

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., April 27, 2023

Commissioner Shearl defends county's stance on HS project at Town Board

The Highlands Town Board unanimously approved a resolution in support of renovations and the addition of Pre-K classrooms at Highlands School.

The move was made in response to the Macon County Board of Commissioners' (BOC) vote to cancel a contract with LS3P Architect for the design work to renovate an existing space at Highlands School for two Pre-K classrooms, the renovation of the Media Center, the renovation of existing STEM/Project-based

learning spaces and the new addition of four classrooms.

The Highlands Renovation/Pre-K project was prioritized and identified as a need by the Macon County Board of Education (BOE) and garnered significant community support and funding.

Despite approving the contract with LS3P for the design work on Nov. 8, 2022 in the amount of \$329,255 and making an initial payment of \$35,262.40 for phase one for the work, the Macon County Board of Com-

missioners cancelled the contract, allegedly wasting taxpayers money.

Newly elected Highlands district MC Commissioner John Shearl spoke at the Thursday, April 20 Town Board meeting to explain the county's position and questioned the need for the resolution.

"I think, you as a board going after the county commissioners for this is the wrong avenue," said Shearl. "It's really the school system's responsibility. If the school board had listed the Highlands

• See SHEARL page 8

Citizens urge BOE and BOC to get Highlands Project done

At the April MC School Board meeting in Highlands, citizens turned out to find out why the Highlands Project/Pre-K was nixed and requested that it be reconsidered by both the BOE and the MC Board of Commissioners.

Jerry Moore, Derek Taylor, Richard Delany and Caleb Brown all urged the board to reconsider

• See HIGHLANDS page 17

HS Salutatorian



Riley Conner, right, is Valedictorian. She plans to attend UNC Chapel Hill. Luke Hartman, left, is Salutatorian and he plans on attending Virginia Tech.

HS Valedictorian



- Submitted

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Hotwire foothold is established and secure

Sharper, faster, smarter fiber optics was the theme at Thursday's Town Board meeting where representatives from Hotwire outlined and updated commissioners about its progress in Highlands.

Sue Kelly, EVP-GM Carolinas and Sue Galletto, VP Service Delivery, were upfront and candid about the process that started back in Sept. 2021 when the lease agreement between Hotwire and the town was signed.

"We were delayed at first and had a lot of catch-up to do because the head-in wasn't ready this time last year, but we have put bodies to the project and are all staffed up with seven full-time people in the office," said Kelly. "In addition to the terrain, there were challenges with various contractors, but we have brought in some that we used in Florida who find this challenging and rewarding."

Timeline of Events: Sept. 2021 – lease agreement with town is signed; May 2022 – website and

local number established, outreach to residents was underway, lease agreement with Ravenel was signed; July 2022 – Headend was ready, Ravenel installs underway and wireless network maintenance needs were identified; Aug. 2022 – installs to town residents was underway, wireless network maintenance under way and wireless system conversion project is kicked off; April 2023 – 8 Highlands employees, hundreds of new customers, 25% total wireless conversion is complete, wireless network upgrades are complete.

According to Kelly, Hotwire is a 20-year company out of Florida that is now in the Carolinas, California, Texas, Nevada, Arizona and Georgia and whose purpose is to get subscribers off the current point-to-multipoint infrastructure to the fiber drop-line that goes directly to the house.

"We have this point-to-multipoint network that we inherited

• See HOTWIRE page 10

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Keeping an eye on this terms' state bills

This week, the Highlands Town Manager Josh Ward and I will be attending the North Carolina League of Municipalities' annual City Vision Conference. This conference is a forum where municipal leaders and league staff meet to address challenges and issues facing towns and cities.

Josh and I will have attended several large sessions, small presentations, and workshops. Top on my list was a workshop covering short-term rentals and municipalities. I wanted to get current information from legislative and legal perspectives and learn how other towns address STRs. Highlands has also been in state discussions about regulating STRs, so Josh and I shared our perspectives.

SB 667, which attempts to establish state STR regulations, is still under legislative review. The outcome of this proposed statute will have a direct impact on how and whether Highlands and other municipalities will be able to regulate STRs. Like many other municipal leaders, I believe the issue of regulating STRs should remain the purview of local governments, not the state.

I will speak for other mayors who have



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

been tracking proposed legislation emanating from Raleigh. We do not all believe singular state-wide statutes fit all communities, and zoning and development issues are best addressed locally.

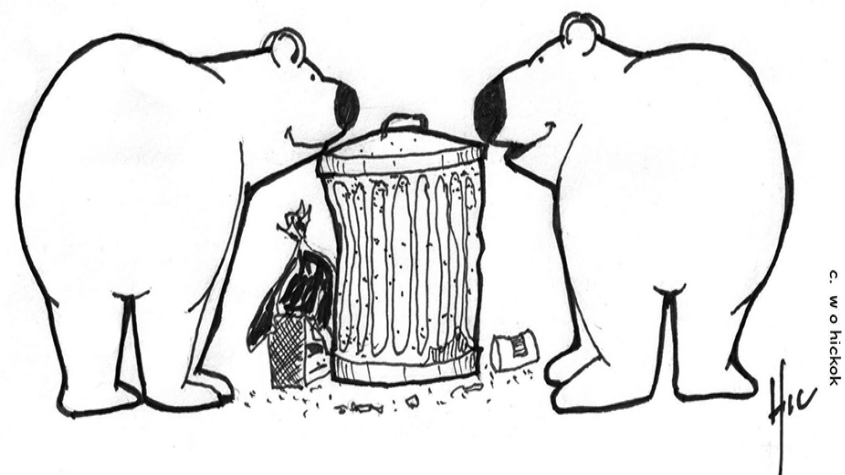
Let me cite a couple of proposed bills that underscore this position. First, there is HB 409-Regulation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ACD). Are ACDs a major issue for some communities? And would HB 409 effectively solve the prob-

lem? This bill would allow across-the-state ACDs in all single-family residential zones. The bill's rationale is that it would help alleviate the workforce housing shortage. Ironically, there is no provision in the bill to disallow these ACDs from becoming STRs, so many folks in the NC League of Municipalities worry the legislation would be counterproductive. The bill also so has no parking limits or capacity limits. What? Yes, no limits like what local governments might require.

The second example of this intrusion into local government authority is SB 515-Improved Water Rates. The title sounds so good, but the bill would limit what towns could charge for water service to people living outside city limits to only 25% more than town residents. The bill has now been modified to say that if a town wants to go beyond the 25%, a public hearing has to be held where the increase has to be justified. Mayors across the state have voiced opposition to this bill that was ironically introduced by Senator Michael Lazarra, a former president of the League of Municipalities. Way back when, say 50 years ago, Highlands allowed some water lines to be run beyond the town limits with the provision those customers would pay a double water rate. In recent years over a million dollars in upgrades to those waterlines outside the town limits has justified those higher rates. In recent decades the town policy has been not to run water or sewer lines beyond the town limits. Passage of SB 515 would only underscore the town policy of not allowing water and sewer beyond town limits.





Another bill afoot is SB 317-Addressing the Workforce Housing Crisis. It, too, would pre-empt local zoning by allowing large housing complexes to be developed

• HIC'S VIEW •



"Yum, Yum. They are finally over their diet."

• WEATHER •

Thu, 27-Apr	Fri, 28-Apr	Sat, 29-Apr	Sun, 30-Apr
			
56°F 53°F	66°F 46°F	69°F 43°F	64°F 41°F
Couple of thunderstorms	Milder with a few showers	Times of clouds and sun	Periods of rain
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• See MAYOR page 15

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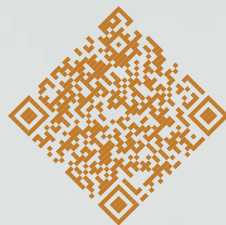
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What are your future hopes and dreams?

