

Highlands Newspaper

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Volume 20, Number 4

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Thurs., Jan. 26, 2023

STRs were brought up during the Public Comment period at TB meeting

The short-term rental issue was brought to the forefront Thursday night when Cathy Henson, president of the Highlands

Neighborhood Coalition, spoke during the public comment period. Accept for the closed session items during the December and

January Town Board meetings, very little has been said since the Unified Development Ordinance

• See STRs page 12

MC BOE approves school calendars for 2023-'24

During the January meeting of the Macon County Board of Education, members approved calendars for the upcoming school year, taking into account feedback from the district's calendar committee as well as teachers and school administration.

With a puzzle of state laws dictating start and stop days, as well as number of days or hours public schools have to operate, Macon County approved calendars for next school year to the best of its ability.

The calendars have teachers returning to the classroom after summer break on August 14 for the first teacher workday. The first

• See CALENDAR page 15



The façade of the proposed ABC Store in the fire station on Oak Street would mean moving the elevation forward to connect the wings of the building side-to-side.



The proposed ABC Store façade will be reminiscent of the old fire station

ABC Store representatives, Manager Kevin Vinson and President of the board Steve Mehder, returned to the Town Board in January to present a rendition of the proposed ABC Store in the old fire department building.

The ABC Store in Highlands Plaza has run out of space and is in dire need of new digs. "This is a necessity, and the ABC Store generates revenue for the town," said Mehder. "If we don't go with this, the future of

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EV charging stations move one step closer

With construction specifics in hand, moving forward with EV charging stations in town is now in the Chamber of Commerce's court.

At Thursday's January Town Board meeting, Public Works Director Lamar Nix provided as requested an outline on what the town needed to do and how much it would cost to ready four parking spaces in two locations in town for Level 2 EV charging stations.

The sites OK'd by the town are on west Oak Street and south 3rd Street and include two adjacent spaces at each site.

Nix said with supply chain problems an issue, it's lucky that the town has the materials on hand – basically utility poles and

the ABC Store is in question." Though the ABC Store is regulated by the state, it is a town entity. As a direct beneficiary of ABC Store proceeds, with the move, the town is likely to receive \$400,000 a

• See ABC STORE page 13

• See EV CHARGING page 12

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

How we regulate STRs in Highlands

The Town's Planning & Development Director is implementing the provisions of the newly adopted Short-Term Rental Ordinance. The Town Board approved the ordinance on September 15, 2022. Since then, several questions have arisen about the requirements and enforcement of the new regulation.

The ordinance states that homes in the R-1 and R-2 residential zones, operating as short-term rentals on or before September 15, 2022, may continue at this time. However, R-1 and R-2 zoned properties that were not operating as short-term rentals before September 15, 2022, cannot rent for a period of less than 30 consecutive days. Short-term rentals are permitted in the R-3 residential zoning district and all business zones.

Our staff relies on a software program called Granicus to track short-term rentals. The software identifies short-term rentals operating through VRBO, Airbnb, and other platforms. Our staff is constantly monitoring Granicus. If the program identifies



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

an STR that wasn't operating before September 15, 2022, our Planning & Development Director sends a Notice of Violation to the property owner. Upon receiving the violation, the owner MUST contact the Planning Director and submit proof that their home was operating as an STR prior to the adoption of the ordinance. If the property owner cannot submit the required proof, a violation is determined, and a municipal citation is issued.

The new ordinance does not call for any form of registration or permit. The Granicus software is only used to track rental activity. According to Granicus, there are between 250 and 270 active short-term rentals within the town limits. Of course, this number fluctuates depending on the time of year. By comparison, the 2022 Community Plan estimates 2,223 housing units within the town's corporate limits.

The STR ordinance has additional compliance requirements for parking, number of bedrooms, noise, trash disposal, etc. These basic requirements apply to all residential properties. Those requirements are also being enforced.

Unfortunately, several rumors and misunderstandings about the ordinance and its enforcement are circulating on social media. I will address two.

First, as mentioned above, no registration or permit is required by the new ordinance. With the help of Granicus, the Planning Department is confident that they're able to track a high percentage of STRs. Also, any rental agreement for 30 days or longer does not fall under the short-term rental category; and, therefore, isn't subject to its restrictions.

Second, when the Planning Department receives an STR complaint, our Planning Director responds. First, the software program is reviewed to determine if the property has operated as an STR before September 15, 2022. If the program confirms proof of operation, no further action is necessary, and the property is determined to be a lawful nonconformity.

If compliance cannot be verified

• See MAYOR page 15

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 26-Jan	Fri, 27-Jan	Sat, 28-Jan	Sun, 29-Jan
 38°F 22°F	 39°F 26°F	 47°F 23°F	 44°F 34°F
Colder with clouds and sun RealFeel® High: 31° Low: 21°	Partly sunny RealFeel® High: 39° Low: 16°	Mostly cloudy and milder RealFeel® High: 49° Low: 23°	Cloudy with afternoon rain RealFeel® High: 42° Low: 32°

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Phone: (828) 200-1371

Email:

HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki

Reporters: Brittney Lofthouse

Brian O'Shea

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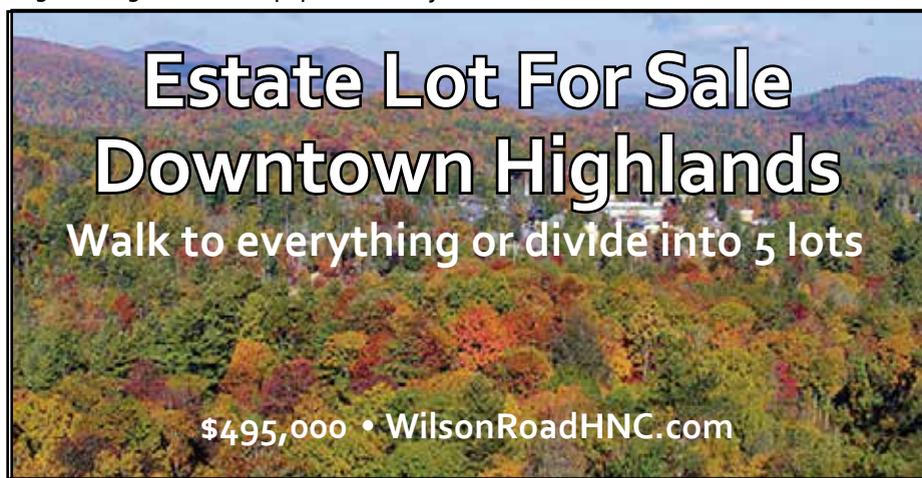
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• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

Negotiations in Real Estate

One of the most common duties of a real estate broker involve negotiations. It starts when a broker affiliates as an independent contractor with a firm, negotiating what commission splits will be as well as items like the use of office space, advertising, use of office equipment and who is responsible for what costs just to name a few.



