

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 19, Number 51

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Thurs., Dec. 22, 2022

Electric fund as 'savior' may change

Auditor says the days of using the electric fund to fund projects and more are coming to an end

At the December Town Board meeting, the annual audit was presented by a new CPA firm, and as usual the town got high marks. since the town decided last year to change firms, that the Gould Killian CPA Group addressed the board; for years it had been Martin Starnes & Associates.

This was the first time As in years past, the account-

ing firm gave an unmodified opinion on financial statements.

"We believe the financial statements are fairly stated in accordance with general accounting

• See ELECTRIC page 4

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HPD's Master Officer John Cherry looks over the mini cars and trucks.



HPD's Sgt. Tim Broughton in the bike aisle.



HPD Police Chief Andrea Holland and Christy Browning help the kids fill their cart.

Highlands PD and children 'Shop with a Cop' for Christmas

If you happened to be in Walmart in Franklin last week, you may have wondered why the place was full of cops and kids.

It was the annual "Shop with a Cop" where on Dec. 13 and Dec. 15, the Highlands Police Department and several other commu-

nity minded people helped about 35 kids spend \$100 each on Christmas presents.

Thanks to donations from clubs and people in the

community, each child got a \$100 Walmart gift card to purchase at least one gift for someone else.

Some bought for their

siblings or their parents/guardians. One girl spent all her money on her family.

Generally, the department takes about 20 chil-

dren due to staffing but this year with help from officers' wives, significant others, their children, the Town

• See SHOP page 10

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

My wish list for Highlands

I know Santa is making his list and checking it twice; and I'm making a list also -- a list of things the town will do next year. Let me identify a few items on the mayor's wish list.

First, the board and staff will begin the annual budget development process at the beginning of the next year. The process will end with the adoption of the town budget for Fiscal year 2023/24. Like always the town will address some very big and expensive items.

Second, one huge item on a wish list will be the replacement of the water pre-clarifier tank at the water plant. The tank was built along with the plant back in the 1960s. The tank is on its last leg of service, and a replacement tank will cost somewhere around 2.5 to 3 million dollars.

This past spring, town staff submitted a grant to the state for funds to build a new tank, along with a grant to replace water-lines and a water tank on Dog Mountain.

The 3 million dollar grant for the Dog Mountain project was approved; however, the pre-clarifier tank project was not approved. Our staff and consulting engineers



**Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor**

have resubmitted the grant for a second-round of review.

We are hopeful the town will be awarded full or partial funding. An alternative would be for the state to grant an interest-free loan. We have received those kinds of loans in the past. Such a government loan is tantamount to receiving free money.

Third, in the budget review process the staff and board will also be funding several more road paving projects based on need and priority.

On another positive note, the repaving activity should begin to decrease as the town has been aggressively repaving roads in the past few years. While the town was behind on paving, we have gotten back on a standard road paving schedule.

Fourth, at the beginning of the new year a review of sidewalk projects will be initiated. The proposed sidewalk on NC 106 from the shopping center to Cobb Road will continue to be developed. It is a top item on my wish list for the town. There are a number of potential funding sources that could make this project a reality in a rather fast period. I am excited about creative ways to potentially fund the sidewalk instead of relying on NCDOT prioritization funding that could take years.

Fifth, but not last, on many people's wish list is installation of downtown electric vehicle charging stations. I believe those charging stations will become a reality in some form, but I'm just not sure of the specifics at this time. One idea I have is for the town government to transition to electric town vehicles where feasible. I believe our light-duty vehicle fleet could go electric in the near term. For instance, EV pickup trucks could be used for routine duties about town. After the workday those vehicles could easily be charged in stations at the town yard. In the long run the electric vehicles could become very cost effective from both a maintenance and fueling perspective.

Next year will be a full and busy, but for now let me just say to you Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 22-Dec	Fri, 23-Dec	Sat, 24-Dec	Sun, 25-Dec
45°F 14°F	24°F -2 F	18°F 8°F	30°F 11°F
A little morning rain	Winds gusting past 40 mph	Breezy and very cold	Cold with plenty of sun
RealFeel® High: 44 Low: 35	RealFeel® High: 3 Low: -20	RealFeel® High: 1 Low: -17	RealFeel® High: 36° Low: -8°

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Digital Media/Circulation - Jim Lewicki

Locally owned and operated by

Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at

www.HighlandsInfo.com

265 Oak St. PO Box 2703

Highlands, NC 28741

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...ELECTRIC continued from page 1

principles for a nonprofit," said Trevor Keever.

Traditionally, one significant deficiency in control is noted regarding the segregation of duties related to payroll function and this was the case again basically because the town doesn't have enough administrative employees to completely separate duties.