I realize this is a Real Estate column, but please bear with me.

You may have heard that Dr. Charles Stanley passed away last week. Perhaps you knew him or maybe you know his son Andy Stanley who leads Northpoint Community Church in Atlanta.

A group of us celebrated Dr. Charles last Sunday by re-watching an interview Andy conducted with his Dad just two years ago. Andy asked his father this question: "In your 65 years of ministry, how have you made important decisions?" He leaned back and said, "First of all I pray about it, and ask God to show me what He wants me to do; and then I ask myself this question; In light of my past experiences, given the current circumstances, and according to my future hopes and dreams ... what's the best thing to do?" If you're still reading ... Dr. Stanley's answer may be the best Real Estate advice ever given, and here's why.

We work with an incredible couple who have decided to sell after purchasing a beautiful mountain home back in 2019. I've been trying to talk them out of selling it for two weeks because we've become great friends, they love Highlands, and have invested well. But here's the deal. The "past experiences" in their lives tell them that family comes first. Their "current circumstances" include a need to spend the next 2-3 years mentoring a new associate with a law firm and their daughter is soon-to-deliver a first grandchild. They know they want to be there for their daughter because she needs them right now. Their "future hopes and dreams" are to retire from the law firm, have a few more grandkids, and perhaps someday return to Highlands to fly fish, and play a little more golf. Are they making the right decision according to Dr. Stanley's sage advice? Heck yes!

And then there's another couple from Florida we know about. Over the past 12 months, they've made six offers on six different properties, entered a contract for two of them, and terminated both contracts after conducting all inspections and



The Gleeson Family
Pat, Bee and Gemma
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due diligence, in one case losing \$10,000 of earnest money. Yes, they're still out there looking! The "past experiences" of this couple is trying to buy rental property sight unseen, making lowball offers, and burning through real estate brokers like firewood. Their "current situation" is that the word is out and no sane Broker will work with them. This couple's "future hopes and dreams" are to continue lowballing and take advantage of an unsuspecting Seller. Are they making the right decision according to Dr. Stanley's sage advice? Heck No!

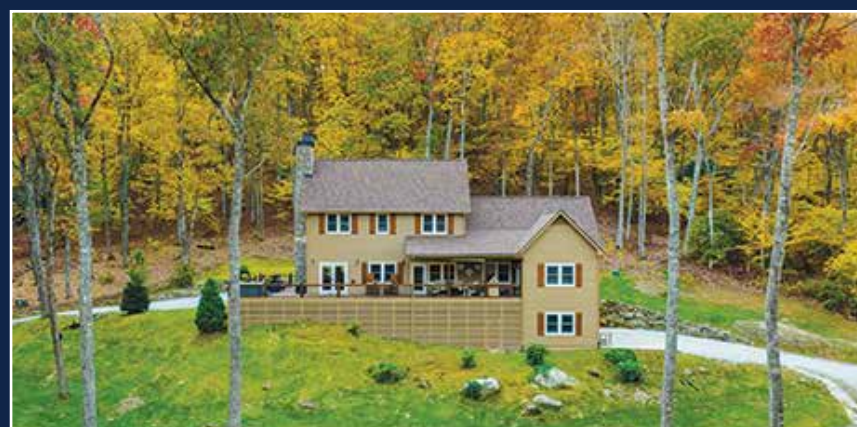
By these two examples I think you can see the difference in approaches. Both used "In light of my past experiences, given my cur-

rent circumstances, and according to my future hopes and dreams, what's the best thing to do." One of the couples prayed about it, sought wisdom, and will profit. The other couple is being faithless, selfish, stupid, and will ultimately be unsuccessful with their real estate decisions.

It's a good time to be reminded of the Golden Rule: Love one another, and always treat people the way you want to be treated.

I applaud the 311 Real Estate Brokers we work with in the Highlands-Cashiers MLS. Odds are pretty good you may know one of us. Or, you can throw a rock in Wolfgang's most nights and probably hit one. Seek the wise counsel of a professional Real Estate Broker whether you're selling or buying. Our role is to work together towards one goal; find a ready, willing, and able Buyer for your property; and/or find a property that closely meets your needs, budget, investment strategy, and most importantly ... your future hopes and dreams!

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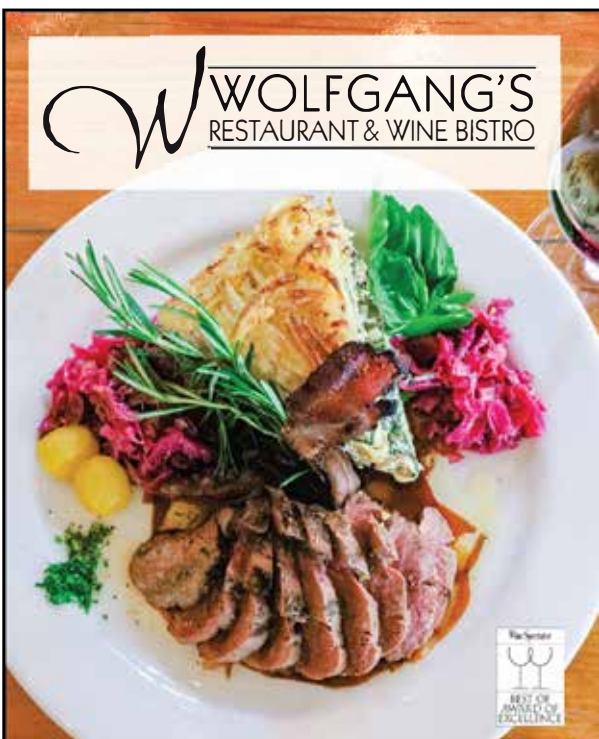
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• OBITUARY •

George Salman Schmitt

George Salman Schmitt passed away peacefully on April 22, 2023, in the presence of his beloved wife in Highlands, NC.

Son of Anna Schmitt and George F. Salman, George was born in New York, NY on September 25, 1930. George spent his early childhood with his maternal grandparents in Germany.

In 1951, George married Mary C. Procida in New York. In 1965, George moved to Highlands, where he and Marie would raise their family, begin the family business of Schmitt Building Contractors, and become a huge part of the mountain community.

George is preceded in death by his parents and his stepmother, May L. Salman, and is survived by his wife of 72 years Marie, stepbrother's Ricky Salman and Ronald Salman and children Gary William (May), Paul Bernard (Andrea), George Frederick (Gabrielle), Anita Marie Lupoli (John) and Eric Alexander (Denise). He is also survived by 20 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren.

George will be remembered for his service to the community and to others. He served with the U.S. Navy from 1948 to 1952. He was a volunteer fireman in New York and North Carolina, served time in Bolivia building a children's home, and volunteered with Habitat for Humanity.

Upon moving to Highlands, George became an active member of Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church Highlands and served there in several positions for many years - most notably as an organist for many years. George had a passion for



the arts community and served with the Highlands Playhouse for many years. With a love for education, George was one of the visionaries and creators of the Town of Highlands Scholarship Fund. He was a member and past president of the Rotary Club of Highlands. He was also active with the American Legion Post 370 and enjoyed serving alongside fellow veterans.

George was an endless volunteer, serviceman, musician, and master carpenter and will be remembered by family and friends for the legacy he leaves in the Highlands area and for his wit and humor.

George was a strong, independent, talented, intelligent, and fierce supporter of those he loved. He loved working with his hands, playing the organ, golfing, tennis, and his German heritage, but his greatest joy was spending time with his family. He loved and was greatly loved by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, extended family and church family and will be dearly missed.