Carl Romberg
 Landmark Realty

Negotiations occur between the broker/firm and sellers of properties. Most firms outline what commission rates they charge on different types of properties, with some being non-negotiable. Sometimes the listing price must be negotiated with the seller wanting to ask a higher price than a Comparative Market Analysis created by the broker. The broker may negotiate to start at that price, but if there are no offers within a specified period of time that the list price will be reduced to a specified amount. In general, negotiating listings isn't overly complicated but there are times that a seller refuses to do something and the broker will pass on the listing or the seller may pass on listing with a firm due to some reason.

The real negotiating begins when a buyer and seller are considering the Offer to Purchase and Contract for a property. The sales price, amount of earnest money, due diligence fee, dates for due diligence to end and closing as well as the seller occupancy period are all items that must be negotiated. Sometimes an offer is accepted as presented and many times counter offers are made back and forth until both parties reach an agreement. As a broker, it is our duty to help advise the client on each of the different items and explain the risks and benefits. Usually, the sales price is the most common item negotiated. However, the best offer may not be the highest offer depending on factors like cash and financing or the proposed closing date. All of these items are taken into consideration by both parties. As an example, the seller may want more earnest money up front. Advising the buyer, it can clearly be explained that the earnest money is not at risk during the due diligence period and will go towards the purchase price once due diligence ends. Alternatively, advising the seller, it may be more realistic to ask

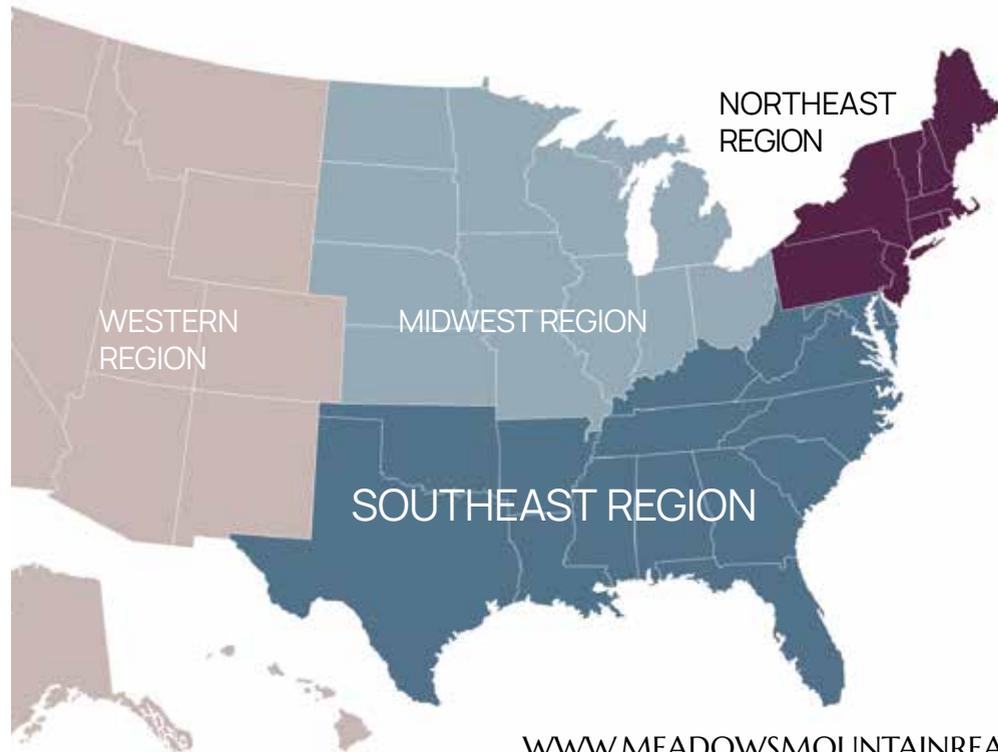
for additional earnest money at the end of due diligence, when the funds would be forfeited if the buyer did not complete the purchase. Occupancy can often be an issue as the seller doesn't want to vacate the house before closing with the buyer needing immediate occupancy because they have no where to go. Brokers help come up with a plan that will meet the needs of each party and protect their interest.

On one of my recent transactions, furnishings were a major part of negotiating. The buyer did not want the furnishings and the seller did not want to deal with anything other than removing personal items. When discussing with my buyer I explained that consignment shops and charities would be willing to take most items and for a nominal fee someone could come in and take anything remaining to the dump. Also, there would probably be some items that they would end up wanting or needing. In the end the buyer agreed to accept the house furnished and asked for the seller to concede on some other item. Usually with furnishings, the buyer wants the same items that the seller wants to keep. It has been stated here before and I will state it again: if you are selling and want to keep something, take it out of the house before it is listed to make any negotiations easier.

More often than not, after inspections are done additional negotiating is needed. The buyer may request that certain repairs be made by the seller prior to closing. Many times, that isn't possible because the seller isn't in residence or a trade isn't available to do something within the time line. At that point the buyer or seller will get estimates and possibly a credit will be given by the seller to the buyer at closing. Sometimes an extension of the due diligence period must be negotiated because additional investigation is needed or the buyer's mortgage hasn't been approved.

