

Highlands Newspaper

Volume 20, Number 29

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com

Thurs., July 20, 2023

NC Child calls for legislators to fund Early Childhood Education

The waiting list at early childhood education facilities in Highlands and elsewhere in the county is old news. But when the county reneged on an architectural contract for Pre-K facilities at Highlands School which were OK'd by the previous board of commis-

sioners, the issue became a hot topic. So much so that the current MC board of commissioners back

• See NC CHILD page 13



UPS workers in Franklin rally for cause outside of UPS building.

Local UPS workers prepare to strike

By Brittney Lofthouse

For months, United Parcel Service (UPS) employees have been in contract negotiations that have seen such little movement that employees of the Franklin office have begun to prepare to strike at the end of this month.

The Teamsters Union has been negotiating the contracts of 340,000 employees with a strike date for the largest trucking company in the nation authorized by 97% of members to begin on August 1.

National negotiations be-

tween the Teamsters and UPS began April 17. Union representatives and rank-and-file members serve on the national negotiating committee.

The back and forth between UPS and the Union has produced

• See STRIKE page 17

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There is still time to file for the Town Board race

By Brittney Lofthouse

As of noon on Wednesday no new people have filed for election to the Highlands Board of Commissioners for the three open seats. But interested parties have until noon Friday to file.

So far, it's Jeff Weller, Rachel Wilson, and incumbents John

Dotson, and Brian Stiehler for the Town Board.

Keven Gabbard had filed but withdrew due to residency issues.

In Franklin, voters living within the Franklin town limits will be voting for Mayor — a seat currently held by Jack Horton,

• See RACE page 17

BOC hopes school merger will help get grant for FHS

By Brittney Lofthouse

Over the last few weeks, both the Macon County Board of Education and the Macon County Board of Commissioners have unanimously voted to support the consolidation of Union Academy with Franklin High School in the event that a new Franklin High School Facility is constructed.

For the last 22 years Union Academy has operated as its own school to serve the needs of students across Macon County as the

district's alternative learning program.

State law requires districts to operate alternative school programs or to provide educational services to expelled students in an alternative setting.

Alternative Learning Programs and Schools (ALPS) are defined by the state as safe, orderly, caring and inviting learning environments that assist students with overcoming challenges that

• See MERGER page 18

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

• HIC'S VIEW •

State legislation stalled

Before July, I was optimistic that the North Carolina Legislature would pass a budget and adjourn sometime in July; however, when the legislators reassembled on July 11, things went south very fast. Out of the blue, SB 90 was introduced. If passed, this bill will make major changes to public education in the state. Also, funding issues like pay increases for state workers and teachers emerged.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Now, I am hearing that the legislature could remain in session through August and even into September. The state budget may not get final approval until the end of the session, so there are a lot of unknowns in Raleigh as we go into late summer. State funds for Mirror Lake and the water plant will not be confirmed until a final budget is passed, and it seems the entire budget process is very fluid until the session ends. Also, during this time, other pieces of legislation, such as limiting towns to regulate STRs, could re-emerge or be attached to a budget bill.

I suspect a number of now weary legislators wish there were a state statute

similar to the one requiring towns and counties to pass a balanced budget by July 1. Such a statute would also help state agencies and schools plan for the coming year.

The July meeting for our Town Board is Thursday at 7 am at the Highlands Community Center. It can also be accessed on YouTube at a link on the town website.

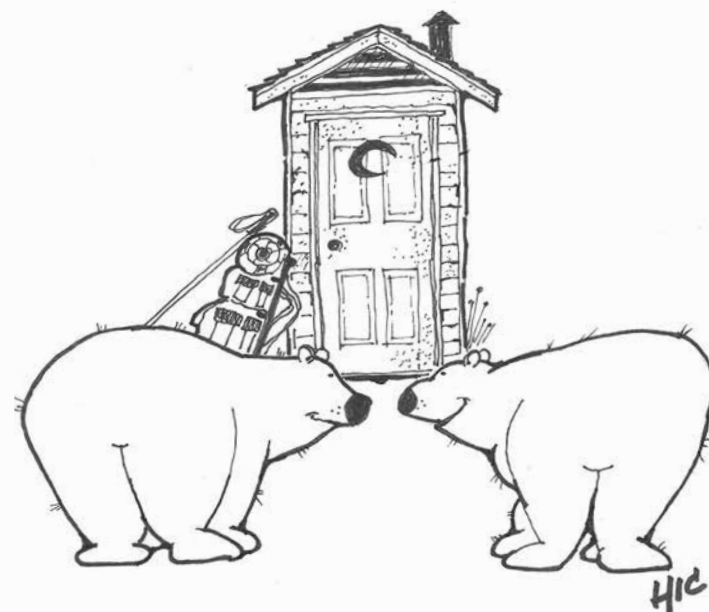
A major item will be a review of the easement request of the Shelby Place Homeowners Property Association for the sidewalk on NC 106. The town presented the association with a memorandum of understanding concerning the required easement. I anticipate several possible adjustments to the MOU before both parties enter a formal legal agreement.

The town needs to move forward with this easement process in order to secure possible grant funding that would help make the sidewalk project a reality. The Town staff and the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission staff have identified grant funds for the project, and it is incumbent that the board commits to move forward with the project in order to qualify for these funds. The total cost for the sidewalk will be somewhere between \$1million to 1.3 million dollars. Funds will come from private resources, the town, and hopefully, this state grant.