A celebration of George's life will be held Saturday, April 29 at 4 p.m. at Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church in Highlands, NC (315 N 5th St, Highlands, NC 28741).

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully asks that donations be made to Four Seasons Hospice Care at their website, or the Town of Highlands Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 460, attn Rebecca Shuler.

Moffitt Funeral Care is handling the arrangements.

• LETTER •

Please make the Highlands School project a priority

Dear Editor,

I attended the April 24th Macon County School Board meeting at Highlands School and was pleased to hear the Highlands School Project remains a priority for the School Board. Specifically, behind the \$118 million new Franklin High School,

Highlands School & Pre-K Project is the number one project that has a funding need which is estimated to be less than \$5 million. The School Board pointed out two emergency repair projects that have to be funded immediately but there should be more than adequate funding to cover those needs with a \$40 million fund balance.

The residents, businesses and the families that call Macon County home need the Highlands School Project to move forward as quickly as possible. The Pre-K is a key component of this project and the Highlands community currently has 53 children on a waiting list to receive childcare. Freeing up the childcare space with Pre-K space will provide more opportunities for our children and their families. I am hopeful the Franklin School Project will continue to progress and we receive a grant from the state to help pay for the new Franklin School.

Moving forward, we need the Macon County Board of Commissioners to reinstate the initial funding for the Highlands School Project. We cannot afford to wait for another budget cycle or two, because every moment that is wasted, it potentially places another child behind in their education progress. I urge the commissioners to put the Highlands School Project on the May agenda and give us an up or down vote, taking into consideration the School Board's priority list and the Highlands School Project placement on that list.

Jerry Moore
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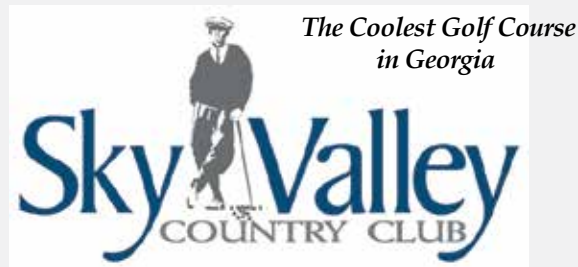


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...SHEARL continued from page 1

School project as the number one priority on their capital improvement list we wouldn't be talking about this today. And taxpayer money wasn't wasted because we have the drawings, which can be used at a later date."

In December, at a joint meeting with the BOE and BOC, MC commissioners asked the school board to present a list of the capital improvement priorities for the upcoming budget year.

In early January the BOE unanimously approved a list that included the Highlands School project ranked as number two, following the Franklin High School project and two emergency items at Nantahala and Macon Middle School.

Currently, the approximate cost of the Highlands School project is \$4.5 million.

Shearl said the county commission has a lot on its financial plate and nixing the Highlands project came down to the BOE prioritizing school needs.

Shearl noted emergency needs in the Macon County School district – repairing the Macon Middle School sewer vent pipes, which will involve masonry and plumbing and upgrading the Nantahala School's Waste Water Treatment Plant that is on the

verge of failing. Upgrading the plant will come out of the 2024 Repair and Renovation Fund.

As to capital priorities that the county pays for, the BOE listed Franklin High School, which was built in the 1950s and has seen minimum renovations over the years, as number one on its list. It's estimated to be a \$118 million project that involves the main building, the fine arts building, the gym, track, football field, ADA compliance, security and renovation of remaining structures.

"We have no idea where that money will come from," said Shearl. "If we borrow the money for this new high school, including \$15 million out of the fund balance, that will max out our borrowing capability for five years. And even with the potential of a \$60 million grant, we will still have to raise taxes to do this, and we have to have a serious conversation about how we are going to fund BOE's number one project."

Shearl said in December, MC Commission Chairman Paul Higdon made it perfectly clear that the county was going to prioritize spending and we are going to adopt a budget and live inside that budget.

Commissioner Amy Patterson questioned the county commission's logic.

"You just decided to buy land across the street from Franklin High School for \$1.3 million [which wasn't in the budget] when that's what it would have cost for the Highlands Pre-K component. Chairman Higdon has said there is plenty of money in the General Fund and some of it needed to be spent," she said. "When the county decided not to do the Highlands Expansion/Pre-K, buying that property wasn't being considered. So, the county cut Highlands out with plenty of money in the General Fund to do it if they wanted to."

Shearl said they began looking at buying the Higdon property to expand Franklin High School – particularly the athletic complex which will cost \$14,174,455 million.

"Highlands feels like we pay most of the taxes and we get the leftovers," said Commissioner Patterson. "I'm not saying that Franklin High School doesn't need to be renovated, I'm saying Pre-K for us is a huge priority, more so than athletic fields at a high school."

Shearl said the county has given a lot of money to Highlands School over the last five years and listed what each of the other eight schools in the county get -- the

• See SHEARL page 11

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...HOTWIRE continued from page 1

but we plan and are ready to take every single person to a fiber drop-line to a home with 1-10 gigs, if that's the retail choice they want," she said.

So far, Hotwire has 100 new single subscribers including underground infrastructure in Ravenel where 32 homes were installed July-August of 2022.

These installs are referred to as "bulk" installs because Hotwire can take care of all the houses in one area. Next up is Highlands Mountain Club with talks with Highlands Country Club currently underway.

"We are committed to giving Highlands good service and getting subscribers over to the fiber-drop scenario, but there

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will be some homes we can't get to, due to rock and some mountains but we will look at a resolution for them," said Kelly. "We don't want to put anyone in a situation where they don't have good fision service."

Part of the lease agreement with the town requires Hotwire to do the work and foot the cost of installing underground infrastructure where needed, which Kelly said did set them back timewise, but the underground build-out will accelerate as residents start to return.

"We've never seen such seasonality," said Mike Hall Senior Director of Store-front/Sales. "We can't get a hold of anyone because we don't have their phone numbers

or emails. But we are getting to the customers we can, to get them on the fiber-drop and off the point-to multipoint system."

Kelly said there are challenges due to the terrain and the seasonality.

"It's a longer burn. Installation isn't a 2-week gig. It's a 45-day type of situation. We have to be careful with existing utilities and we are committed to leaving your home the way we found it," she said.

"Taking everyone off point-to multipoint is 50% of what we can do, now; it's just slower, it's not that it's not being done," she added.

Galletto said Hotwire is gearing up for the season and conversions.

"We have converted about 30 retail customers with 50 ready to go. As people come back, we can get them on the schedule," she said.

Hotwire's aim is to get into neighborhoods for a bulk hook-up scenario to get them off the existing fiber networks and on to Hotwire/Fision.

Since so many people are working from home, Kelly said she doesn't want people to be in the predicament that they leave Highlands because they don't have data.

"That's the ultimate end-game," she said. "We are committed to overhauling the network configuration."

To schedule installation visit the Highlands office at 670 N. 4th Street or call or email, 833-986-1570 or highlands@hotwiremail.com.

- Kim Lewicki

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...SHEARL continued from page 8

three elementary schools, the two middle schools, Franklin High School, the Early College and Union Academy – in capital outlay and funding for personnel.

In 2023, local funding for teachers, teacher assistants, custodians and clerks for Highlands amounted to \$1,055,405. When geographically isolated schools, like Highlands and Nantahala have less than 15 kids per class, they don't get state funding so teachers are locally funded.

Locally funded personnel system-wide for 2023 is currently \$3.2 million with the rest subsidized with state and federal funds.