Mold is a very common issue here and it can cause extensive damage if left unattended for an extended period of time. We will usually obtain quotes for the remediation and a new vapor barrier or encapsulation. Sometimes it isn't a costly item, but there are times that it can be a very expensive

• See INVESTING page 8



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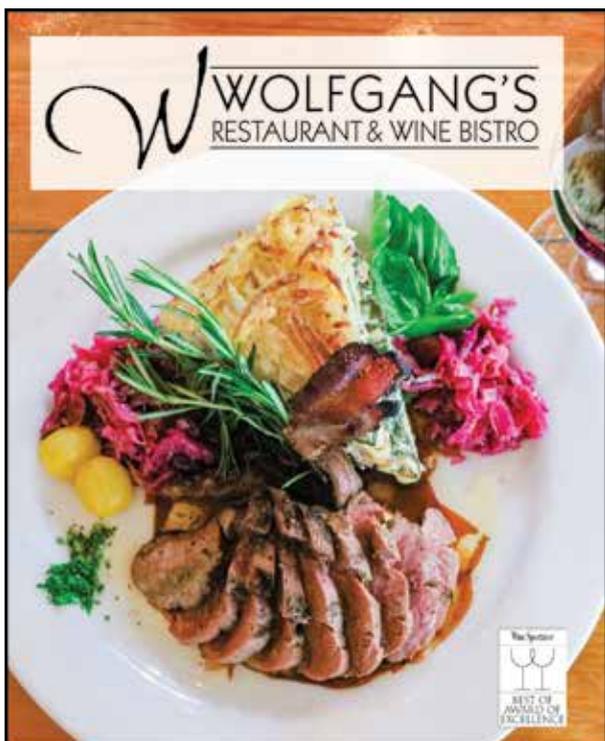


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• OBITUARIES •

Ann Nuckolls Cook

Ms. Ann Nuckolls Cook, 90, of Highlands passed away Friday, January 20, 2023. Ms. Cook was born July 25, 1932, in Greenville, SC to the late Thomas Jeremiah Nuckolls and Elizabeth Eskew Nuckolls. Ann was a homemaker and had a great love for her children, grandchildren, and her beloved dogs. She was a member of Highlands United Methodist Church and an avid Clemson fan.

Survivors include her children, Peter Cook and his wife Anne of Anderson, SC, Kathy Williams of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Chris Cook and his wife, Anita of Woodstock, Ga; and a son-in-law, Art Perry of Hendersonville, NC; grandchildren, Thomas Williams, Beth Whiteside and husband, Robert, Rebecca Cook, Ben Cook and wife, Lindsey, and Eric Anderson and his wife, Melissa; Sallie McElwain and Husband, Clay; Chris Cook Jr and wife, Emily; great-grandchildren Robbie, Anna Grace, Quinn, Thomas and Benjamin and her dog, "Taffy."



In addition to her parents Ann was preceded in death by a daughter, Sarah Elizabeth Cook, a brother, Thomas Jeremiah Nuckolls, Jr., a sister, Elizabeth Nuckolls; and her many beloved dogs.

A graveside service was held Tuesday, January 24, 2023 at Highlands Memorial Park with the Rev. Randy Lucus officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Four Seasons Hospice via the Four Seasons Foundation, 211 N Main St., Hendersonville, NC 28792 or <https://fourseasonsfoundation.org>

Online condolences can be left at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home & Crematory served the Cook family.

Willene (Heidi) Boggs

Willene (Heidi) Boggs, age 83, of Highlands, NC, passed away Sunday, January 22, 2023. She was born March 10, 1939, in Olympia, WA to the late William Louis Graythen and Mary Zorah Williams Graythen. Mrs. Boggs had worked as a legal research consultant for the gas and oil industry and worked in commercial and residential real estate. She loved fine arts, arts and crafts, restoring antique furniture, collecting antique toys and flower gardening. She was a Methodist by faith.

She is survived by her husband, Harry Boggs of Highlands, NC; stepsons, Michael P. Boggs and Jason M. Boggs both of Mandeville, LA; grandchildren, Kailey Marie Boggs of Abita Springs, LA, Elizabeth Grace Taylor of home.com.



Sudell, LA and Isaiah Margarito Boggs of Mandeville, LA; and niece, Kelly Butler of Nashville, TN.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by sisters, Julia Fay Butler and Eloise Anderson.

A graveside service will be held Saturday, January 28, 2023, at 2 pm at the Church of the Wildwood Cemetery in Horse Cove, NC.

Donations may be made to the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society, PO Box 638, Cashiers, NC 28717.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is serving the Boggs family. Online condolences may be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com

'Black Out Cancer' and HS Senior Night is Friday, Jan. 27

On January 27 Highlands Varsity Girls and Boys basketball plays Blue Ridge at home. This night will serve as two special occasions.

It is senior night with students recognized between the varsity girls and boys games.

In addition, it's "BLACK OUT AGAINST CANCER" night. Teams will be wearing their black away uniforms. Please wear black to show support for cancer awareness. Part of the game proceeds will be donated to cancer research.



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...INVESTING continued from page 4

sive and time-consuming repair. Negotiating is required to determine who is going to be responsible for the cost and when the actual work will occur. With any repair requests or cost estimates it is important to not include an improvement rather than a repair. Regarding mold, the remediation and a new vapor barrier might be considered a repair. The cost of encapsulation and addition of dehumidifiers would probably be classified as an improvement.

With commercial properties items negotiated include lease rates, utilities, taxes, repairs, lease terms and commissions.

In the end, it takes skill, patience, flexibility and creativity to successfully negotiate all the terms of the different contracts in real estate as well as the willingness of all parties to work towards a successful transaction.

Carl Romberg is the Broker-in-Charge of Landmark Realty Group's Highlands Office. Stop by his office on Main Street to say hello or reach him at 678-936-9309 or carl@landmarkrg.com.

ALL ABOUT BOOKS

• INK PENN •

Confession — I like characters of a certain age

Perhaps it's a coincidence, but the last two novels I read featured "older" characters, as in at least age 60. Could that be because I'm, ahem, in my sixties? Check out my latest reads and see what you think.