A significant deficiency is less severe than a material weakness in that it is unlikely to have a material impact on financial statements, but it is important enough to merit attention by those responsible for oversight of the town's financial reporting.

"Segregation of duties needs to be tightened up," said Keever. "One employee was responsible for a lot of different parts of the process from the human resource part, to entering new employees, entering pay raises and processing payroll. But Rebecca [Shuler, Treasurer] has attested that the procedure has already been changed so this won't be an issue next year."

One "Material Weakness in Internal Control" was found regarding the way Duke's coal ash monies were noted.

"The material weakness relates to correction of a proprietary error," said Keever. "In previous years, the town reported the coal ash settlement as a liability of its electric fund. The previous audit firm probably recommended that liability be recorded. It's related to the amount of money Duke Energy is having to pay to settle their coal ash payout. So, it's a liability to Duke Energy not Highlands. Basically, it's a cost increase by Duke Energy which has been passed along to its customers – in this case the Town of Highlands."

Keever said he was required to report it as a material weakness but since it has been noted and corrected in the financial records it will be correct going forward.

A final Financial Performance Indicator of Concern was the fact that electric fund transfers are used for sources other than the electric system operations and capital improvements.

For decades, as a wholesale customer, the town has purchased power from Duke at the wholesale rate. It then sells the power to its citizens and the profits have been used to fund projects or to balance the budget in the town's two other enterprise funds – water/sewer and sanitation.

According to Keever, North Carolina's Local Government Commission (LGC) has taken the position that reserves within enterprise funds shouldn't be used for any-

thing other than operating and capital needs of that fund.

"Everybody who has an electric fund uses money to kick off to other things, but I would encourage you to consider this in the coming year. This is coming from the LGC due to some pushing and prodding from the General Assembly," he said. "This is where this is going at the state level and it would be easier to get there on your own instead of the state popping up one year and saying 'this is no longer allowed.'"

He said scrutiny has increased quite a bit over the last several years and it will continue to increase until eventually the state will say the transfers are no longer allowed.

"There is no legislation in the works, but LGC is getting calls from subcommittees that oversee them. So, start looking at ways to fund projects by adjusting rates in all funds so they are all self-sustaining," he said.

He said a few years back, the state said if governmental entities transfer money out of a water/sewer fund into the general fund, they are no longer eligible for state revolving funds. Highlands hasn't had that problem because if necessary, the water/sewer fund like the sanitation fund, is subsidized by the electric fund.

"There are billions of dollars out there and there are a lot of governments that have used money from their water/sewer fund to subsidize their general fund. So now they are scrambling to find a way to pay all that back to have access to the state revolving fund," said Keever.

Except for municipalities that get electricity from an electric co-op, the state hasn't taken measures like that for electric funds.

"However, in some of the big electric co-ops in the state it is now flat out illegal to transfer money out of the electric fund," Keever said.

Mayor Pat Taylor said looking down the road, if the town can't use the electric fund to subsidize the water/sewer or the sanitation department, the rates will have to reflect the capital needs of those funds.

"We need to start rethinking this whole model," said the mayor.

Keever agreed.

"If you have capital needs in the electric fund, I suspect you have funds to meet those needs at this point, but with the other enterprise funds – water/sewer, sanitation – maybe not."

He said Highlands needs to set the rates for the electric fund based on what

• See ELECTRIC page 10

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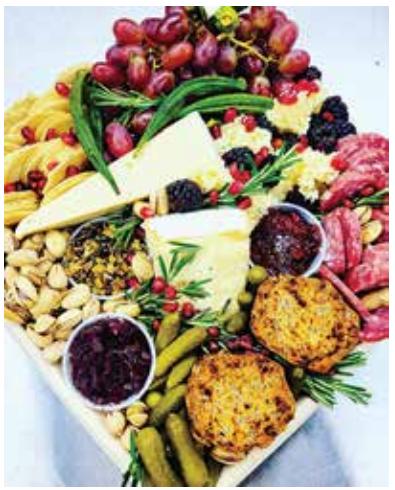
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• LETTER •

The Christmas story meant for you

Dear Editor,

Countless stories have been written throughout history and told by mankind that cover just about everything the mind can imagine. The story of Christmas is not one invented by man; it is the Divine who brings Himself to you for the richness of knowing Him for the fullest of life and living. To bring joy, peace, and thanksgiving to you and the world. Christmas is so much more than a seasonal story, it's a grand entry into a hurting world with the innocence, purity and strength against all that is evil, selfish, and hateful, all that is the opposite of good, true, and pure.