As to capital outlay, spent over the last five years in Highlands, in 2018-'19, \$6,938.75 finished out the cafeteria tile project; in 2019-'20, \$93,869.46 was paid for the sidewalk and covered walkway, \$2,362.97 for classroom door locks, and \$5,675.90 for security cameras; in 2020-'21, \$9,304.54 was spent on a cafeteria steamer; in 2021-'22, \$18,237.24 was spent on furniture and equipment; in 2022-'23, \$26,573.75 was spent for fencing, \$20,060.21 for floor equipment and \$15,000 for HVAC, and \$88.93 was spent to finish out the 15-year QZAB payment for the new gymnasium.

Capital outlay spent system-wide for 2017-'18, was \$280,916; in 2018-'19, \$529,423; in 2019-'20, \$634,611; in 2020-'21, 563,876; in 2021-'22, \$534,803; and in 2022-'23, \$322,967.

For technology, which is its own designation, system-wide a total of \$3,023,659 was spent including for Highlands.

Shearl said the county isn't denying the Highlands Expansion/Pre-K is important for Highlands School, "but what we are saying is we don't have the money right now if we are going to spend money for Franklin High School (FHS).

He said phase one \$14, 174, 455 million athletic complex is in the 2024 budget cycle but due to FHS needs, many other county projects have been put on hold.

"The county needs are great," said Shearl. "For decades and decades, the county's properties have been ignored. We have to look at all this. For instance, the Senior Services Center has been presented as a need since 2018."

Commissioner Marc Hehn suggested the 1/4 cent sales tax increase would have meant at least \$2 million a year, but it failed due to political rhetoric.

Shearl told the board the proceeds had to go into the

state's general fund and couldn't be earmarked for schools.

However, though a county can't stipulate the use of the tax money on the ballot, a county board of commissioners need only adopt a resolution stipulating how it plans on using the funds. This is what neighboring counties – including Jackson County – have done.

Shearl also questioned the viability of Pre-K in Highlands.

"Where are we going to get the additional teachers?" he asked. "We have to really think about that. The Gordon Center had a hard time finding someone to replace Ms. Tate. If they couldn't find that teacher, how are we going to find teachers for Pre-K?"

The two proposed Pre-K classrooms in Highlands would accommodate 18 students each with one teacher and one teacher assistant per classroom.

He also said the cost of attending the Pre-K would be private pay since only two students fit the state's requirement for state funding.

Shearl suggested private pay in Highlands would be \$667 per month per child compared to Franklin's \$496 per month, but Brooke Keener, Director of Exceptional Children/AIG/PreK for Macon County Schools said the cost in Highlands would be the same as in Franklin.

"The \$667 per month figure was what it would cost to not run a deficit," said Keener. "The deficit for the existing Pre-K programs in Cartoogehaye, Iotla Valley, and South Macon is currently \$154,731. But Highlands would not be charged more than Franklin. They would pay the same amount which is currently, \$496."

In the end the board passed the resolution unanimously. Commissioner Patterson said it reiterates that the need is there, and the county needs to consider it.

Commissioner Brian Stiehler agreed.

"There is nothing negative in this. It's just stating our case," he said.

Shearl reiterated that if the BOE had listed Highlands as number 1, the discussion would not be taking place.

The resolution states that the Town of Highlands contributes almost 50% of the county's ad valorem taxes; that Highlands is a major source of revenue in the county's construction and hospitality industries which require an educated workforce and worker access to childcare; that the proposed pre-K program in Highlands would add two classrooms and an outdoor area for 36 children and four new classrooms for older students as well as improvements to include meeting and office space; and the proposed improvements would include upgrades and space for Career and Technical Education with project-based learning;

and would expand and upgrade the media center with secure outdoor education space; and that the Macon County Board of Commissioners had approved a \$329,000 contract with LS3P to design the improvements to the Highlands School and recently rescinded the contract; and that the proposed new Franklin High School is much needed and will cost approximately 120 million dollars and the proposed upgrades to the Highlands School will be approximately 5 million dollars, which is 4% of the cost for the new FHS; therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Highlands supports the Highlands School, its students, faculty and parents, and requests that the Macon County Board of Commissioners re-instate the contract for the design phase for the capital improvements at the Highlands School in order for the project to move forward in a timely manner.

Commissioner Shearl will be addressing the public on the matter at the Rec Park at 6 p.m. tonight, Thursday, April 27.

- Kim Lewicki

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Spring Home Improvement 2023

Renovation inspiration: Top 5 home trends that combine elegance & purpose

(BPT) - Balancing beauty with practicality is a common challenge when renovating and upgrading a home. This desire to marry personal style with purpose was evident at the 2023 Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS). Designers are creating concepts and products to make life easier while adding visually appealing elements. Popular trends especially cater to tech-savvy homeowners looking for innovative products that can make their home lives more convenient.

If you want to create a home that combines personal style with practicality, check out five top home trends for 2023 and beyond.

1. Wide open spaces

Homeowners are looking for ways to create more space in their homes to increase their square footage and functionality. According to the National Kitchen and Bath Association, 74 percent of homeowners want to tear down walls to open up the kitchen to other areas of the home. These open spaces allow for rooms to have multiple functions. Whether you want to work, learn, entertain or relax, opening up the design and architecture of your home will make it easier to flow throughout your day.

2. Design and function

There's no need to choose between beauty and practicality. Today's modern appliance brands are finding the intersection of design and function for homeowners who want the best of both worlds. The latest counter depth

refrigerators are great examples of how you don't have to sacrifice space for design or vice versa.

One such sleek, stainless-steel fridge from LG offers maximum food storage in a small footprint, creating a more stylish kitchen that sits flush with cabinetry and offers a built-in look. Thanks to "InstaView" technology, you can check the inside without opening the refrigerator door by knocking twice on the elegant mirror-coated glass panel that illuminates, reducing cold air loss.

This refrigerator can also keep food fresh longer with advanced cooling technologies. With its convertible drawer featuring adjustable dividers and five temperature settings, there's plenty of space and flexibility to store and preserve your favorite foods.

3. Sustainability matters

Like many other industries, sustainability is a popular trend for kitchens. According to a 2023 Kitchen Trends survey by Houzz, 92 percent of homeowners are incorporating sustainable features when renovating kitchens. From LED lights to water-efficient fixtures and Energy Star certified appliances, homeowners are looking for ways to make more environmentally friendly choices in their homes.

Sustainability goes beyond efficiency of natural resources and both homeowners and designers are taking that into account. Most of the designers surveyed at KBIS said that, when recommending products, they oftentimes consider the manufacturer's sustainability practices.

4. Steam power

Many appliances showcased at KBIS 2023 harness the power of steam. From steam ovens to steam closets, companies are innovating appliances to make a homeowner's day-to-day life cleaner and tidier with minimal fuss.

For example, sneakerheads and shoe lovers will appreciate the LG Styler ShoeCare and ShoeCase, which offers a novel way to clean, organize and display footwear. ShoeCare uses steam technology to sterilize and deodorize shoes inside and out. Whether leather, suede or sports footwear, you'll find the right controls to refresh your shoes between uses.

Meanwhile, the Styler ShoeCase offers a modern, streamlined shoe storage solution to organize and display your shoe collection. Transparent panels allow users to display and store their footwear in an ideal environment that protects against humidity and fabric-decoloring UV light. When combined, you'll have a total shoe care solution that extends the life of your shoes while providing convenient storage.

5. Space and versatility

Space and versatility are top of mind to homeowners. According to a recent survey, homeowners said their dream kitchen remodel focuses on increasing space, with 50 percent of respondents saying they were specifically looking for an extra-large refrigerator.

A larger fridge doesn't just mean more room. It also means more flexibility for food storage. For example, one luxury brand, Signature Kitchen Suite, has leaned into this trend by launching the industry's first 48-inch French-door refrigerator. It offers a combination of spacious capacity, preservation technology to ensure food freshness, smart organization and a sleek design. It's also equipped ThinQ Care technology that proactively monitors the appliance and alerts homeowners if needed.