You will note that I stole the title for this column from the first book!

"Killers of a Certain Age" by Deanna Rayburn

OMG! What's not to like about this book? Four menopausal women in their sixties are retiring. The lifelong friends who worked together for 40 years as deadly assassins are looking forward to retirement—or at least they were until their employer puts out a hit on them.

They started together in 1979. Fast forward to 2018 and learn how the world has changed not only for the rest of us but also for highly trained assassins. The younger generation of clandestine operatives relies on different skills. Oh sure, these "killers of a certain age" and today's youngsters all excel in hand-to-hand combat, but the seniors aren't very good with computers or even smartphones.

The tales of their past exploits are sprinkled throughout the story, so you get a glimpse of their former prowess. It's not that they've completely fallen apart at age 60. It's just that they have creaky knees and hot flashes and don't run as fast or jump as high as they used to. But, they're still deadly.

You have to laugh as one of them pops her osteoporosis pill and admires a good-looking waiter at the same time. They're just like other menopausal women except they can throw together a recipe for poison and can use garrottes.

The book is packed with witty and pithy dialogue. Her colleagues quip about the smallest of the four who wears "wedge espadrilles that were four inches high and tied halfway up her leg with yellow satin ribbons" and bats her eyes at pool boys.

When she asks what they think her chances are with her favorite porter, her friend responds, "Maybe he has a geriatric kink. Dab a little Metamucil behind each ear and go get him, cougar."

Do I recommend this book? For sure.



Kathy Manos Penn

It's a rollicking read. You don't want to miss out on four senior women kicking butt! Not quite convinced? Here's one last teaser. If you're a woman of a certain age, you'll covet the "Menopaws" app.

"Winter Solstice" by Rosemunde Pilcher

Years ago, I read Pilcher's "Shell Seekers" and enjoyed it tremendously but never sought out her other books. Of course, back then, I found most of my books at used bookstores and didn't hunt

endlessly for particular books.

One of my newsletter subscribers recommended "Winter Solstice" as a Christmas read. She is such a fan, that she reads it every year in December. It moves from a small English village to London, to Cornwall, and on to the village of Corrydale in Scotland. Pilcher has a wonderful way with words and describes the scenery so vividly that you will feel as though you are there. I saw the waves crashing on the Cornwall coast and the snow falling in Scotland.

The book begins with Elfrida, a woman in her mid-sixties, and her delightful neighbor Oscar, who is slightly older. This is the story of their evolving relationship through the good and the bad. The story unfolds with each chapter told from the perspective of a different character. Along the way, Elfrida's niece Carrie joins the tale as does a great-niece. So, if more mature characters aren't to your liking, you will also find younger ones to entertain you.

As the book jacket says, "The December solstice is ... about hope, renewal, and rebirth," and the friendships in the story reflect that spirit. It's a heartwarming story about friends, family, and neighbors.

As I googled information about the book, I was delighted to find a Rosamunde Pilcher Winter Solstice Tour, an eight to nine-hour tour that visits the Scottish locales featured in the book. The description says it's enjoyable even if you haven't read the book, but I think fans of the book would enjoy it even more. Yet another idea to add to my neverending wishlist.

There you have it, two very different books featuring characters of a certain age. I highly recommend them both.

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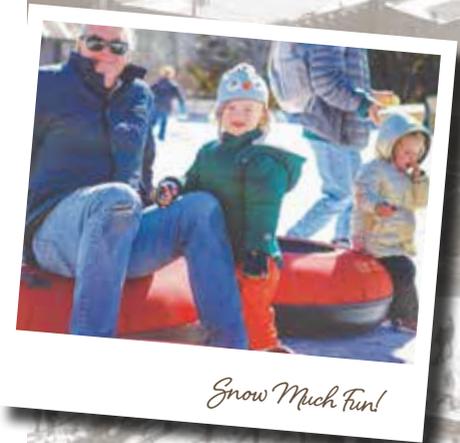
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Snowball Toss

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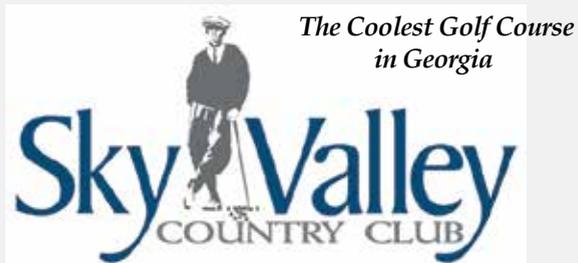
January 28 & 29

11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park

Highlands, NC





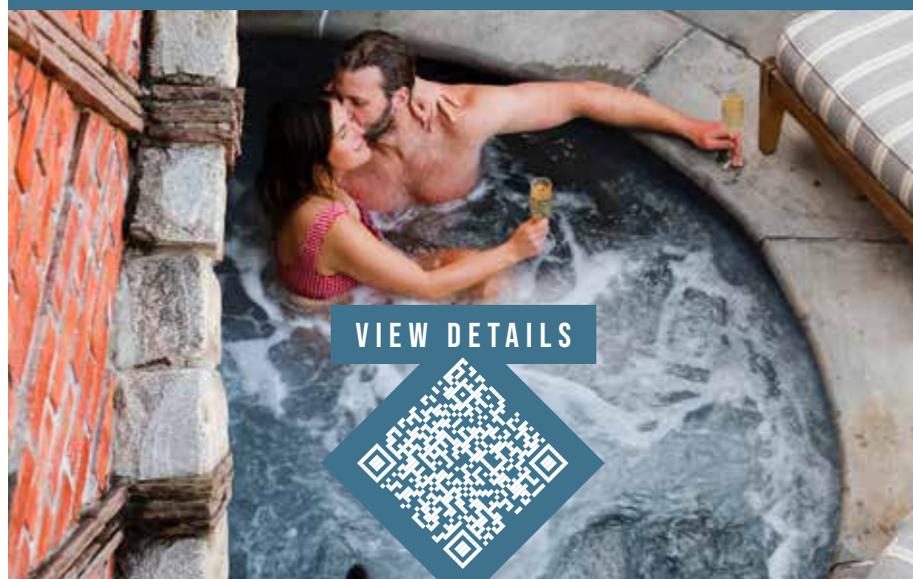
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• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

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Rec Pool Hours EXTENDED

- 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.