Such is viewed in the most innocent young child, but for Him, much of the world hated him throughout His birth, resurrection and His entire life. Yet for some this is still true to this present day. For me it is clear to see our world hasn't changed much. But there are millions who follow and find their hope and trust in Christ, then there are those who believe man will someday or somehow find his way.

Will it be the Greatest story ever told of Christ loving us, coming into the World for us? Or is it the continued story of believing that man believes in himself and that he is his own savior.

Can mankind give such a hope and love, or offer such a trusting relationship that mankind has ever known? Or is there something beyond man that such things can be trusted and hoped upon?

It is my prayer we all will see this Christmas beyond the pretty wrapping and the busyness of the holiday, and instead will see the real person of Christ and His life's gift given to us. I pray that someday you'll find a change of heart for it's the heart and soul He came to set free -- otherwise, mankind continues chasing what he never seems to find. It's peace, love, and truthfulness that man has always longed for, yet it is Christ who comes to give this for you and I, the most wonderful gift of Christmas.

This should be "your story," in finding a real personal relationship with the Divine -- the true gift of Christmas!

Deni Shepard
Franklin

• THANK YOU •

You make what we do
possible!

We at the Highlands Emergency Council would like to thank the Mountain Top Rotary, all the Churches, Sponsors and anyone who helped make this a very good year for Christmas and fuel.

For Christmas this year we served 28 families with 58 children. Fuel we served 55 families. Also the Mountain Top Rotary has been doing a coat drive as of today we have collected 685 coats.

We as the volunteers at HEC Thank You everyone for their time & donations. without you all we could not exist.



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Your Journey to Highlands

"Sometimes it's the journey that teaches you a lot about your destination." (Drake)



As we celebrate another trip around the sun and head into 2023, take a minute to think about the path that brought you to Highlands. How did it happen? It was different for each of us, but we made it thanks to the journey. Maybe it was short, maybe it was long.

We're blessed to be in Real Estate, which means we're pretty much in the "journey business." Here are a few stories of those who found their destination... Highlands, NC! Perhaps their story will become yours.

There's John & Julie from Atlanta who used to celebrate Thanksgiving every year in a local Bed & Breakfast. John flies for Delta Airlines. Julie's an attorney. They have three grown kids. After falling in love with Highlands, they sold their Atlanta home. These days, John commutes from here to Hartsfield International Airport for his Delta trips. They purchased a great cottage right next door to the Bed & Breakfast, renovated, and are full-time residents.

Then there's Karen & Richard from Tupelo, MS. Karen's a successful designer and Richard's a retired architect. We helped them check in to a VRBO on Foreman Rd in 2018. They asked us if we knew any good real estate agents (how convenient). A year later Richard and Karen owned their own VRBO near Mirror Lake, and help others discover the journey to Highlands through short-term rentals.

Rene & Julio live near Orlando, FL in Windermere. They owned a place in Big Sky, MT. Julio loves race cars, fly fishing and skiing. Following two skiing injuries, they looked at each other and said, "there must be somewhere closer and cooler," and discovered Highlands. After quickly selling their Big Sky property, Rene & Julio are here this week with their family to celebrate Christmas for the first time.

Jannie and Tom lived near Lake Min-

netonka, MN and always vacation in Key West. While driving home to Minnesota one beautiful April weekend, they stopped in Highlands for breakfast with friends who live here full time. After breakfast and a 20-minute stroll down Main Street with their Yellow Labrador Mick, they announced they were moving to Highlands. Within two months Tom had sold their home in Minnesota, Jannie folded up her jewelry business, they found a home in Highlands, and purchased another jewelry store which is now the home of Jannie Bean Fine Custom Jewelry & Design.

And finally, Bee and I have our own journey. We had our respective corporate careers in Atlanta. Our

journey began in 1990 renting in Highlands every chance we had with friends, family, by ourselves. Weekends were spent going to restaurants, shopping, fly fishing, hiking, and listening to live music. Driving back, we always said "someday, we gotta live in Highlands." After 25 years of rentals, we moved to Highlands in 2015 full-time are in the Real Estate business. Actually, we're in the "Journey Business!"

Today we lift a glass to those of you out there who believe it's time to begin a journey and embrace Highlands for that "next chapter" of life. We lift another glass to the 1,064 full-time residents who share their journey's daily, and whose kindness encourages others to do the same. As the Jimmy Buffet lyric says... here's to "one more candle and a trip around the sun." Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everyone!

• Pat Gleeson, Bee Gleeson, Christal Green and Gemma are proud to be a team of "Helpers" and Real Estate Brokers at Highlands-Sotheby's International Realty in downtown Highlands (Kitty Corner from Old Edwards Inn). You can reach all of us at 828.526.8300. Please stop by for coffee and conversation.