Are you ready to start on your kitchen upgrades? You'll be ahead of the curve in style and functionality by incorporating a couple (or all!) of these trends into your home renovations.

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Home Improvement 2023

5 easy ways to refresh your bathroom for spring

(BPT) - There's nothing like the warmer temperatures, blooming flowers and longer, brighter days to inspire you to take a fresh look at your home, and the ideal place to get started is in one of your most-used spaces: the bathroom. Spring is the perfect time to refresh your bathroom, so why not go beyond a thorough cleaning to make the room feel brand new? Fresh, seasonal colors give the room an upgraded look, and products like a new toilet seat let you continue that spring-fresh feeling all season.

Here are simple ideas to help you get started on re-vamping your bathroom this spring.

1. Invite more color: Start with swapping out some of the simple elements in your bathroom, taking the opportunity to brighten the space with fresh new colorful towels, bathmats and even a new shower curtain. Choose light, appealing colors and/or patterns based on natural elements that will bring more of a springtime feeling into your home.

2. Decorate thoughtfully: Consider adding some easy decorative accents, like glass jars filled with cotton swabs, small soaps or garden flowers. A little goes a long way, so choose just a few of these accents to help give the room a sense of spa-like elegance, without making it seem overly busy or cluttered.

3. Think attractive storage solutions: Include smart and visually appealing storage options such as a few pretty baskets on shelves for holding extra guest towels, for example. Baskets are also really useful for keeping that extra clutter off of your countertops, and you can easily organize them by categories like toiletries, washcloths and makeup.

4. Upgrade your seat: Spring cleaning for your bathroom isn't complete without a new toilet seat. The Mayfair by Bemis Affinity is an attractive plastic seat that installs easily and is designed for a precise fit, so it never moves after you install it. The seat also features quiet closing to avoid unpleasant slamming. Best yet, the hinges are designed to let you easily remove the seat for thorough cleaning - and when you're finished cleaning, you simply place the seat back on the toilet and close the hinge caps. The durable plastic seat wipes clean effortlessly for that final touch on a

fresh, spring bathroom feel.

Visit ToiletSeats.com for more options to help you find the perfect seat from Bemis Manufacturing Company.

5. Refresh your windows: After giving your bathroom windows a thorough cleaning inside and out, consider updating how they look overall with new window treatments. One terrific on-trend idea is to install roller blinds or Roman shades in lighter colors. If you opt for blinds or shades made from thin-enough fabric, they will still provide much-needed privacy while also letting in some natural light - helping the whole room feel lighter and brighter.

Ready to get started on refreshing your bathroom? These are all ideas you can easily DIY - no plumber or designer required! - that will make a big difference for the look and feel of your bathroom, right away. Then you can relax and enjoy your room all season long.



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Spring Home Improvement 2023

The top 5 benefits of laminate flooring

(BPT) - The transition from winter to spring can be messy, putting your home's flooring to the test. When temperatures rise and storms increase moisture across the country, laminate flooring tends to outperform other options, offering durability that can stand up to mud, puddles and more.

Laminate flooring has made a massive comeback in recent years as builders and interior designers have embraced the material with renewed enthusiasm. Laminate is more refined than ever, offering sophisticated style options and impressive durability without the excessive cost of other flooring materials.

Here's what every homeowner should know about the benefits of laminate flooring so they can make the best choice for their home improvement projects:

1. Durability

Jennifer Meska, Director of Merchandising for LL Flooring, says, "Moist weather and rainy seasons, plus everyday spills that happen all year long, can cause serious damage to your floors. With waterproof laminate flooring you can have peace of mind and be worry-free for whatever weather or messy spills might come your way."

2. Affordability

The cost of laminate flooring is highly appealing, especially as consumers are tightening their budgets and looking for more cost-effective home improvement solutions. Laminate flooring typically starts at around one dollar per square foot, making it an affordable option with many styles to choose from.

3. Style

A design chameleon of sorts, laminate is available in a huge variety of tones and

textures so you can find the perfect style option for your home. Designed to closely replicate the natural look of real hardwood, stone and even mosaic patterns, laminate flooring offers the best of both worlds - impeccable style and practical function.

4. Wood-like options

If you want the look of wood without the maintenance concerns, laminate's a go-to choice. With a core made from wood byproducts bonded with resins and a hard plastic surface protecting the printed design layer, laminate closely resembles hardwood in appearance, texture, and depth.

5. Easy maintenance

General cleaning on laminate floors is as easy as using a standard soft-bristle broom or dust mop on a weekly basis. If you vacuum, be sure to disengage the beater bar with hard bristles that can scratch or

dull the surface. For periodic deep cleans (every two months is recommended), use a laminate-friendly product like the Bellawood Floor Cleaner applied to the mop - not directly to the floor - and avoid oil-based cleaning agents or anything containing wax or polish.

Not all laminate is created equal

A lot of laminate on the market isn't reliably water-resistant, which is why it's important to look for options tested and proven to stand up to the elements. One high-quality laminate option is the LL Flooring Dream Home Collection that is completely waterproof, making it a game-changer when it comes to selecting flooring for anywhere in your home. Plus, with a clear aluminum oxide top layer protecting the boards, this laminate is exceedingly durable and stain resistant.

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Spring Home Improvement 2023

New trends and plants for 2023

(BPT) - No matter where you live or how green your thumb, you can enjoy the beauty and bounty of gardening at home. Now is the ideal time to plan a spring garden that will be the envy of the neighborhood.

The experts at Ball Horticultural Company share their recommended plants, top topics and tips to set up every type of gardener for success this year.

Plants for your pocketbook

Creating a stunning garden doesn't have to break the bank. To get even more bang for the buck, select hardy plants known to thrive through adversity or fast-spreading flowers that fill in quickly.

New Hula™ Spreading Begonia is a great example of a budget-friendly plant that quickly fills in garden beds with a blanket of high-impact color, covering the soil and discouraging weeds in minimal time. They're bursting with eye-catching blooms, very forgiving for novice gardeners, and are also great for outdoor hanging baskets and mixed containers.

If heat, humidity or drought are a concern for you, opting for resilient flowering plants can help ensure greenery and blooms no matter the weather condition. Angelonia AngelDance™, for example, thrives even in harsh conditions like high heat, producing tall flower spikes that are perfect for that cottage garden vibe. Additionally, because the stems are flexible, they bring awesome movement to your garden and you don't have to worry about breakage.

Tropical colors delight

Tropical hues are trending, which is evident by the rich, pink shade of Viva Magenta selected as Pantone's 2023 Color of the Year. From deep burgundies to bright, energetic pinks, you can use florals reminiscent of a south beach escape to turn your outdoor space into a personal oasis.

To add instant color to sunny spots, try all-season blooming Easy Wave® Burgundy Velour Petunias either solo or in

mixed planters, baskets, gardens and window boxes. Brighten up shadier spots with the Glimmer™ Burgundy Double Impatiens, which produce beautiful, rose-like blooms that are easy to maintain, as the plant's old blooms do not need to be removed as they fade.

If you live in climates that require low-maintenance plants that can withstand chillier temps, try Oscar® Cherry Velvet Dianthus, which has frost tolerance and a soft floral fragrance. Another hardy option in a vibrant shade is the Sombrero Poco™ Hot Pink Echinacea, a compact version of winter-hardy prairie coneflower, with bright, non-fading blooms. As an added bonus, the plant is known to be deer resistant and attract song birds and butterflies.

Impress with vegetables

When you grow your own vegetables, you reap even more health benefits, including the positive emotional boost of being outdoors, plus you save money on groceries. This year, try unique homegrown choices that add fresh flavor to your meals and impress guests at your next gathering.