Our town attorney has drafted a new lease for the Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center building on the corner of 1st Street and Main. The board will review the latest draft lease before sending it to the chamber for their review. I anticipate final action on this lease at the August meeting.

At the Town Board meeting this Thursday, our town attorney will present a report on his assessment of our Town Board committee structure. For many years the board has had work committees to address specific issues such as public safety, land use, recreation, and finance. These committees meet and then make recommendations to the full board. Mr. Hagemann will identify options and modifications for the board to review and consider.

I hope to see you at the Town meeting this Thursday night.



"Just for fun, let's, growl."

• WEATHER •

Thu, 20-Jul	Fri, 21-Jul	Sat, 22-Jul	Sun, 23-Jul
75°F 64°F	81°F 62°F	77°F 52°F	76°F 52°F
A p.m. t-storm in spots	A t-storm around in the p.m.	Partly sunny and pleasant	Partly sunny
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High: 84° Low: 68°	High: 86° Low: 69°	High: 86° Low: 68°	High: 85° Low: 63°

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• THANK YOU •

To show our appreciation ...

Dear Editor,

The Sky Valley-Scaly Mountain Volunteer Fire-Rescue Department is hosting a community appreciation day July 22nd from 1-5p.m. at the Scaly Mountain fire station.

This day is to thank the citizens, visitors, and the communities as a whole that we serve.

In recent years we have received an outpouring of public support. This has been in addition to the already established county tax base.

Because of this generosity, the volunteer firefighters that supply emergency services to these communities have been able to go above-and-beyond "industry-standard" level of services.

Our firefighters, emergency medical

responders, and support personnel are better equipped, trained, and prepared to respond due to the support of the community.

Because of this we would like to say "Thank you!"

Please join us on July 22nd at our Scaly Mountain fire station at 169 Hale Ridge from 1 to 5 p.m. for our appreciation to you.

Events and activities that day will include a free bar-b-que dinner, a large 'bounce-house' for the kids, fire station tours, equipment and firefighting demonstrations, hands-on activities (trying on gear, spraying hoses, etc.), fire prevention items, free smoke-detector installation sign-up, and other fire and ems related activities.

For questions or further information please contact us at: 828-526-9032. We hope to see you there!

- NOTICE -

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5:30PM-7:30PM

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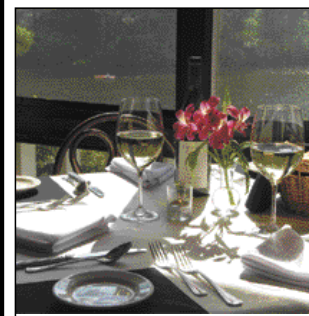
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• LETTERS •

Note:

This is a response to a Spiritually Speaking column by Fr. Jason Barone of Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church - Page 26 - Highlands Newspaper -Thurs., July 6, 2023 - entitled "My Thoughts on the LA Dodgers."

Know thyself

"...these blasphemous 'sisters,' whose pride is their shame" (Phil 3:19), have publicly disrespected my sisters in Christ, and so I respond publicly: shame on the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and shame on the LA Dodgers!" A quote from the column to the editor this past week by Fr. Jason Barone. I found the column fascinating and ironic.

I have a few points I wish you to consider. First, these Sisters of the Perpetual Indulgence are not making fun of, or ridiculing, the religious Catholic nun. They are, in fact, a group of people – just people – who band together to express how they are persecuted by others just for being who they are. The fact is, they have been routinely physically victimized by being who they are. If you care to check Wikipedia, it lists 59 incidents of crimes against this community just in America. May I remind you of 49 people who were killed and 53 injured in a shooting at an Orlando gay nightclub on June 12, 2016. So, I think the group has something legitimate to talk about.

Second, you have condemned the entire group now as a result of one show they put on, which they considered satire; you considered it both blasphemous and demonic. I consider it in bad taste as well, and certainly "not my cup of tea." For the record, I have seen worse on the legitimate stage, but I do not condemn all actors.

Third, I dare say it is both ironic and hypocritical that you condemn an entire group for one act, namely, their performance. In your column, you profess not to personally know of abuses done by nuns, and "... that was true leading up to the 1960s," but not now. Therefore, satire against nuns now is unwarranted. As a Catholic in the 1960s, I can personally confirm the truth of those stories. But that is not my point. You condemn the entire group, yet we, by the same token, are not supposed to condemn the entire group from which you speak and represent. You are a member of a group, namely priests, that has abused boys for genera-

tions. Yet, I suspect you want the people at large to respect you and your fellow priests, as you are not one of "them."

Unlike you, who has no personal experience of abuse, I, on the other hand, have personal experience – sexual abuse by my parish priest. Both my brother and I fell victim to what was seemingly common practice by many priests in those days. I have lived with the torment of those episodes for 60 years. If you wish to read about it, I suggest you check out Mulholland, John H. on AbuseLawsuit.com, you will find him on page 67 in the "M" section. (And yes, that detail was added to show the extent of the problem.) But with that, I do not condemn you or all priests for the actions of others. I do not condemn all priests, nor do I, as you wrote, "... wonder what these grown men, dressed as such in public, are doing in those same habits in private." With my experience, I guess you would not condemn me if I wondered what you were doing in that same habit in private.

Since you felt free to quote the bible in your column, allow me to do the same. "Judge not, lest ye be judged," which comes from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 of the King James Bible. I find the column ironic, as I thought the priestly group was in the forgiveness business. In closing, allow me to tell you a story a priest told me when I was a small boy; it goes like this. A man comes into the confessional and says, Father, I have sinned, I have spread lies about someone. The priest tells the man to go, get a pillow, cut it open, spread the feathers to the wind, and then return to him. The man did what he was told, return to the confessional, and told the priest. The priest then said, now go and retrieve all the feathers, to which the man said, that is impossible; they have spread too far. The priest responded, yes, just like your lies.