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 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 at 3:30 pm with a wide variety of STEAM, nature, and craft activities. For more information about any of these summer activities, contact Hud-

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

son 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.

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.

Sat., Jan. 28

• A modern retelling of William Shakespeare's classic Much to do About Nothing. Since the 1930s, the legendary family-run Hotel Messina has been visited by artists, celebrities and royalty. When the current owner's daughter falls for a dashing young soldier, the hallways are ringing with

the sound of wedding bells. However, not all the guests are in the mood for love, and a string of deceptions soon surround not only the young couple, but also the steadfastly single Beatrice and Benedick. 1 p.m. For tickets call 828-526-9047.

Girl Scout cookies are available for sale during Snowfest at K-H Founders Park on Pine Street from 1-4p.

Feb. 11

• Girl Scout cookies are available for sale at 4118 Kitchen in Highlands Plaza from 12-4p.

Feb. 25

• Girl Scout cookies are available for sale at Highlands Wine Shoppe at Main and 3rd streets from 12-4p.

Second Annual Snow Fest

Saturday, Jan. 28 & Sunday, Jan. 29 | 1 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park

It's back and even better! Bring friends and family for guaranteed winter fun (courtesy of snow blowers, if needed) in the park. A snowball toss, a snow tube merry-go-round, a snow slide, an ice-skating rink and more will be waiting. S'mores will be available for purchase and roasting, with proceeds going to the Highlands School Booster Club. Enjoy "snowga" (a twist on yoga), provided by Highlands Yoga. A DJ will provide music to add to the fun. [Watch our video](#) for more! Don't miss it.



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828-526-3909

...STRs continued from page 1

(UDO) was amended to adjust for existing STRs as of Sept. 15, 2022.

Henson suggested the town make available to the public the STR data that the town has obtained through the use of the Granicus software it uses to keep track of STRs in Highlands.

Granicus helps governmental entities monitor STR compliance which in turn helps them enforce ordinances.

According to Granicus, with the in-

crease of short-term vacation rentals, such as those advertised on Airbnb and VRBO, many communities are struggling to define and enforce regulations that preserve community character and keep communities safe while ensuring revenue collection.

Using Granicus, properties for rent can be found, hosts can be educated on how to stay compliant and though Highlands isn't a beneficiary of the room tax, it will show how much room tax is or should be collected.

"By now, the town should have some fairly accurate data on the number and location of STRs in Highlands," read Henson from a prepared statement. "Making this data available to the public, services several purposes."

Henson said the data will show homeowners the location of STRs in their neighborhoods; help STR owners self-report if they haven't been identified by Granicus; identify STRs operating illegally; and show potential homebuyers the location of STRs in case they want to buy one or avoid being near one.

"Knowing the number and location of STRs as of Sept. 15, 2022, allows the town to assess the impact of recent amendments to the UDO over time and evaluate the need for future amendments," she said.

Town Manager Josh Ward said the

Granicus software has been very helpful in identifying those properties using Airbnb, VRBO or Homestay.

However, if the town knows of STRs but can't find their history via Granicus, letters are being sent to those homeowners requesting history information regarding room tax paid, contracts issued to renters, etc., to get the evidence needed to make sure everyone is in compliance.

"Once we have that information and proof, the owner is good to go," said Ward.

Identifying illegal STRs – basically those that started up after the Sept. 15, 2022 deadline – is paramount to members of the Highlands Neighborhood Coalition who brought up those concerns during a Fall Town Board meeting.

Ward said the software is doing its job. "It's been a slow go and we continue to find stragglers."

The town amended the UDO to allow existing STRs as of Sept. 15, 2022 in R1 and R2 to continue but no new STRs are allowed in those districts. However, both previous and new Tourist Homes are allowed in the R2 district.

Ward also announced that the Huff vs. Town of Highlands case is going to court Feb. 27 in Swain County where the town intends to file a motion to dismiss.

Representatives from Save Highlands said they aren't aware of any newly filed motion to dismiss.

"The town's prior counsel filed a motion to dismiss in 2021, instead of answering the complaint, so perhaps the town is considering resurrecting that," said Jennifer Huff of Save Highlands. "What we do know is that we recently calendared our motion for attorneys' fees to be heard in February. That motion is based on the town overstepping its authority in 2021."

Huff said although the town has since acknowledged and walked back its initial position, it only did so in response to being challenged on its actions.

"We are confident in the basis of our motion," she said.

The case was once again the subject of a closed meeting during the Thursday, Jan. 19 Town Board meeting, but details of the discussion were not made available.

- Kim Lewicki

...EV CHARGING continued from page 1

transformers.

"Transformers are no where to be had across the country," said Nix. "But we have a good inventory of them."

It will take three transformers per site, so six all together. Nix said It takes a bank of overhead transformers to create the correct 3-phase voltage required for these applications.

Two new 55' to 60' utility poles will also be required at each site because the existing poles are too short to support a bank of transformers.

Commissioner Amy Patterson was all for moving ahead.

"I consider this an infrastructure upgrade to move technology in town forward," she said.

However, Commissioner Marc Hehn suggested the town consider outfitting the sites for Level 3 EV charging stations instead because the charge is faster and vehicles can go further on a charge.



Photo by Brian O'Shea

Nix said outfitting town spaces for Level 3 chargers would cost \$100,000 instead of the estimated \$25,000 Level 2.

A Level 2 charger will get an average of 32 miles of driving range per hour of charge.

A Level 3 charger that delivers between 50 kW and 350 kW power, can add 298 miles range at the high end and at 50 kW, one hour of charging a passenger vehicle will add approximately 173 miles.

This was all started by the Chamber which has a grant to set up two, Level 2 sites. The grant money will be used to outfit the sites which is above what the town is supplying.