Merry & Bright

*May the love that fills your home this
joyous season be with you all year long*



Pat Allen
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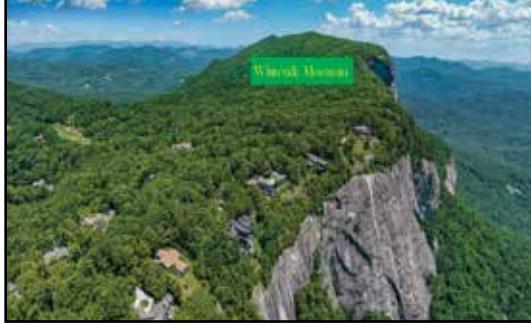
...SHOP continued from page 1

of Highlands Finance Director, the Town of Highlands Human Resource Manager, and her sister, and two Highlands firemen, the department was able to shop with a lot more children.

When they got back to town, members from the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, which had purchased coats, hats, and

gloves, hand-delivered the items to each child.

Highlands Shop with a Cop Coordinator Master Officer Advance Kevin Breedlove and Highlands Police Chief Andrea Holland and the entire department say "thanks" to everyone who donated and participated in this year's event.



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...ELECTRIC continued from page 4

Enterprise Fund Summary

Electric Fund	2022	2021
Working capital	\$8,741,113	\$7,149,644
Unrestricted net position Operating	\$8,647,546	\$5,861,075
income (loss)	\$2,155,501	\$3,585,794
Transfers to other funds	\$872,850	\$354,222
Cash flows from operating activities	\$2,516,069	\$3,654,559
Net increase (decrease) in cash	\$1,653,704	\$3,083,080

In 2022, the town transferred \$872,850 to other departments for various needs.

it costs to actually deliver services and the same for the other enterprise funds – rates should reflect what it actually costs to deliver those services as well as their future capital needs.

"The public reception needs to be – 'well you are getting a lower electric rate but the tax rate or the water/sewer rates move up a little,'" said Keever. "It's really a give and take. The total amount of dollars coming into the town seems to be sufficient. It's just a matter of rearranging where the dollars come from."

Due to population fluctuations and other challenges of running a sanitation department, Keever said a lot of municipalities have moved the sanitation department costs into the General Fund instead of making it an enterprise fund.

"You would continue to charge rates, and set the rates based on what it costs to deliver services, you just move it to the General Fund," he said.

Commissioners said this will be taken up during the budget process next year.

– Kim Lewicki

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• ON THE SUNNY SIDE •

Christmas symbols and more

The First Christmas was celebrated in Rome 336 AD.

The Christmas Tree was 1st used by German Lutherans in 1539.

Queen Victoria, wife of King George III of England hung lights and put gifts around the Christmas tree in 1832.

Nativity scenes were started in Rome 963 AD.

The traditional colors of Christmas are Red, Green and Gold.

Red symbolizes the blood of Jesus.
Green symbolizes eternal life.

Gold is the 1st color associated with



Kenny Youmans

Christmas as one of the three gifts of Magi symbolizing Royalty.

1822 Clement Clark Moore wrote the poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

1563 The Poinsettia has been associated with Christmas symbolizing "The Star of Bethlehem."

1611 The first Christmas Cards were sent by Michael Mauer to James I and his son Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales.

The song White Christmas was written in 1942 by Irving Berlin. It was recorded by Bing Crosby. It is the number one recorded single in history – over 50 million singles. The movie "White Christmas" was made in 1954 starring Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney.

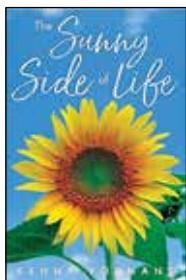
Merry Christmas and let's all remember we are celebrating the birth of Jesus.

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Pen Turning Class

Learn how to make your own wooden pen!

Choose from 5 different pen styles. Cost: \$40-50 per person and includes laser engraving.

Bird House/Bird Feeder & Bat House Classes

Learn how to make a Bird House, Bird Feeder or Bat House!

Choose from 5 different Bird House styles, 2 different Bird Feeder styles or a Bat House.

Cost: \$20-\$45 per person

Call 828-526-8800 or email scalymtncrafters@gmail.com to schedule a class!

Each class lasts approximately 90 minutes and provides 25 meals locally for each item made.

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94 US HWY 64 W
Cashiers, NC
Right behind the Crossroads

For more information, or to donate, Contact Skip Ryan at (828) 226-2588



*Join us as we journey to the manger with the characters of the Christmas Story at
First Presbyterian Church of Highlands*

Saturday, December 24 4:30pm Prelude by John Wickey, *Harpist*
 5:00pm Christmas Eve Service with Candlelight - *The Angels*

 Sunday, December 25 11:00am Christmas Stories & Songs
 12:00pm Congregational COOKIES!!!