Thus ends the lesson.

Matthew Eberz
Highlands

It's time for less not more

Dear Editor,

I just read the July 13th edition of the Highlands Newspaper. The mayor's column regarding parking and traffic issues and possible solutions combined with the police reports listed on page 19 tells us Highlands has and continues to change and not in a good way.

Traffic and parking have both been issues for some time particularly in the summer and on many holidays. Now we have seen an increase in crime in the area. I was shocked to see several reports of breaking and entering and theft at local businesses. What has happened to our wonderful area?

While we wrestle with the issues described above the local chamber continues to create events and programs aimed at bringing more and more visitors to the area. The

chamber seems bent on MORE. More visitors, more cars and more issues normally associated with big cities. I continue to say the chamber is acting on behalf of its members but not necessarily in the best interest of the residents of the area.

I suggest a series of meetings between chamber officials and representatives of the residents aimed at both sides gaining a better understanding of what is the best way forward for all concerned.

Surely, we can't continue to see an increase in "big city" problems make their way to our area. Let's do something before it's too late.

James Riddle
Highlands

• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft •

Is this Heaven? No, this is Highlands, NC.

I promise to talk a little Real Estate in just a minute, so hang with me.

As I become what people call a "seasoned citizen" these days, I find myself in the unenviable position of having lost some friends who are now in Heaven. My parents are up there, along with some favor-

ite people I've been blessed to know throughout life. Guys like Tim Lundy, who made the finest fried chicken in America as owner of the Rosewood Market. Call me crazy, but I find myself looking up at the clouds some mornings and I can see their faces, talk to them, and say thank you for being in my life,

which makes me better at life. But they're in Heaven, and I'm in Highlands, NC. I may be the luckiest guy in the world!

If you're still reading, perhaps it's 90+ degrees where you are; the crime rate around you is rising rapidly; there are "cultural shifts" you can't quite wrap your head around; the Mayor of your town is a jerk; you're wondering how you can spend way more time outdoors versus way too much time in traffic; your spouse is over-booked, over-worked, and you guys need a date night; the air is thick with humidity, the water is stagnant, it hasn't rained much lately, and they keep cutting trees down to create more concrete. Let's face it, you need a break or some kind of lifestyle adjustment; you need a little bit of Heaven; you need Highlands!

Here are some areas of life where Highlands is a lot like Heaven (although I've never actually been there).

Highlands is a place where nearly everyone is happy (or so it seems). If you lack friendliness or struggle receiving it, you won't like Highlands. Most Highlanders have an attitude; a good one. Highlands' drivers generally don't honk their horns, unless they're having a bad flashback from being in Atlanta. If you're walking across

the street in downtown Highlands, people stop their car to let you cross whether you're a Clemson, LSU, Georgia, or Auburn fan (someone told me that Alabama fans cross the street at their own risk).

Just like Heaven, Highlands has perfect weather, clean water, fresh air, comfortable dewpoints, and the greens and blues are greener and bluer up here. You are closer to Heaven because Highlands sits 4118' above sea level. If you need to get closer to Heaven than that prior to your appointed time, all you need to do is climb a higher mountain.

"And now a word from our sponsor" (Highlands Sotheby's International)

about Real Estate. Perhaps some part of what I've talked about today resonates with you. Therefore, I'll do the "Real Estate Sales-Guy" thing and close!

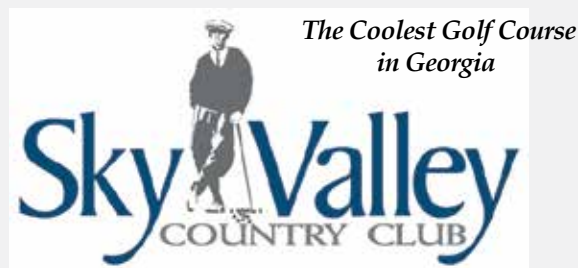
Please come to Highlands and see what I'm talking about. We will gladly show you around. If there's such a thing as drinking from the "fountain of youth" I believe this is the best place to drink it. Raising your kids here will raise their IQ as well as their "OQ" (Outdoor Quotient). A real estate investment in Highlands is well...Heavenly.

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• See INVESTING page 19



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• INK PENN •

It's my turn



Kathy Manos Penn

readers who write to me and subscribe to my newsletter.

Add to that the thrill of walking into a bookshop like Shakespeare & Co. in Highlands and seeing my books. And, yes, I'm delighted when Stuart Ferguson, the proprietor, writes to say he needs more stock.

So, what's all the hoopla about? It seems that readers are in love with Dickens the dog and Christie the cat. Bonus points if you know who those two are named for.

It's not only that they're loyal and lovable sidekicks to the main character, Leta Parker—it's that they talk to her, AND she understands them. I can't tell you how many reviewers mention that her cat and dog sound just like they think their own pets would. I mean, don't all pet parents wish they could understand their fur kids?

The series kicks off with "Bells, Tails & Murder, described below."

"She crossed an ocean to start her life over. Can she nab a killer before her quaint village becomes a graveyard?"

"Recently widowed Leta Parker desperately needs a change of scenery. Pursuing her lifelong dream of retiring to the Cotswolds, she leaves her soulless corporate hustle in Atlanta and moves to England with her talking dog and cat companions—Dickens and Christie. But she's barely begun making new friends when she stumbles across her housekeeper's body ...