To upgrade your vegetable platter, check out Sun Dipper Tomatoes. Their unique, elongated shape makes them easy to hold and ideal for dipping into your favorite spreads and party dips. Another visually mesmerizing variety is the Mocha Swirl Snack Pepper from Burpee Plants. This sweet snacking pepper produces 4-inch fruits that ripen green and white at 50 days and then to rich chocolate-red stripes at 70 days.

If you're limited on space, you can still enjoy the benefits of growing your own fresh vegetables by exploring indoor, tabletop options. Kitchen Minis Quick Snack Cucumber are a restricted-vine crispy-and-delicious cuke that can be kept inside on a sunny windowsill or counter for a fresh harvest over a few weeks.

Living color indoors

Have you recently downsized, or do you live in an apartment, condo or townhome? No matter where you live, you can still enjoy

the beauty and benefits of plant parenthood by exploring indoor-flowering varieties that brighten spaces and enhance interior design.

Yellow is reminiscent of sunshine and conveys positive emotions, which is why the ColorBloom™ Gerbera is such a happy addition to indoor spaces. Perfectly happy to grow in small indoor pots, you'll enjoy long-lasting blooms when you place them in sunny locations throughout the home.

If you prefer leafy varieties in your

home, try color- and texture-rich foliage plants, such as Jurassic Dino™ Rex Begonia. With bold patterns, including a beautiful rose-pink leaf color with green edges, white dots and a black leaf center, the plant sets the mood and accents any room.

From indoor tabletops to outdoor landscapes, porches and beyond, garden experts agree: There are plenty of plant options to help you create a stunning space this year.



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...MAYOR continued from page 2

on ten or more acre tracts in any residential zone. Local zoning requirements would not apply. The last time I checked, it had strong support in the Senate.

If you are concerned about any of these proposed bills, please contact your representatives, Senator Kevin Corbin or Representative Karl Gillespie. Josh and I already have.

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• **Public Swim:** Mon.-Wed. 3:30-7p; Sat. 11a-6p; Sun. 1-6p. **Adult Swim:** Mon.-Wed. 11a-3:30p and Thurs. and Fri., 11a-2p. **Lap Swim:** Mon-Fri 6a-9:45a and Sat. 10-11a. **Water Aerobics:** Mon.-Fri. 10-11a. 828-526-1595.

Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat, & Sun

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands Mountain View Group holds open meetings in Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. A ZOOM meeting is available Wednesday at 7PM (ID# 921 817 2966, password CVG2020). For more information, please visit www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-4357

with different types of exercise. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information

First Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health, at 11:00 AM. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health issues of particular interest to them. The February 1 program is PTSD: Healing the Emotional Wound.

Wednesdays

• 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

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, Kids Zone

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 budandlynn@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 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 with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class

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.

3rd Fridays

• 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.

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.

Through May 31

• The Fontana Regional Library system, including Hudson Library in Highlands, is starting an Active Audio Challenge that will run from March 1st through May 31st. Participants who listen to 25 hours of audiobooks, while being active, will receive a prize. To register for the Challenge, come by Hudson Library and pick up the logbook used to record entries. For more information or to request an accommodation, please call the library at 828-526-3031.

Wed. & Sat. in April

• Spring is in the air! The Highlands Botanical Garden is waking up, and with it, an abundance of wildflowers is beginning to display. Join the Highlands Nature Center for an easy stroll through the Botanical Garden each Wednesday & Saturday this April between 4 and 5 PM to explore what spring ephemerals are blooming. These programs are free and open to the public, no registration is necessary. For more information, visit highlandsbiological.org. The Highlands Nature Center & Botanical Garden is part of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of WCU.

Fri.-Sun, April 28-30

• Bear Shadow Music Festival, a weekend of celebration that highlights world-class music acts and outdoor experiences as we emerge from winter's hibernation. Brought to you by Highlands Festivals, Inc., the 3-day festival is at Winfield Farm. Bear Shadow is a sister event of the

bespoke Highlands Food & Wine Festival. For more information and tickets, visit bearshadownc.com or email info@bearshadownc.com.

Sat., April 29

• Macon County Academic Foundation Auction at South Macon Elementary at 11 a.m.,

Fri. - Sun., May 5 - 7

• At Half-Mile Farm, live fire cooking with Old Edwards Executive Chef Chris Huerta & Half-Mile Farm Chef Jason Tardo featuring locally grown Providence Farmstead protein. Social Hour Friday and Saturday evenings from 5-6 pm with complimentary hors d'oeuvres and live music from 5-8 pm. Craft beverages also are available from the J. Henry Farmhouse Tavern. Book Online: <https://www.oldedwardshospitality.com/half-mile-farm#/booking/step-1>

Fri. Sat. May 5-6

• There is a Cowee Valley Quilt & Fiber Celebration at Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center from 10a to 4p. There will be workshops, demonstrations, kids activities, vendors, a fashion show and more. To register for workshops and find more info go to www.coweeschool.org

Fri. May 5

• Local author Victor Treutel will appear at Hudson Library on Friday at 2 PM to talk about his new historical fiction release When the Dogwoods Bloom. Books will be available for purchase and signing at this free event.

Charles Gandy EMBELLISHED KNITTING workshop 1 to 4 and Get Weaving with Sarah Howard May 5th at 10:30 live ZOOM Talk taking place during the Cowee Valley Quilt & Fiber Celebration at the Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center Franklin N.C. Go to www.coweeschool.org to RSVP limited spaces.

Sat., May 6

• Join us in a cozy, Appalachian tavern for an intimate performance with one of country music's most respected artists, Charlie Worsham at The Ruffed Grouse Tavern at Highlander Mountain House, 270 Main Street. 8:30 - 10:30 pm

Sun., May 14

• At PAC, Steep Canyon Rangers. For tickets, email highlandspacnc@gmail.com.

Wed., May 17

• At Acorn's a book signing

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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

from 2-4 p.m., with Chef Steven Satterfield of Miller Union in Atlanta who will be signing copies of his book, "Root to Leaf: A Southern Chef Cooks Through the Seasons."

Thurs - Sat, May 18-20

• "Nightwatch" with the Highlands-Cashiers Players at PAC at 7:30 p.m. Unable to sleep, Elaine Wheeler paces the living room of her Manhattan townhouse, troubled by unsettling memories and vague fears. Her husband tries to comfort her, but when he steps away for a moment, Elaine screams as she sees (or believes she sees) the body of a dead man in the window across the way.

Thurs., May 18

• At OEI's The Farm from 6-9 PM, James Beard Foundation award-winning Chef Steven Satterfield of Miller Union in Atlanta. "Root to Leaf: A Southern Chef Cooks

Through the Seasons" (featured on CBS This Morning). \$185 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Book Online: <https://www.simpletix.com/e/chef-steven-satterfield-dinner-tickets-123309>

Friday, May 19

• Dedication of the new Fire Station at Oak and Main streets from 4-6 p.m. Parking may be limited. If so you can park on the road that leads from the back parking lot to Oak St. Please leave 1 lane open in case of an emergency, or you may also park in the old PNC bank parking or the vacant lot (weather dependent) on Oak St across from the bank.

Sat., May 20

• "Meander in May," the free, self-guided arts festival organized by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC. The annual event includes painting, woodworking and ceramics demon-

strations along with performances by a myriad of bands and musicians. The immersive arts experience begins at 11 a.m. and culminates with a free concert by The Boomers in K-H Park from 6 - 8:30 p.m.,

Thurs-Fri, May 25-26

• "Nightwatch" with the Highlands-Cashiers Players at PAC at 2:30 p.m. Unable to sleep, Elaine Wheeler paces the living room of her Manhattan townhouse, troubled by unsettling memories and vague fears. Her husband tries to comfort her, but when he steps away for a moment.