*All are welcome!
Todos son bienvenidos!*
 471 Main Street in Highlands
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 Thank you for visiting our new location.
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*2060 Dillard Rd, Highlands
 2 miles south of Main*

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

ICE RINK SCHEDULE

(Through March 5)

- Thursday: 3:30-8 p.m.; Friday 3:30-10pm; Saturday 1-10pm; Sunday 1-5pm. \$5 for skate rental & skating

NEW Rec Pool Schedule

- Public Swim: Sat. 11a-6p; Sun., 1-6p. Adult Swim: Tues & Wed 11a-5p and Mon., Thurs., Fri., 11a-2p. Lap Swim: MOn-Fri 6a-9:45a and Sat. 10-11a. 828-526-1595.

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 with financial need who want to return to school or further their education meets at 10 a.m. More meeting places call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004

1st Tuesdays

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

2nd Tuesdays

- Highlands Writers Group meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 3pm. Writers still uncomfortable with in-person gatherings may participate via Zoom meetings held on the second or third Tuesday of each month at 3pm. Members receive weekly notification regarding when and how the group will assemble. For more information contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at budanlynn@me.com

Tuesdays

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

Mon-Fri

- Water Aerobics 18 years plus 10-11am. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

- Pickle Ball inside and outside. 10am-1pm, everyone is welcome so come out and enjoy a

game of Pickle Ball.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

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

Mon. & Wed.

- 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, 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 w/Tina Rogers

- Aerobics w/Tina Rogers 8-9a. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

Tues. & Thurs.

- New Zumba class with Gay Chalpin from 4:30-5:30p. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

Exercise Class

- Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with different types of exercise. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information

Thursdays

- Kickboxing 8:15-9:15am. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

At Hudson Library

- At Hudson Library, Kids Zone at 3:30 pm with a wide variety of STEAM, nature, and craft activities. For more information about any of these summer activities, contact Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

2nd Saturdays

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

3rd Saturdays

- The American Legion Post 370 meets 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.

At the Rec Park

- Senior Lunches noon in the meeting room. For any other information call Lester Norris or Maxine Ramey at 828-526-3556.

Saturdays in December

- Santa in the Park in Kelsey-

*Join us in celebrating the birth
 of our Savior at the
 Highlands United Methodist Church*

Family-oriented Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

in the Sanctuary

5pm

Featuring our Children's Christmas Pageant

Christmas Eve Eucharist Service

7pm

In the Church Sanctuary

Christmas Eve Singing with Les

In the Faith and Fellowship Center

8pm

Christmas Day Eucharist

in the Sanctuary

8:45pm

Christmas Day Breakfast

In the Faith and Fellowship Center

9:15am

Christmas Combined Worship Service

in the Sanctuary

10am

Pastor Randy Lucas

315 Main Street • 828-526-3376 • [highlandsumc@icloud.com](mailto:hightlandsumc@icloud.com)

•HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS•

Hutchinson Founders Park. Santa will appear in the park each Saturday to hear wishes from children of all ages. He will also periodically stop by to retrieve letters placed in

a special mailbox in the park.

Sat. & Sun, Jan. 28-29

• Snow Fest in Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park. It's back and better! Bring friends and family for

guaranteed winter fun (courtesy of snow blowers, if needed) in the park. A snowball toss, a merry-go-round, a snow slide, s'mores, "snowga" (a twist on yoga) and more.

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Center for Plastic Surgery
& Medi-Spa
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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



Rotary President Chris Wilkes with many of the teachers of the Highlands School as Rotary distributed checks to all the teachers.

Rotary upholds tradition and gives every Highlands School teacher \$100 for Christmas

Last Tuesday, Dec. 3, the Rotary Club of Highlands repeated a long-standing tradition of giving every teacher in the Highlands School a check

for \$100 in appreciation for all they do for the children in the school.

Every Christmas, our Rotary Club has endeavored to

honor the teachers at the school for helping the children in the school to be better students, better children, and better citizens.

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Fine goods for your family and home.

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• THEN AND NOW •

What the music you love says about you

Let me begin with an apology to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, John Newton, and Jim (not James) Taylor, all of whom understood the evolutionary, cognitive, spiritual, and aesthetic benefits of music. I don't. The music they loved and produced both acoustically and physically underwrote our need to insulate ourselves from worlds that did not understand or cherish us. They also transformed lives. A teacher here in the mountains, baseball coach, vinyl collector, musician, and Leader of the Band, Jim still does. All are the Pandoras and Spotifys of their time.