Director of the Chamber Kaye McHan said she needs to put numbers together and get board approval before she can give specifics regarding steps forward.

- Kim Lewicki



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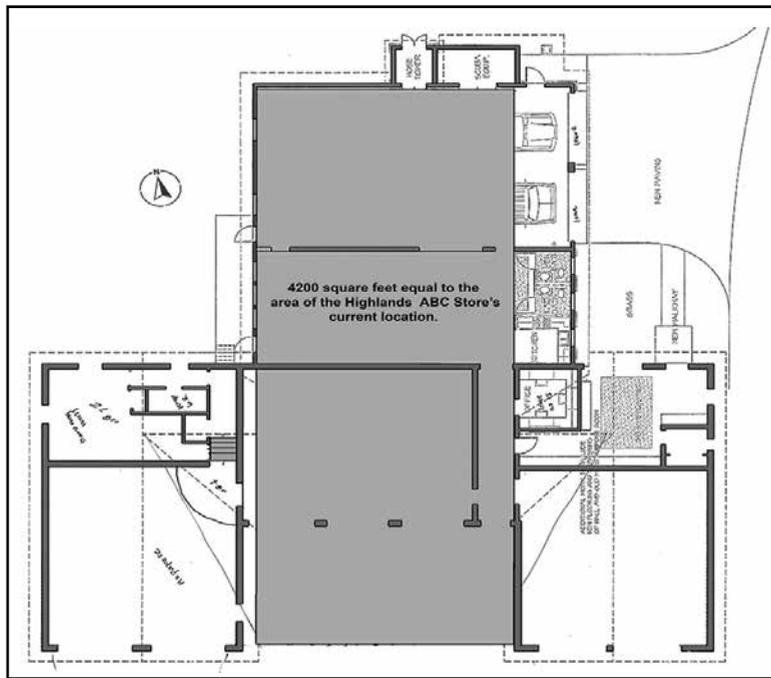
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...ABC STORE continued from page 1



The shaded area illustrates the 4,200 sq. ft. out of which the Highlands ABC Store currently operates at Highlands Plaza. The shaded overlay in on the firestation's current 6,711 sq. ft. layout.

year if the store can move to the fire station location rent-free.

The \$400,000 in proceeds aside, there are a lot of pluses to the idea.

The merchandise for commercial customers (bars, country clubs and restaurants) which represent 50% of ABC Store sales can be handled separately from the retail customers. Product could be stored and loaded apart from the retail side.

At the Highlands Plaza 4,200 sq. ft. space, the commercial stock as well as stock for the store itself, has surpassed the warehouse area with some boxes stacked in the restroom as well as on the retail floor.

"We would rather have clean, clear pathways for people to be able to shop comfortably," he said. "There is also the challenge of having enough room to pack the commercial orders and receive shipments in the warehouse side due to the lack of storage."

Adding to the problem is the first 3-door cooler which was installed in September to house Ready to Drink beverages because it takes up "sales" area of the store, said Vinson.

"That has really taken off and as that market continues to grow, we will need more coolers

and more floor space in the next 3-5 years," he said.

Since the ABC Store is a town entity it fits the deed requirements of the property – that it be for governmental use.

Town Manager Josh Ward said he has received numerous calls about using the building for commercial businesses but it's not allowed.

Architect Knight Martorell presented a rendition of the 6,700 sq. ft. site whose "look" will be reminiscent of the old fire station. He and Vinson even suggested decorating the interior walls with photos of fire department life in Highlands throughout the ages.

Mehder said knowing more space would be needed in the future, the ABC Store has been setting aside funds. It is in the position to fund 60% of the renovations of the building and can get a loan for the rest with the payoff within five years.

However, it's too early to say if the Town Board will OK the idea.

Commissioner Marc Hehn wants to consider the use of the entire five-acre tract which includes the Town Hall, Police Station, Playhouse and the Fire Department, before giving the ABC Store the green light.

Commissioner Amy Patter-

son suggested each of them think about potential uses for the site and return with ideas.

In the end, they gave the ABC Store representatives permission to consult with contractors so they can get an idea of the overall cost.

- Kim Lewicki

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From left: Coach Steve Hott, Tate Wilson, Finneas Garner, Jesus Mendoza, Aniah McKim, Paolo McRae, and Conner Hughes.

HS Varsity Swim Team finishes regular season; prepares for regionals

By Steve Hott
 Head Coach

HS Varsity Swimming & Diving
 On Friday, January 20, the Highlands School Varsity Swim Team finished its regular season at Rabun Gap Nachoochee School.

Highlands entered 11 events. There were as many as 24 in each event. Highlands finished with four firsts and six seconds.

The five Highlands Boys finished 3rd out of six teams. Overall, the team finished 5th.

High scoring honors for Highlands were shared by sophomore Finneas Garner and freshmen Aniah McKim, and Conner Hughes, with 55.5 pts. each.

Garner won the 100 backstroke came in second in the 50 free. McKim won the 100 breaststroke and came in 2nd in the 100 free. Hughes won the 200 Individual Medley and finished 2nd in the 400 m freestyle.

The regional-bound relay of Garner, McKim, Hughes and fellow freshmen Paolo McRae won the 200 medley relay and finished



From left: Aniah McKim, Paolo McRae, Finneas Garner, and Conner Hughes.

2nd in the 400 freestyle relay.

McRae scored 50.5 pts with 3rd place finishes in the 200 and 400 freestyle. Freshman Tate Wilson scored 34 pts by finishing 2nd in the 50 and 400 freestyle, and freshmen Jesus Mendoza scored

21 pts with 5th and 10th place finishes in the 200 and 100 freestyle.

The Highlands School Varsity Swim Team returns to action at the Mecklenburg Aquatic Center in Charlotte, NC on February 4.

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 ...on Bob's side • 828-526-1029

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 2 miles south of Main

...CALENDAR continued from page 1

day for students in both Highlands and Franklin will be on August 28th.