"With several villagers pegged for the crime, Leta teams up with a retired English teacher and her sharp-as-a-tack octogenarian

mother to track the killer before the trail goes cold. As the not-so-friendly local policewoman elbows them out and scandalous rumors plague the tight-knit community, it's left to the ladies and their pets to sleuth for the truth.

Can Leta, Dickens, and Christie sniff out the culprit before the cute little town loses more than its charm?"

By the end of Book II, the ladies are jokingly referring to themselves as the little old ladies—LOLs. Together, they solve murder mysteries in their small village and other picturesque locales. Think "Murder She Wrote" but set in England.

What are readers saying?

- "... perfect for anyone who gets a kick out of, dare I say, late middle-aged ladies who have a penchant for getting into trouble."

- "Not your momma's cut-and-paste cozy mystery: Word nerds, History nerds and Literary Nerds will especially enjoy the well-researched details in this fun romp."

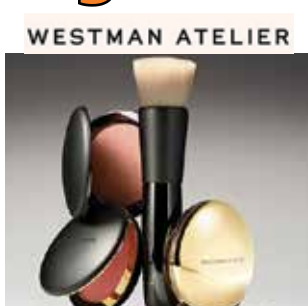
- "... humor, cozy descriptions of the Cotswolds and its charming villages, a bit of romance and two of the most unique "sleuthing" partners I've met - Dickens and Christie. What's not to like?"

Trust me, I still pinch myself when I read words like these. And I can assure you I wouldn't have gone on to write eight more books without this kind of encouragement.

Are you intrigued? Then I hope you'll run, not walk, to Shakespeare & Co. to pick up a Dickens & Christie mystery. If you have half as much fun reading these books as I have writing them, I predict you'll have a ball.

- Award-winning author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her cozy mysteries at Shakespeare & Company in Highlands, Franklin Office Supply & Gifts, and on Amazon. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com, and follow her on Facebook, www.facebook.com/KathyManosPennAuthor/.

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Foxfire Boys

JULY 14

Curtis Blackwell Band

JULY 21

Carter Gingerich and Friends

JULY 28

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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

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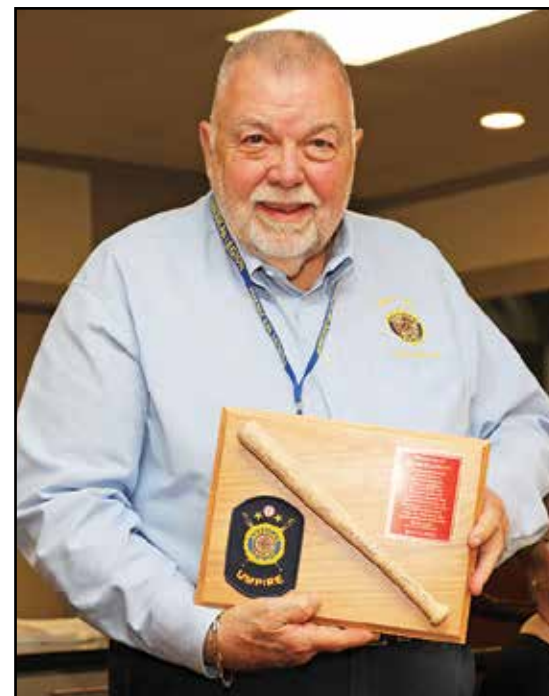
Ed McCloskey, immediate past Commander of American Legion Post 370, Highlands, NC, displays a plaque he received from fellow Post Legionnaires on Friday, July 14, at the Mountain Laurel Tennis Club.

He received the plaque in recognition of his loyalty, devoted service, and leadership in upholding the principles of the American Legion for God and Country for his almost nine years as the Post Commander.

During his tenure and under his leadership as Commander, Post 370 grew in numbers from 8 to the present membership of 68.

Also, during his tenure, Post 370 received accolades for achieving a 100 percent renewal rate for the last three years.

Paul Schowalter, an Air Force Veteran combat pilot with 30 years of service, has assumed the role of Commander, American Legion Post 370, Highlands.



Ed McCloskey, immediate past Commander of American Legion Post 370 in Highlands at a recent ceremony.

Concerts: July 22-25



Saturday, July 22 - 5 PM, Highlands | Sunday, July 23 - 5 PM, Cashiers

"The Viano Debut"

The Viano Quartet

Monday, July 24 - 5 PM,
Highlands

Tuesday, July 25 - 5 PM,
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• OBITUARY •

James Crawford Neely

James Crawford Neely, of the Satolah Community, went to be with the Lord on July 14, 2023. He was preceded in death by his parents, James Philo and Maybelle Chastain Neely, son James Leslie Neely and two brothers Carl Edward and William Philo Neely.

He is survived by his daughters, Sonya Neely and Sheila Woodall; grandson, Matthew Neely (Marella); granddaughter, Marena Woodall and sister Kathryn Vaughn (Randall).

Services will be held on Friday, July 21, 2023, at 11am at the Clear Creek Baptist Church Cemetery with Rev. Zane Talley officiating.

In lieu of flowers, Crawford requested that donations be made to the Clear Creek Baptist Church Cemetery, 612 Wilson Road, Highlands, NC 28741.

Hunter Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Crawford. Visit www.hunterfuneralhome.com to leave condolences and sign the guestbookdolences and sign the guestbook.