I'm superficially convinced the music we love becomes, after a fashion, a soundtrack of our lives, a sort of insight into our true selves and personalities. It reveals something about who we are. Who knew? Gosh, I thought it was Facebook likes and retweets, not music.

While a famous neuroscientist like Frank Sinatra might persuade you of the hedonistic, pleasurable nature of music and drink, you should also listen closely to his "ordinary" rendition of *It Was A Very Good Life* for an understanding of his complex, changing phrasing and beat to highlight the superb musicians around him. Even as I write this, I still can't fully appreciate Sinatra's phrasing. Yet that was his way, and no one did it better than ol' blue eyes.

So what does it say about me that I love to hear Merle "the Hag's" Mama Tried and remember my mother's twinkling eyes and smile, that Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson's song, She's a Good-Hearted Woman in Love With a Good-timing Man, and its lyrics, "But she never complains of the bad times, or bad things he's done. Lord, she just talks about the good times they've had and all the good times to come," imperfectly describes my parent's forever marriage? Or that I think John Fogerty, Don McLean, and Kris Kristofferson better writers,



Milton Ready

even poets, than Bob Dylan?

Or that, as an adolescent, I danced to honky-tonk music in Texas beer-joints with older, beehived, chain-smoking, slightly disrespectful, tank-topped women while they belted out Hank Williams tunes and wanted me to croon Hey Good Lookin' to them, all for a dime or a quarter, enough to buy a coke and some comic books? I still love all those honky-tonk heroes and their music as well as the kind, fun-filled, hard-scrabbled ladies who taught me about them. And to dance. Did you know you can dance to just about anything with a Texas two-step? Me neither.

And guess how well I did in my college class on music and art appreciation? You bet! Try reading Sanskrit to a donkey as a start. Yet in Bath, England, on a rare warm and sunshiny day, I wandered into the Cathedral where I heard an orchestra rehearsing music by Claude Debussy. It transformed me. A little.

I first heard La Mer, the sea, which over-washed me in some sort of primal, amoebic, pre-donkeyish way, then Clair de Lune which I still think means more than just moonlight, and, finally, Suite bergamasque, prelude a apres-midi d'un faun, which I still can't translate but thoroughly enjoy. Even tone-deaf Texans can savor music without understanding it. Still, I

never liked Wagner much.

While at Oxford and briefly at Cambridge I often went to colleges like St. John's for evening vespers to hear boys or other choirs sing the liturgy and classical music, an especially powerful experience for me as I sat in front of Rubens' Adoration of the Magi in the chapel at King's College. I think Elvis could have been a featured soloist in those choirs, so ecumenical is music and its affection.

Even today, Josh Groban and Andrea Bocelli's We Will Meet Once Again, and anything the violinist, Joshua Bell, plays become sort of a Buddhist moment for me. Did you know that, on his Gibson Stradivarius worth millions, a baseball-capped, blue-jeaned Bell once played as a busker for passengers on the Washington Metro earning, in almost an hour, \$32.17? I think it's on YouTube.

So what does all this say about me? I genuinely don't know, but it's been a wonderful soundtrack if not symphonic or finished. Yet now it's time for me to sing Silent Night and remember Christmases past.