Thurs., May 25

• At OEI's The Farm, from 6-8 p.m., the talented duo of Jilly Martin and Ryan Brooks Kelly. Tickets are \$40. Book Online: <https://www.simpletix.com/e/martin-and-kelly-orchard-sessions-at-the-f-tickets-124374>

Thurs., June 1

• Highlands Volunteer Fair from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. This free event will take place Thursday from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Community Building, 71 Poplar Street. For more info call 828-526-5841

...HIGHLANDS continued from page 1

prioritizing the project.

"I am here to encourage you to move the Highlands School project up on the priority list so the Board of Commissioners can truly consider where the school board thinks we belong in this project," said Moore. "Pre-K isn't childcare but we have 53 kids on a waiting list for childcare. That means we have 53 kids who aren't getting early childhood education. If they aren't up to speed by Kindergarten, then they are going to be behind. It's critical. We need you guys to get this project going. If we wait to 2024, I don't know if we will ever get it done."

Moore said no one knows why the Highlands Project/Pre-K was OK'd and then rescinded.

"We need to know why and where the miscommunication occurred," he said.

Taylor said Highlands needs Pre-K so every kid who comes through the school can be the very best they can be. And the Highlands Project/Pre-K is a big part of that.

"I am confused. Why has our placement on the priority list changed? The Board of Commissioners have said if the Board of Education wants the project, then

they will vote for it," said Taylor. "So, I would like you guys to figure out how to make that happen for us."

Delany said children's education at the Pre-K level is hugely important.

"How did a project that seemed to be going so well get derailed so quickly? Highlands deserves a second look for the sake of our community so we can have childcare and have them learning at a Pre-K level," he said.

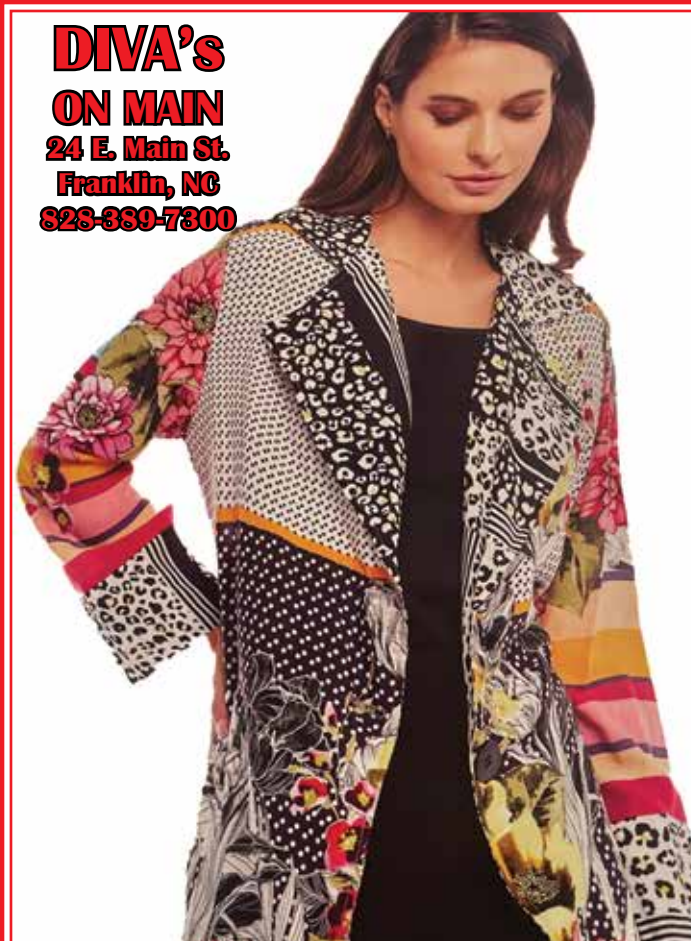
Teacher, soccer coach and occasional bus driver Caleb Brown, asked what we are looking at in the long run?

"How do we make the best citizens in society and best citizens to give back to our community?" he asked. "Childcare and Pre-K is important because those children will ultimately be the people sitting in your seats and on the board of commissioners and will be the people who are changing the world."

BOE Chairman Jim Breedlove said there has been a lot of misinformation. First, he said the conceptual funding paid LS3P Architects for the Highlands Project/Pre-K didn't mean the project

• See HIGHLANDS page 19

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



Divine Agenda

Rev. Bentley Manning
Episcopal Church of the
Incarnation

During the season of Easter, Christians remember and give thanks for the action of God, who overcame death through his Son Jesus Christ and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. It is a time of joy and new birth, promise and hope, thanksgiving and praise. However, this season can also give rise to feelings of uncertainty and doubt.

One of the earliest resurrection appearances recorded in Holy Scripture is Jesus' meeting with his disciples in the upper room. You will remember, however, that Thomas was not with them. Now, the circumstances surrounding Thomas's absence are not exactly clear. If pressed, I suppose he might have gone off in order to find some work, returning to his trade as a carpenter and getting on with life. Maybe he was just out on an errand, picking up a few supplies for the group, or maybe he just needed time alone, time for reflection to put all the pieces back together. But in the end, all we can say for sure is that he was not with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared.

But then, when Thomas finally gets his chance one week later, he insists rather grotesquely that "Unless he sees the mark of the nails in his hands and puts his finger in the mark of the nails and his hand in his side, he will not believe." And so, when Jesus appears again, he offers Thomas his hands and side. Then come the words that will mark this belated and questioning disciple forever: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Regrettably, Thomas' experience of the risen Lord has been understood through the centuries as the exception to faith rather than the rule. But as every one of us knows (and indeed as every other Christian from ages past has experienced), Thomas' example of faith is the rule, not the exception. Though he couldn't have known it then, Thomas's doubts, uncertainty, and demands for proof would become the norm. And yet, like the rest of us, Thomas would have to learn that faith is not a function of proof.

However much we might want to insist on the evidence, a relationship with God will never be a matter subject to empirical verification because this is not how relationships work. Very few things we cherish most deeply can be proven, making many of life's most important commitments provisional.

Still, we live in a time and an age suffering a great crisis of trust. Many in our country no longer feel like the great institutions of society are working for them (educational systems, health care services, law enforcement, the press, politicians, the church, etc.). And even for those who think these institutions are working relatively well and for the ben-

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 22

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315

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

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

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

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Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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www.cashiers.church

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Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

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Pastor Jim Kinard

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

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

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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 &

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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

Emily Wilmarth, pastor

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

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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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

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sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

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

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Rev. Ken Langsdorf

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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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Rev. Marty Kilby

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

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

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Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from April 11. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

April 11

• At 8:50 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on Chowan Drive.

April 20

• At 7:50 p.m., officers responded to a call of trespassing. When they tried to serve an outstanding warrant, to a resident on Upper Lake Road, the subject fled in a vehicle. The incident also involves kidnapping and assault with a deadly weapon.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from 4/11.

April 18

• At 2:21 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

April 19

• At 10:03 a.m., the dept. was on special assignment at a location on Main Street.

• At 10:51 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 11:06 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clubhouse Trail.

• At 2:57 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clear Creek Road.

April 20

• At 1:59 p.m., the dept. provided

public assistance at a residence on Cobb Road.

April 21

• At 11:17 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on S. Old Walhalla Road.

• At 11:52 a.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

April 22

• At 7:44 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.

April 23

• At 2:56 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Cashiers during a rescue.

April 24

• At 10:36 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Old Walhalla Road.

...HIGHLANDS continued from page 17

was approved. The money that was pulled was for the continuation of concept of the plan. That is what was voted on.