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 Highlands

...NC CHILD continued from page 1

tracked and voted to reinstate the contract which would make the project shovel-ready should funding become available.

According to Elizabeth Byron, senior policy analyst Early Childhood Education from NC Child, parents and providers in North Carolina shouldn't be surprised at legislators' disinterest in early childhood education (ECE) because for the past decade the state has only allocated 1% of its budget to education at any level.

As a policy analyst Byron collaborates with Early Childhood advocates to advance policies on the state level that provide sup-

port to make sustainable change for NC's childcare system.

She came to Highlands recently to present a "childhood education map" to local early childhood providers, employers who say the lack of childcare affects their ability to hire and retain employees and others interested in finding a solution to the problem.

"The aim is to work with people to find solutions to address this crisis," said Byron. "The mission of NC Child is to build a strong North Carolina by advancing public policies that ensure all children regardless of race, ethnicity and place of birth have the op-

portunity to achieve to their full potential."

And that starts with ECE. But why care? she asked.

"It's more than school readiness, it's the foundation of children's lives," said Byron. "Children who get a high-quality childcare experience go on to find success in grade school, earn higher marks on reading and math tests, graduate on time earn higher wages, are healthier physically and mentally, have stronger families while building the next generation workforce," she said.

• See NC CHILD page 16

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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

POOL SCHEDULE

• Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri., 6-9:45a, and Sat., 10a-11p - 6 lanes.
Water Aerobics: 18 yrs plus, Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers. Public Swim Mon. thru Thurs. 11a-7p; Fri. and Sat. 11a-6p and Sun. 1-6p. For info, call 828-526-1595.

ONGOING

• The "Kids Hike Highlands" trail passport program has been refreshed for the 2023 season. pick up a copy of the Kids Hike Highlands passport map at one of the four prize locations or you can download a copy at www.highlandsbiological.org.

Mon.-Fri.

• Nantahala Tennis plays at the Highlands Rec Park 9a-1p.

Mon-Wed, Fri-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

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 5-6:30pm 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. 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.

Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, held on the

first Wednesday of each month at 11AM. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health topics of particular interest to them, but all ages are welcome to attend.

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 info, call 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.

Tuesdays

• At Hudson Library, Nature Kids on selected Tuesday mornings. For more info call the Hudson Library at 828-526-3031

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers - Tuesdays from 5-6:30 PM. Facilitated by Sam Renken, this group has a simple mission: to foster and provide consistent community for local writers thereby giving writers of all ages



*Saturday, July 22 & Sunday, July 23, 2023,
 10 am - 5 pm each day*

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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

and genres the opportunity to write, read, revise, and present their work to the group.

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

Tues. & Thurs.

• Zumba class with Gay Chaplin 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

Thurs. through Aug. 10

• Highlands Biological Foundation's free Zahner lectures at the Highlands Nature Center (930 Horse Cove Road) at 6 p.m. To preview HBF's full Zahner lecture lineup, please visit www.highlandsbiological.org.

Thurs-Sat.

• Highlands Historical Society Museum at 320 N. 4th Street is open 10a to 4p through October.

Mountain Findings Thrift Store on Spruce Street is open 10a-1p through October.

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, Family Storytime continues throughout the year on Thursday mornings at 10:40 AM.

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

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Chair Yoga – from 4-5 PM. If you are interested in greater strength and flexibility but have difficulty getting up and down from a sitting or reclining posture.

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Gentle Mat Yoga – from 5-6 PM. Looking for greater strength? Join Dana Thiele at the chapel for Gentle Mat Yoga on the Deck. With more than 20 years experience,

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

St. in their community room/909 chapel. We serve breakfast at 9 AM and hold our monthly meeting at 10 AM. We invite ALL veterans to attend - email ncpost370@gmail.com for more information or just join us at 9 AM on the 3rd Saturday of the month.

Sundays

• Church in the Wildwood Hymn Sing Sundays 7-8 p.m. through Sept. 3. 828-506-0125.

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Sunday Service: 10 AM Sunday Morning. Stick around for visitation and coffee hour immediately after service. (Coffee hour is replaced by potluck dinner the 1st Sunday of each month).

Sat., July 20-22

• PAC fundraiser. Satulah Mountain Home & Garden Tour 10 a.m. and 12:30-3p. five homes and gardens found on historic Satulah Mountain. Tickets are \$125 each. Shuttles run from the PAC every 15 min. starting at 9:45am. Last shuttle departs the PAC at 2pm. This is a walking tour so wear good walking shoes; rain or shine event.

Fri., & Sat., July 21 – 22

• At The Bascom, the 12th Annual Summer Pottery Show! From 10 am – 5 pm. Join us for the summer installment of the 12th annual pottery show. Enjoy beautiful handmade pottery including both functional wares and sculpture. All work is made by studio members and will be available for purchase.

• At Peak Experience, Suzy Landa Jewelry Trunk Show. Meet the Artist Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 2820 Dillard Road, 828-526-0229

Sat. and Sun., July 22-23

• Summer Colors Fine Art Show – A Rain or Shine Fine Art Exhibition and Sale presented by the Art League of Highlands-Cashiers (ALHC). 10 am to 5 pm each day. Indoors at the Sapphire Valley Community Center, 207 Sapphire Valley Rd, Sapphire, NC 28774. (Just east of Cashiers on 64) This is an exhibition and sale of works by more than 20 local and visiting artists featuring original works in oil, mixed media, encaustic and watercolor, as well as work by woodworkers, glass artists and more. In addition, live, pop-up music performances are planned throughout the weekend along with a kids' studio for budding artists.