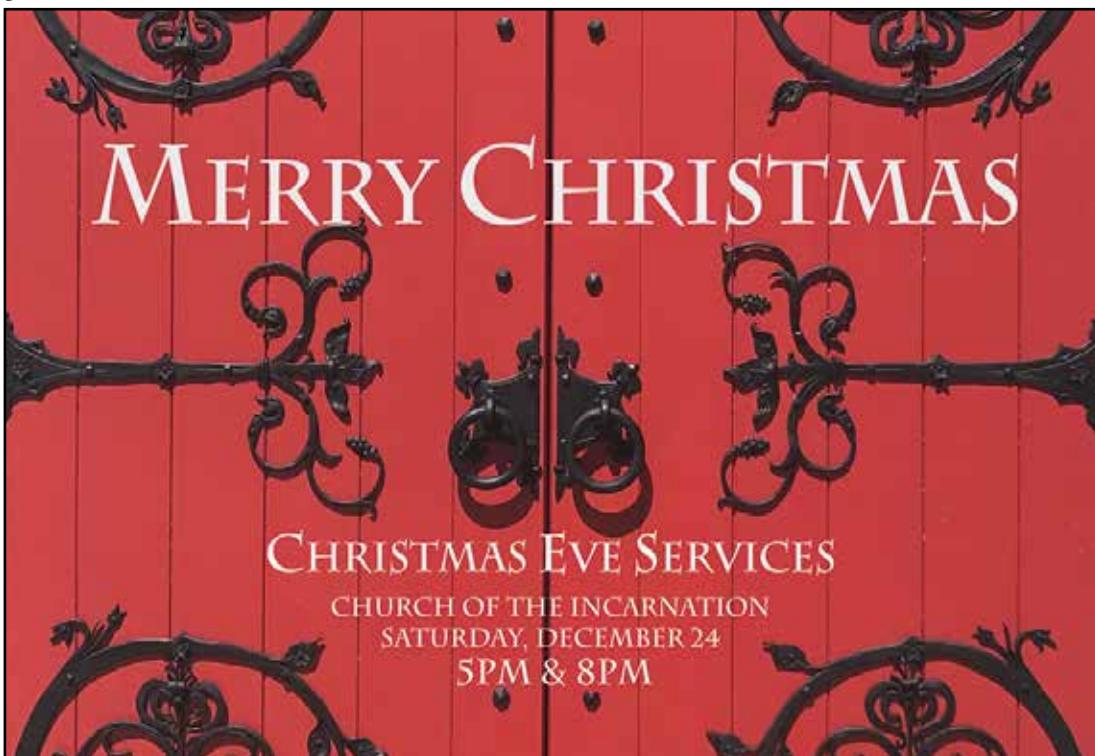


LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

*Christmas Eve
Service
December 24 @ 2 PM*

2152 DILLARD RD, HIGHLANDS

Come and fellowship with us!



SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Your Choice: Neighborliness or Not

Rev'd Jim Murphy,
Christ Anglican Church,
Highlands-Cashiers, NC



I grew up in a time and within a family and community where everyone had a role to play. That is, each member of the community had a job to do. And, no matter what the role or job was, it was, more often than not, successfully completed. Said "completion" was usually attributed to an honest sense of communal interdependence that was promoted and lived out more commonly, in decades gone by. People, families, neighbors pulling together. When teamwork was called for, whatever the task might be, the job was normally completed in a timely manner and carried with it a satisfying sense of accomplishment.

We still see some of that "sense of communal interdependence" or neighborliness today, but it seems to be diminished. A great part of the communal interdependence, also called communal teamwork, be that in a family, a workplace, in neighborhoods, communities or the society in which we live, has been lost. How did it happen? How can we recover it?

Perhaps some of the blame for a flagging sense of interdependence can be laid at the feet of the proverbial "retreat" into electronic bubbles. Cell phones, computers and streaming video content or music often leaves their users in an individualistic cocoon. Tribalism might be another culprit. The increasingly narrow identities we define ourselves by leaves many of our neighbors out in the cold. Therein we have effectively cut some of the "ties that bind" between individuals, micro groups and from the communities at large. Then too, as a society we pay people to "check-out" of communal participation through poorly thought-out social welfare programs. Interaction with neighbors and society, never mind a sense of accomplishment, is severely diminished. And if these were not enough, the divisions fostered by political partisanship have driven people into their own corners, making a mockery of communal interdependence.

If our desire is to restore a healthy sense of community and interdependence, we need a rallying point. Here in the seasons of Advent and Christmas we are presented once again with just such a rallying point, really, a person, Emmanuel, God with us, Jesus Christ. God incarnate left behind all of his majestic privileges to come down and rub elbows with such as us. In some of the Apostle Paul's words about Jesus he wrote, "For he himself is our peace, who has made us all one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility." (Ephesians 2:14, ESV)

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.
Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore. Pastor
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298
Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30 p.m.

CHAPEL OF THE SKY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship; Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

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www.christanglicancashiers.com

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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.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.
Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

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

Sundays: Service 10:45am, Children's 10:30am
Wednesdays: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mondays
4:30pm, Tuesdays 10am; Men's Bible Study: Wednesdays &
Thursdays 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKYVALLEY

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 a.m. Worship Service: 11 a.m.

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www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter 743-9814
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HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Highway 107N. • Gleville, 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 a.m.

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
909a Bluegrass and 11a Traditional
www.highlandsmethodist.org

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741
Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.

Visit our website: Holy Family Lutheran Highlands NC

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.

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

Franklin • 828-634-1312 • mountainsynagoguewnc.com.
Services: 1st /Fri. and 3rd Sat.
and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

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

Tues. - 9:30am Latin; Thurs. - 9:30am English; Sun. - 11am English

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.
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
Sunday Services: 8a. 9:30 & 11a

Visit our website www.goodshepherdofcashiers.com for
schedules of activities both virtual and in-person.

Bazaar Barn is open Fri. & Sat. 10a -2p.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

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Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers
Sunday School: 10 a.m. Worship Service: 11 a.m.

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Dec. 7. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Dec. 7

- At 1:30 p.m., officers received a report of larceny of fuel from a vehicle parked near the Dog Park on Foreman Road.