Highlands will begin their Thanksgiving/Fall break on November 20th, giving Highlands students a full week out of school for the break. Franklin area students which includes all schools in the Franklin area with the exception of Macon Early College, will begin their Thanksgiving break on November 22.

According to Highlands Principal Sarah Holbrooks, the longer break is in part because of the difficulty the school has in finding substitute teachers that week as well as student absences being high the days prior to the holiday.

Both Highlands and Franklin area schools will begin the Winter/Christmas break on December 22, which will also be the end of the second nine weeks. An important accomplishment for both Highlands and Franklin in the approved calendars, is the fact that end-of-course testing can be completed before students leave for winter break. That way, high school students can take end-of-course tests while the information is fresh on their minds, rather than after a month-long month.

Students will return for the

Spring semester on January 8 in both Highlands and Franklin with both areas coordinating the spring break holiday to be the same — the first week in April.

The school year will end for students on May 24 with the last teacher workday scheduled for June 7.

The approved calendars include the required 215 days within both calendars as well as 169 instructional days for students which equates to 1064.7 hours of instruction.

The state requirement is for districts to produce calendars with 185 hours of instruction time or 1025 hours. There are 194 teachers' days, just one shy of the state's 195 maximum and includes 11 holidays. The calendars also feature 10 leave days for teachers — state law has a 10-day minimum — and 25 workdays built into the calendar. While only nine workdays are required by state law, the workdays built into the calendar are used to accommodate weather delays and other issues that may arise throughout the school year.

Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin said that the district's calendars are in compliance with current state laws — however as is the case every year, there is a chance the state laws surrounding the calendar may

change.

While Macon County's calendars are in compliance with state law, not all districts in North Carolina follow suit. Union County North Carolina announced this week that they will be defying state law this year by starting school on August 9, ahead of the state law which mandates that "start dates [are] no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26. If a waiver is approved, the start-date can be no earlier than the Monday closest to August 19.

- Kim Lewicki

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...MAYOR continued from page 2

through the software, a Notice of Violation is sent to the property owner. At that point, the property owner, operator, or manager MUST provide any requested documentation to the Planning Director. Rental Agreements, Occupancy Tax Records, and Proof of Financial Statements are some of the required documents. Upon receiving clear and authentic records, the Planning Director can determine whether the owner was operating a short-term rental before September 15, 2022. The Planning Office will not accept a claim without supporting documents. Failure to provide the

requested documents will result in a disqualification as a short-term rental unit. Any ruling by our Planning Director can be appealed to the Town of Highlands Zoning Board of Adjustment.

I want to emphasize that the Town of Highlands has procedures in place to guide enforcement decisions. As in all zoning cases, our staff determines whether the elements of the ordinance have been met as a means to determine compliance status.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Planning Department at (828) 526-2118.

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• HIGHLANDS SCHOOL SPORTS •

Highlands JV loses to Robbinsville at home



Highlands Aniah McKim sets up on defense against Robbinsville at home on Jan. 16.

By Mason Stoltzfus
Plateau Daily News

Highlands junior varsity boys basketball team hosted Robbinsville on Jan. 16 and lost 50-32.

Highlands JV does not play on Jan. 27 when both varsity teams host Blue Ridge Early College and hold Senior Night.

Varsity girls begin at 6 p.m. and senior athletes will be recognized between games.



Highlands Gavin Small passes into the paint setting up the layup for 2 points.



Highlands Bryan Jarquin brings the ball down the court and calls a play against Robbinsville.

Lady Highlanders prevail in close game against Robbinsville



Highland Bella Wilson drains a 3-pointer.

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Highlands varsity girls basketball team hosted Robbinsville on Jan. 16 and won a hard-fought game by a slim margin ending with a 48-41 final.

Highlands next plays on Jan. 27 when they host Blue Ridge Early College and hold Senior Night.

Varsity girls begin at 6 p.m. and senior athletes will be recognized between games.



Highlands Ezra Branham on a fast break against Robbinsville.

• HIGHLANDS SCHOOL SPORTS •



Highlands cheerleader Katie Earp keeps the crowd psyched at home on Jan. 16 against Robbinsville.



Highlands B Bryson puts 2 points on the board with a lay up.

Highlands boys varsity can't seal win against Robbinsville

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Highlands varsity boys basketball team hosted Robbinsville on Jan. 16 and couldn't keep pace with the Knights losing 59-41

Highlands next plays on Jan. 27 when they host Blue Ridge Early College and hold Senior Night.

Varsity girls begin at 6 p.m. and boys begin at 7:30 p.m. Senior athletes will be recognized between games. There are no junior varsity games on Senior Night.



Highlands high school cheerleaders keeping the crowd fired up on Jan. 16 against Robbinsville.



Highlands James Earp grabs his own rebound and scores a lay up.



Highlands Landon Green brings the ball down the court at home.



Highlands Kasen Mitchell on a fast break against Robbinsville.



• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Who am I and where do I belong?



Ken Langsdorf
Lutheran Church of the
Holy Family

In times of change and transition we may ask ourselves, (intentionally or in the back of our minds) Who am I and where do I belong?

When we experience major life changes like retirement, or the death of a spouse or divorce, or moving to a new place; we may wonder about our identity in this new situation. Our lives are often defined by what we do and our relationships. When there is a significant change in what we do, our relationships or where we live; we may need time to assess our core identity and values.

When I recently when through a major life change, I spent some time in discernment. For the past 15 years I knew who I was and had my daily and weekly routines. When I completed that job, I had to find my new life.

In time of reflection, I came to see that I am more than what I do. I am more than what I have. I am more than what other people say about me.

What I found is that there is an identity I have that has been there my whole life and will never change. As jobs change and relationships change, the one constant is that I am a loved child of God. Every day, in all the changes and challenges of life, and for eternity, I am a loved child of God.

This core and foundational identity is for you too. By the grace of Jesus, you are a loved child of God – everyday and for eternity. Nothing, no change or failure will take you out of the love of God. God's forgiveness is abundant, and God's love is steadfast. No matter what, God's will never abandon you. By the grace of Jesus, you are held in the love of God forever.