Sat., July 22

• The Scaly Mountain fire station at 169 Hale Ridge is hosting an "Appreciation Day" from 1 to 5 p.m. Events and activities that day will include a free bar-b-que dinner, a large 'bounce-house' for the kids, fire station tours, equipment and firefighting demonstrations, hands-on activities (trying on gear, spraying hoses, etc.), fire prevention items, free smoke-detector installation sign-up, and other fire and EMS related activities. For questions or further information please call: 828-526-9032.

• Soiree for Pre-K at the Vineyard at High

• See **EVENTS** page 16

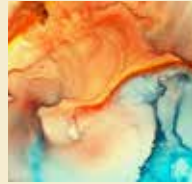
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Upcoming Program Highlights



Art Workshop: Botanical Art and Graphite Rubbings

Presenter: Norma Hendrix, Tuesday, July 25, 1:00-4:00, \$100/\$110
Learn the art of Frottage, or "Rubbings," in this hands-on art program!



Art Workshop: Intro to Alcohol Inks

Presenter: Mary Cavaoli, Wednesday, July 26, 1:00-3:30, \$80/\$90
Try your hand at painting with highly pigmented, fast drying alcohol inks! Fans of watercolor will love this workshop!



Cocktail Reception and Author Book Talk with Carolyn Newton Curry: "Sudden Death - A Novel."

Thursday, July 27, 4:00-6:00, \$70/\$80
Join author Carolyn Newton Curry at a beautiful private home for cocktails and conversation about her latest novel, "Sudden Death."



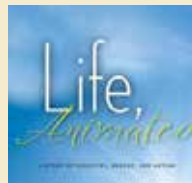
College Football Preview

Presenters: Tony Barnhart and Bill Curry, Friday, July 28, 10:00-12:00, \$35/\$45
Join football legends Tony Barnhart and Bill Curry for a preview of the upcoming season!



Tales From the Garden

Presenter: Dr. Allan Armitage, Tuesday, August 1, 2:00-4:00, \$30/\$40
In this lecture, Dr. Armitage will educate and entertain with his riveting tales from the garden.



Life, Animated: A Tale of Autism, Hidden Potential, and Love

Presenter: Ron Suskind, Friday, August 4, 2:00-4:00, \$30/\$40
Join author and filmmaker, Ron Suskind, for a powerful presentation on neurodiversity and how Disney films unlocked a whole new world of communication for him and his son, Owen. Ron's 2016 documentary feature, "Life Animated," was nominated for an Academy Award, and won multiple Emmys.

To register for these and other CLE programs, please visit clehighlands.com

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• EVENTS •

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July 28-Aug. 19

• "Rock of Ages" at Mountain Theatre Company now in residence at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street For tickets go to www.mountaintheatre.com.

Tues., July 25

• At Hudson Library, at 10:15 AM, Highlands Nature Center will be at the library to present a special program geared toward the 5-and-under crowd. The July 25 Nature Kids program will feature Flowers and Bees! Hands-on fun is guaranteed.

Thurs., July 27

• At Hudson Library, at 3:30 PM, the library welcomes Big Bang Boom! There will be dancing, singing, and lots of fun! Big Bang Boom is a band made up of three dads playing parent-friendly kid music. This is a high-energy show, and both parents and children will find it hard to stay in their seats!

...NC CHILD continued from page 13

There are 700,000 children ages birth to 5 years in NC which represents 1/3 of all children in North Carolina with the youngest children making up a large part of the population.

"This means we should be investing in the next generation," said Byron.

Currently, there are 225,000 children enrolled in 5,500 licensed childcare programs either in centers or homes.

"But that number represents 40% of the number of children in the state so the majority of our children aren't in a licensed program," she said. "They are cared for at home or at the home of a friend or family member."

Most parents of the children in programs are working, whether in a two-parent or in a single-parent home.

"The fact is, 65% of all children have parents who are working which means the need for care is pretty large," she said. "It's actually an economic issue."

She said research indicates that reliable access to childcare can generate \$79,000 over a lifetime for women, in particular. Furthermore, the lack of childcare hurts the US economy to the tune of \$122 billion lost in earnings and productivity.

Byron said In NC 75% of voters, regardless of party affiliation, see the lack of childcare as a serious problem but so is the cost. The cost for childcare averages \$9,254 per year for a family whereas it costs \$7,220 per year at a 4-year NC university and \$15,132 per year in mortgage payments.

"This is the time to come together and to come up with solutions. The earlier we invest the higher return we see. For every \$1 we put into early childhood programs, there is a 13% return on investment for our most disadvantaged children," she said.

There has been some movement during the 2023 Legislative Session for ECE.

• An increase to the subsidy reimbursement rate has been included in bipartisan bill HB343/SB288 with an appropriation of \$24M. The House budget sets a recurring appropriation of \$11.15M with \$75M recurring in the Senate budget.

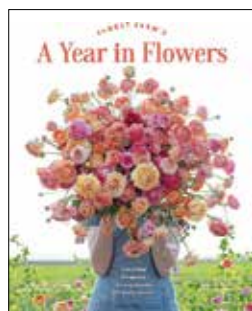
• Still possible is the extension of compensation to Early Child-care Education teachers. So far it's partially included in the Senate budget where it's suggested that unused ARPA relief funds extend compensation grants another six months through June 2024.

"That's something but it isn't new money and is \$200M short of what is needed," said Byron.

Also pending is an increase to Smart Start's annual allocation with \$5M in recurring funds in the House budget and \$1.5M in the Senate as nonrecurring funds, designated for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Budget negotiations continue while ECE advocates push for additional funding.