- At 2 p.m., Tyler Garrett Converse, 29, of Highlands was issued a criminal summons/citation for misdemeanor larceny.

Dec. 8

- At 6:12 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at NC 28 and 3rd Street.

Dec. 9

- At 7:40 a.m., officers received a report of someone violating a domestic violence protection order at a residence on Picklesimer Road.

Dec. 12

- At 1 p.m., officers responded to a report of someone failing to return a vehicle to a residence on Lucas Lane.

Dec. 14

- At 10:06 p.m., Samantha Katurah Webb, 42, of Highlands, was arrested on a warrant from another jurisdiction and being a fugitive from another state. She was issued a \$2,500 secured bond.

- A little after midnight, officers were called to a residence on Rainbow Road about a verbal dispute.

Dec. 16

- At 8:36 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at Foreman road and US 64 east.

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from 18

Just as our cultural sense of neighborliness has waned, so has our sense of Emmanuel's purpose and accomplishments dwindled. Do you think that there might be a connection between the two? Could the general reduction in knowledge about and reverence for God have precipitated a decline in our communal interconnectedness? Could the One who came to be our Peace, the very Prince of Peace, as Isaiah prophesied concerning him, restore unto us the lost sense of neighborliness? Without a doubt, the two are connected.

The gift of Christmas, the gift of God with us, Emmanuel, can, when we respond like those who first heard the announcement, break down the walls and things that divide us. Jesus is the only one that can restore us and return to us the culture of Peace and interconnectedness. Won't you receive him as Lord and Prince of Peace today? I, for one, am tired of divisions.

Dec. 17

- At 10:55 p.m., officers received a call about possession and distribution of methamphetamine by someone at Paoletti's Restaurant.

Dec. 18

- At 7 p.m., Noe Rios Ruiz, 28, of Franklin was arrested for DWI on US 64 west. He was issued an \$2,000 unsecured bond. His trial date is Jan. 11, 2023.

Dec. 19

- At 12:40 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at Bowery Road and Gibson Street.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Dec. 13

Dec. 13

- At 11:33 a.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on Dillard Road.

- At 1:16 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Garnet Rock Trail.

Dec. 14

- At 3 p.m., the dept. responded to a medical alarm at a residence on Whiteside Mountain Road.

Dec. 15

- At 8:53 a.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on N. 4th Street.

- At 7:41 p.m., the dept. responded to a chimney fire at a residence on Flat Mtn. Road.

Dec. 16

- At 11:27 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on the Cashiers Road.

Dec. 17

- At 6:34 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on the Bowery Road.

Dec. 18

- At 3:46 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Western Rhodes Road.

- At 4:42 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Arnold Road.

- At 7:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a Co2 alarm at a residence on Old Edwards Lane.

- At 7:43 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Rockledge Lane.

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• Biz/ORG NEWS •



Pictured from left: Jerry Hermanson (Community Care Clinic), Bonnie Potts (Literacy), Cindy Trevathan (REACH), and HMF volunteers Steve Mehder, Steve Ham, Mark Chmar, and Knight Martorell.

Motoring Festival donates \$105,000 to area nonprofits

By Steve Ham

This year's Highlands Motoring Festival® was the most successful in festival history by every measure including financial support that will be donated to local human needs charities.

The festival's net proceeds of \$105,000 will be distributed equally between three charity organizations: The Literacy and Learning Center of Highlands, REACH of Macon County, and the Community Care Clinic of Highlands and Cashiers. Highlands Motoring Festival® is a 501.c3 nonprofit and is an all-volunteer team of classic car enthusiasts.

The 15th annual Highlands Motoring Festival® was held on June 9-12, 2022. Amazing collector cars could be seen on town streets during the four-day festival which consisted of two days of driving tours, three evening gatherings, a parade of Main Street, and two car shows.

The centerpiece of the motoring festival was Saturday's "Cars in the Park" jur-

ied car show that attracted an attendance estimated to be upwards of three thousand people, to view 85 classic cars. The motoring festival has grown significantly in stature over the years, not by increasing the number of show cars, which is limited by the capacity of Kelsey Hutchinson Park, but by raising the level of quality of the cars by going to an invitational entry process.

Over 50 volunteers joined the 15-member planning committee to stage the events. The Highlands Motoring Festival® Committee would like to thank the entire Highlands community, including citizens, volunteers, businesses, organizations, and government officials and staff, without whom none of this would have been possible.

The 16th annual Highlands Motoring Festival® will be on June 8-11, 2023. Along other classic cars, the history of BMW will be told with a curated display of vintage BMWs. Registration opens in January at www.HighlandsMotoringFestival.com

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