No matter what is going on in our lives, we belong to God. And we belong to the family of God. This is the message we preach and live at Lutheran Church of the Holy Family. We see everyone as a loved child of God who belongs to us as fellow children of God. Each Sunday we are renewed in our identity as forgiven and cherished children of God who belong to the family of God.

If you are going through a change in life or are seeking deeper meaning for your life, know that you are welcome to join us at Lutheran Church of the Holy Family.

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315
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Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

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www.christanglicancashiers.com

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Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470
Sun. 10:45am. S.S. 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.
Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

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

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Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

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5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org
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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
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Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m.. Choir: 6p

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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Hwy 107N. • Glenville, NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson
Sunday: School 9:45a. Worship 11a & 7p. Bible Study 6p
Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed. Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road
The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily
sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.
Sunday Worship is at 9a. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376
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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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Franklin • 828-634-1312 • mountainsynagoguewnc.com.
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and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

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4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)
Wed: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

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SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212
Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Tues. noon (Latin). Thurs. 9a.; Fri.: noon;
Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Jan. 5. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Jan. 5

• At 5:17 p.m., Madison Elizabeth Roach, 28, of Easley, SC, was arrested for DUI when stopped on US 64 east and Foreman Road. She was issued an unsecured bond. Her trial date is March 15

Jan. 6

• At 10:50 p.m., John Alexander Smereczniak, 31, of Charlotte, NC, was arrested for DUI when he was stopped on US. 64. He was issued a \$1,500 unsecured bond. His trial date is March 15.

Jan. 21

• At 8:30 p.m., Julio C. Avianeda, 33, of Franklin, NC, was arrested for DUI and with no license when stopped on Raoul Road. He was issued a \$800 unsecured bond. His trial date is March 15.

• At 3:16 p.m., officers were called to a residence on Harris Drive regarding an unattended

death of a 68-year-old male.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Jan. 16

Jan. 16

• At 5:38 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Lucerne Drive.

Jan. 18

• At 12:22 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Primrose Lane.

Jan. 20

• At 1:46 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Oak Street.

• At 2:45 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a location on US 64 east.

Jan. 21

• At 5:06 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Happoldt Drive.

• At 3:16 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Harris Drive.

Jan. 23

• At 6:37 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on S. 4th. Street.

Highlands Fire & Rescue Department asks that you dispose of ashes properly

Chief Ryan Gearhart and Asst. Chief Robbie Forrester ask that ashes gathered from fireplaces or grills or fire pits be deposited in metal containers.

So far this year, there have been a few fires started due to hot ashes not being deposited correctly.

Typically, there are several each year.



From left, Ryan Bryson, Chuck Sutton and Chris Wilkes.

The Rotary Club of Highlands was honored to welcome Chuck Sutton, Executive Director of Macon Program for Progress, Inc. as its speaker of the week.

MPP is a program that sprang out of Lyndon Johnson's presidency in 1964 as a part of the War on Poverty. It is a private, tax exempt 501 C 3 company governed by a Board of Directors.

Sutton delivered an amazing presentation of all the many services provided by MPP to the many folks in the region in need of help. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals, children, and families. That help comes in the form of children's services like NC Pre-K, Head Start and Early Head Start, Extended Day Child Care, housing assistance, job training, food subsidies, home health and safety, and more. For anyone in need of these services and more, contact Macon Program for Progress in Franklin, NC at 800-563-4022.



From left, Highlands School Counselor Nicole Lui, Jayden Hughes, Brittany Damian Clemente, and Rotary President Chris Wilkes.

The Rotary Club of Highlands, as it does every month, welcomed and honored Highlands School's Students of the Month. This month's recipients of this honor went to elementary school student, Ruby Foley (not pictured), middle schooler Jayden Hughes, and senior Brittany Damian Clemente. Congratulations to these fine students!

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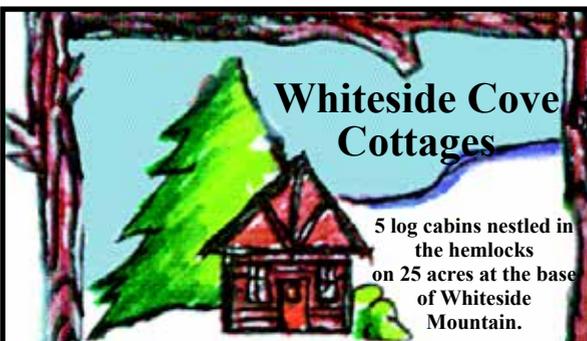
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HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS LAND TRUST IS LOOKING FOR AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. Applications must be received by February 15, 2023. Start date is May 1, 2023.

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 2

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ble for execution of strategic plans, donor education and development, land acquisition and stewardship, staff management, and office administration. The Director should embrace servant-leadership and will work closely with an involved Board of Directors and experienced staff. The full-time position includes benefits, and the salary will be commensurate with experience and comparable with non-profit executive director positions in the region.

POSITION OVERVIEW: The successful candidate will report to the Board of Directors. In addition to the HCLT staff include three full-time and two seasonal staff. At a minimum the successful candidate must demonstrate an appreciation for and curiosity about natural resources, and superior organizational skills. He or she should have experience with successful non-profits. Experience with other land trusts or other environmental non-profits is not required but would be helpful.

QUALIFICATIONS: Capacity to excel at influencing and leading the staff and the organization; Outstanding

communication skills and ability to work well with board, staff, the community and media; High executive functionality; Nature-oriented; Energetic, curious, and social; Passion for the mission and programs of HCLT; Experience in program planning and execution; Donor support and fundraising capabilities; Age-appropriate education programming; Fiscal and operational management; Environmental, property, and/or fiscal regulations

TO APPLY: Please send introductory letter and resume to: Carlton King, President, HCLT, P.O. Box 1703, Highlands, NC 28741. Or email to personnel@hcltnc.org

HCLT is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages diversity and equity in all facets of the organization's work. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other protected class. (st. 1/5)

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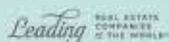


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