed a letter from Hehn’s attorney requesting red-line documents related to the Hotwire contract which that firm consistently refers to as “public documents.”

Since no one in Highlands has the red-line documents, the board directed Attorney Coward to ask the lawyers who assisted with the contract negotiations from Raleigh and Washington, DC if they had any draft red-line documents from the Hotwire contract.

“If Mr. Baller and/or Mr. De Sablon have any relevant documents they are authorized to provide the documents to the town attorney who can then release them to Mr. Hehn’s attorney,” said Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor.

It was discovered that the Washington attorney still had a copy of a red-line document on his computer. He was asked to send it to Hehn’s lawyers at Cannon Law Firm in Waynesville, NC.

At the end of the April Town Board meeting, when asked if the litigation against Ward had been dropped, Commissioner Hehn said there never was any litigation – though Attorney Coward referred to the pre-litigation mediation 22CUS filed with NC courts as litigation – and offered his

lawyer’s contact information.

In an email Attorney William Decker said it is unfortunate that incorrect words, terms, phrases and unjustified accusations were made against Hehn during the Board of Commissioners meeting.

Even though the NCSG said red-line versions of documents are not public records, Decker said “requesting public records is a process.”

“Hehn’s request was done according to the requirements of the law and followed the rules exactly as prescribed by the statutes. There was no ‘lawsuit’ filed and Josh Ward as the Town Manager was an appropriate recipient of the original request, because he is considered, one of several ‘custodians of records,’” he said.

However, Attorney Decker said when the request for the documents was denied, Hehn, as required by the public records law, had to apply for “Voluntary Mediation.”

Decker said the public records law requires this application to be processed through the court system – probably because “Mediation” is already a part of all cases filed in Superior Court.

“So, this application is a standard court document that is filed with the court and that application had to be served on the person who denied the request,” he said.

He said Ward, the mayor, and others, refused to participate in the Voluntary Mediation and at that point, Hehn could have filed a lawsuit.

“However, to avoid the Town from incurring unnecessary legal expenses, Hehn asked us to address this directly with Coward,” said Decker. “As such, we wrote a comprehensive letter confirming that Hehn followed the rules and the documents he was requesting constituted ‘public documents’ that were required to be produced.”

Decker said at the April 7 closed meeting, the people who originally objected to producing the documents, and those who accused Hehn of harassing Ward through filing a “lawsuit” against him, reversed position and agreed the documents were required to be produced.

“We have been told they will be sent to our office. To date we have not received any documents,” said Decker. “To date, we are not aware of any apology from anyone who made the baseless and inflammatory accusations against Mr. Hehn.”

Hehn says he wants the red-line documents associated with the Hotwire contract even though it has been signed, because he foresees problem on the horizon, and he wants to be prepared.

– Kim Lewicki

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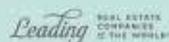


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