- Kim Lewicki



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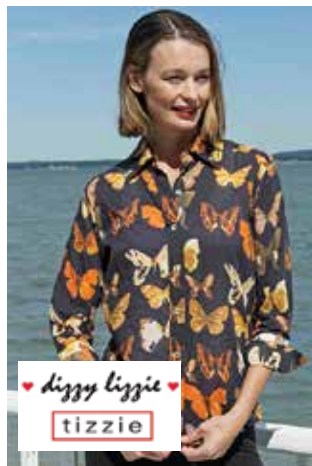
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...STRIKE continued from page 1

some compromise, however this week both entities walked away without a resolution with just over two weeks left to reach a deal.

The UPS Teamsters National Master Agreement is the largest private-sector contract in North America. Full- and part-time UPS Teamsters are working in lockstep for a new five-year agreement that guarantees higher wages for all workers, more full-time jobs, an end to forced overtime and harassment from management, elimination of a two-tier wage system, and protection from heat and other workplace hazards.

UPS carries just under 10 percent of America's gross domestic product and moves an average of 20.8 million US packages a day in 2022.

UPS Teamsters have previously demanded a better contract and improved working conditions.

Back in 1997, around 185,000 UPS workers went on strike for 15 days. This strike caused major disruptions in delivery services and put a strain on FedEx and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). However, the workers were successful in gaining higher starting wages, additional benefits, and the creation of thousands of new full-time positions.

According to a statement from the Teamster Union, despite the Teamsters having reached a consensus on 55 non-economic issues with the company on June 19, UPS has continued to seek a cost-neutral contract during economic negotiations.

"The world's largest delivery company that raked in more than \$100 billion in revenue last year has made it clear to its union workforce that it has no desire to reward or respectfully compensate UPS Teamsters for their labor and sacrifice," said the release.

The crux of the issue is over employee compensation, with the last Union claiming that the last offer from UPS only offered minuscule raises and wage cuts to traditional cost-of-living adjustments.

"The largest single-employer strike in American his-

tory now appears inevitable," said Teamsters General President Sean M. O'Brien. "Executives at UPS, some of whom get tens of millions of dollars a year, do not care about the hundreds of thousands of American workers who make this company run. They don't care about our members' families. UPS doesn't want to pay up. Their actions and insults at the bargaining table have proven they are just another corporation that wants to keep all the money at the top. Working people who bust their asses every single day do not matter, not to UPS."

A strike by UPS workers would undoubtedly impact the entire economy, causing devastating disruptions to the supply chain in the U.S. and other parts of the world.

"We have an economy today that is reliant on parcel delivery and no one in the game handles more packages per day or provides better service than Teamsters at UPS. Our members are fighting for a post-pandemic agreement that honors the sacrifices they made to keep this country moving during the last several years," said Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman. "Time has run out for UPS to give workers that honorable contract. The Teamsters repeatedly told the company from the beginning of this process that there would be no extensions. But UPS has sat on its hands and chosen to turn its back on these workers. Come August 1, it's going to be damn hard for UPS to ignore us any longer."

A strike's impact would result in a reduction in the speed of goods transportation, leading to anticipated package delays, increased shipping expenses, and possibly higher prices for goods. While big businesses may not face as severe consequences unless they heavily depend on UPS—which is the case for many small businesses.

FedEx says its priority is to protect its existing customers and is advising shippers who are considering moving their business to FedEx to do so now, according to a news release Thursday.

...RACE continued from page 1

and three council seats which are currently occupied by Joe Collins, Mike Lewis, and Adam Kimsey. Both Collins and Lewis have filed for re-election to their seats.

Jack Horton has filed for re-election but as of press time, Adam Kimsey hasn't filed for reelection to the Franklin Town Council.

Not only will new officials be elected in towns around North Carolina this fall, beginning with the 2023 municipal elections, North Carolina voters will be asked to show photo ID when they check in to vote for the first time.

Both the Franklin Town Council and Highlands Commissioners are municipal offices serving their respective towns — and are separate than the Macon County Board of Commissioners, which are elected to serve the county as a whole. County commissioner seats will not be on the ballot this fall.

To file for municipal office, a candidate must:

- Be 21 years old by Election Day.

- Be a registered voter of the municipality at the time they file for office. If not already registered, they can register at the time they file their notice of candidacy.

- Reside within the district or ward for an office that is elected by district or ward.

- File a Municipal Notice of Candidacy (Fillable PDF) with their county board of elections and pay a filing fee set by the municipality (or submit a petition in lieu of paying the fee).

- File an organizational report for the candidate committee with the county board of elections within 10 days of filing a notice of candidacy or within 10 days of organizing the candidate committee, whichever occurs first, and comply with all other campaign finance requirements.

- Disclose any felony convictions. A felony conviction does not preclude holding elective office if the candidate has completed their felony sentence.

The 2023 municipal election will be held on Nov. 7.



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...MERGER from page 1

may place them “at-risk” of academic failure. The goal of each program and school is to provide a rigorous education while developing individual student strengths, talents, and interests.

Union Academy (UA) is located in Franklin next to South Macon Elementary and serves students in all parts of Macon County including Highlands and Nantahala.

Union Academy Principal Brian Moffitt explained to commissioners last week that since the inception of UA in 2001, students have attended the alternative school for many different reasons. Sometimes when a student transfers to the Macon County School system from another state or county that isn’t on the four-by-four block schedule, credits don’t line up, and it can be extremely difficult to come into Franklin High School.