However, Breedlove said the Highlands School Project/Pre-K has always been and will always be number two on the priority list presented to the BOC.

“That has never been removed from the priority list. It is our 2nd ranking. And we have no intention of removing it from our priority list. We understand the needs of our community,” said Breedlove. “But number one is the Franklin High School. It was built in the 1950s and hasn’t had substantial renovations in years.”

Of the seven items on the original priority list presented to the BOC in January, three are left because two items – the failing Nantahala School sewer plant and the Macon Middle School sewer vent pipes represent emergencies, which need to be dealt with immediately.

The other three items are already funded.

The Macon Middle School Track will be funded with contingency money left over from the middle school renovation as well as a grant from the NC Athletic Facility Fund. The Highlands Middle School renovation – windows, floors, HVAC, and roof – will be paid for with NC Lottery

Repair & Renovation funds for \$950,000.

The three remaining projects are FHS estimated to cost \$118 million; Highlands School/Pre-K estimated at \$4.7 million and the Highlands Soccer Field which is still to be determined with mitigation assessment scheduled through the end of the 2024-25 school year estimated at \$35,000.

The board hopes the field to be renovated the summer of 2024 so it’s ready for the fall soccer season. The process and overall cost will be determined after the year-long assessment of precipitation and drainage during the dry and wet season.

The other issue that was the subject of intense discussion was the potential use of the Higdon property which is under contract with the county.

Colleen Strickland, director of Career Technical Education along with Commissioner Gary Shields suggested the property be used to expand and develop the CTE offerings for the school system.

Strickland suggested using the house and some of the property for horticulture, ag-science, animal husbandry, even a culinary component because a commercial kitchen could be installed in the house. CTE pathways have been suggested by the Business Advisory Council in hopes of preparing students

for the world of work with hands-on experience.

Though the school board and those attending the meeting were enthusiastic about the proposal, Breedlove said no one knows if the property is meant for the school system or for other county departments.

Commissioner Shields, who is also on the Business Advisory Council, wanted the BOE to commit to the CTE proposal, but board members said the use of the property is up to the BOC and though they hope it’s meant for the school system, they don’t know the county’s plan because the BOE wasn’t included in any prior discussion.

BOE Attorney John Henning suggested the board enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to let the county know that using the property by the school system in some capacity would be most beneficial but exactly what is unknown at this time.

Meanwhile, Strickland said that the Gibson family in Highlands is going to help construct a greenhouse on the Highlands School campus by doing the grading and pouring the concrete slab. Materials to build the greenhouse will be provided with CTE funds. Where it will be erected on the campus is being decided.

- Kim Lewicki



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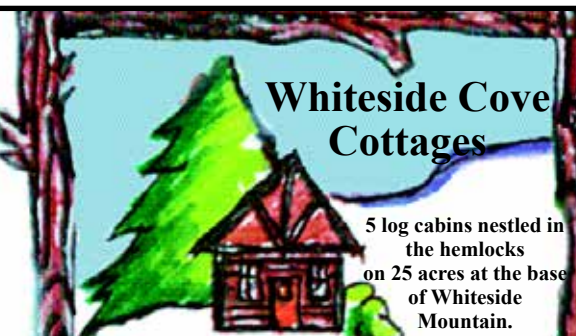


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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 22

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Bear Shadow music festival set for this weekend

New this year: 'SOBEaR Tent' offers non-alcoholic lounge area

The 3rd annual Bear Shadow music festival is set for this weekend, April 28-30, with headliners Spoon, The Head & The Heart and Jason Isbell and The 400 Unit.

A limited number of tickets for the Bear Shadow music main stage, called "Base Camp," at Winfield Farm in Scaly Mountain are still available online and will be sold at the gate.

In addition to the headliners, Bear Shadow includes performances by Lissie and Fruit Bats on Friday; Myron Elkins and Neal Francis on Saturday; and Woody Platt & Shannon Whitworth, and Amythyst Kiah on Sunday.

Gates open at 4:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and shows will be 5:30-10p.m. On Sunday, gates open at 12 noon and the performances run from 12:30-5p.m. Free shuttles from K-H Founders Park on Pine Street and the High-

lands Community Building will run continuously between Highlands and Winfield Farm from 4-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday and from 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday.

Limited on-site parking passes are still available for \$20 per car, each day for Friday and Saturday. On-site parking for Sunday is sold out.

At Base Camp, ticket holders will have access to multiple food trucks and food vendors. There will also be beer, wine, water and other non-alcoholic beverages included.

Complimentary small plates from local and regional food partners, along with selected spirits will be available for VIP ticket holders.

New 'SOBEaR Tent' lounge offers alternative to alcohol. The SOBEaR Tent is sponsored by the Counseling Center of Highlands and will feature beverage brands

like Walker Brothers, La Colombe Coffee Roasters, Heart Water, and Coca-Cola.

For more information, or to purchase tickets and parking passes, visit <https://bearshadownc.com/tickets/>. All events are rain or shine. However, in the event of severe inclement weather, event organizers reserve the right to cancel individual performances or events to maintain optimal safety for all attendees, staff, talent, and vendors.

For more information, visit <https://bearshadownc.com/information>

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 18

efit of everyone, there remains no small amount of suspicion and uncertainty just below the surface.

On one level, such skepticism can be a good thing. We need a certain amount of critical response in a healthy society - freedom to question what we are told and space to hold people and institutions accountable. And yet, as former Archbishop Rowan Williams has stressed, we have come to a point in our culture where we just assume things are not arranged for our benefit. That is, we harbor a great deal of mistrust even before we receive all the relevant information on any given subject. In such an environment, trust feels like risk and folly.

Against this cultural backdrop, the idea of putting our trust in God can seem reckless and maybe even a bit foolish. So why should we put our trust in God? For Christians, an answer can be found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, through whom the loving purposes of God have been laid bare. For in Christ, we see that the only "agenda" God has for the world is love and love alone. And if this is what God is truly about - if God's only agenda is love - then maybe we can let down our guard a bit and open ourselves up to the grace-filled promise of Easter.

Finance and Accounting Manager



The Church of the Good Shepherd, Cashiers, NC, is seeking a **Finance and Accounting Manager** to oversee all aspects of our finances, from contributions to payroll and expenses.

- Ability to interact professionally, tactfully, cheerfully and confidentially with staff and parishioners through personal contact, phone and email
- 3-4 years finance experience (with nonprofits) preferred
- Strong computer and MS Office skills required, particularly Excel
- Possesses organizational skills, a high degree of accuracy, and a strong work ethic
- An excellent communicator, orally and in writing

HOURS AND BENEFITS

- Estimated at 25-28 hours a week at a competitive hourly wage (Exact days and times to be negotiated to meet church needs and personal needs of the employee)
- Two weeks of paid vacation per year, as well as standard national holidays and religious holidays
- Benefits: Pension, Life Insurance.

Full job description available upon request.

To apply, send a cover letter and resume to:

The Rev. Rob Wood: rwood.gs@gmail.com.

Starting Date: on or before May 1, 2023.

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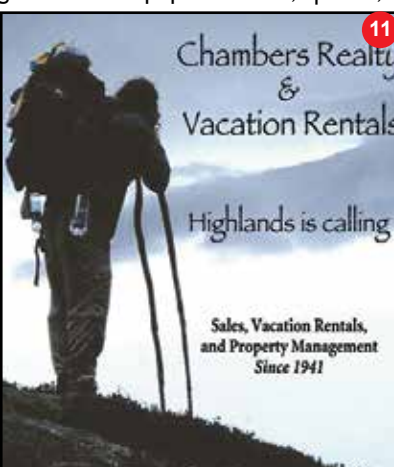
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