Another reason students attend UA is because a parent and/or student requests the school due to smaller class sizes. Attendance and behavior are two other reasons students attend UA, with behavior being the lowest reason why students attend the alternative school.

Macon County Board of Education member Diedre Breeden noted that while the grant application might have been what initiated the idea of merging the schools, she believes it would be in the best interest of the students regardless.

“I know that while some of the grant discussions have led to maybe some of the consolidation discussion, my personal belief is this is what’s in the best interest of our students,” said Breeden.

Outgoing Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin said to the board of education in June, “I believe it was in February when we began to look at the possibility of consolidation to put us in a better position to win that needs-based public school grant. One of the qualifiers for the grant is consolidation of two schools.”

Highlands Board of Education representative Hilary Wilkes said in June after learning more about the advantages of combining the schools, she supports moving forward.

“I think we can also report from the Liaison Committee that we had a very extensive meeting about, specifically, the merging of the two schools ... I had some doubts, but after coming out of that meeting, it really did seem like there was a consensus that it was the right thing to do, going forward – even without the grant being involved – I think it’s going to be the best choice,” said Wilkes.

Macon County Commissioner Gary Shields told his fellow board members last week that creating a “school within a school” would benefit students while increasing the district’s chances of securing grant funding to build the facility.

“My support of the FHS project is not hidden anywhere; I am very much for that project,” said Shields. “However, a piece of this project deals with the grant monies, \$50- to 60 million dollars in grant perks. To get that grant money, we have to develop a concept of a ‘school within a school,’ merging UA into FHS so that all students will have the same opportunities.”

Macon County Schools new superintendent Josh Lynch explained the consolidation would open up new opportunities.

• See MERGER page 22

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Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315
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Wednesdays: 6 pm Bible Study, Prayer, Potluck
Thursdays: 10 am Healing Eucharist

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Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

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

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Wednesdays: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mondays
4:30pm, Tuesdays 10am; Men's Bible Study: Wednesdays &
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am in Sanctuary, Wed: Healing Eucharist 12 pm in Chapel, Morning
Prayer: Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in Chapel

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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; Women's 10:30 am

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

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

July 11

• At 1 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza.

July 12

• At 2:35 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident in the August Produce parking lot on US 64 west.

July 13

• At 12:20 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at the intersection of NC 106 and Main Street.

July 14

• At 4:20 p.m., officers received a report of shoplifting at Potpourri on Main Street where about \$80 worth of jewelry was taken.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from July 11.

July 11

• At 10:50 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clear Creek Road.

• At 12:43 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clear Creek Road.

• At 8:17 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

July 12

• At 7:35 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Laurelwood Ridge.

July 13

• At 12:21 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.

• At 12:44 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Webbmont Road.

• At 1:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of smoke at a location on Oak Street.

• At 2:39 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clubhouse Trail.

July 14

• At 3:32 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Skyline Lodge Road.

July 15

• At 12:44 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Split Rail Row.

• At 8:42 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

July 16

• At 3:11 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to Lower Lake Road.

• At 8:37 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

• At 10:22 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

...INVESTING continued from page 8

(that's Heaven without the "e"). By the way, you can still get Tim Lundy's famous fried chicken at Rosewood Market every Saturday...(thanks Tim, hope you're enjoying the view up there). I'll close with an excerpt from a very famous speech called "The Sermon on The Mount" that goes like this; "You are the light of the world, a town built on a hill cannot be hidden."

(Matthew 5:14).

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...MERGER continued from page 18

portunities for Union Academy students.

"Currently, if we offer programs for UA students at FHS, transportation becomes an issue; when transportation becomes an issue so does the loss of classroom time and time on task, and instructional time becomes a major issue," said Lynch. "Traveling to and from the schools really cuts into the learning and impedes that learning greatly. This is one barrier that would be mitigated if the merger did occur, and you have

the consolidation."

Moffitt, who was recently appointed as UA principal following the retirement of Diane Cotton, is encouraged by the possibility of a merger.

"From my experience as an educator over the last 17 years, I have come to believe that all students should be given hope, opportunity and access," said Moffitt. "Merging UA and FHS, provides the greatest amount of access for our students."

The school consolidation would only occur if a new facility is built for Franklin High School.

Scoring for the \$50-\$60 million state grant Macon leaders are hoping to get for the new construction is based on a multitude of factors with school consolidation being one.

If the county does not get the grant and a new Franklin High School facility is not constructed, then the two schools will not be merged.

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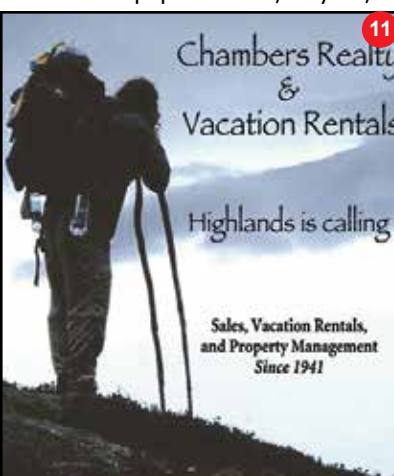
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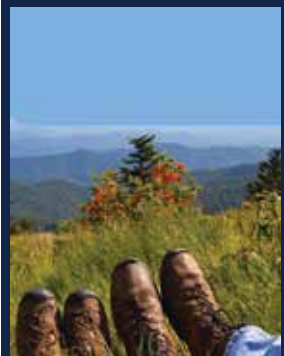
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