

# Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., March 23, 2023

## MC residents urge commissioners to reconsider canceling HS project

By Brittney Lofthouse

When the Macon County Board of Commissioners voted to cancel an active contract for

the design concepts for renovations at Highlands School that had already been fully budgeted for and funding allocated, they did not

just halt plans for two new pre-k classrooms. Their vote also cancelled the designs for the needed

• See PROJECT page 8

## Govenor's signature is last step for Medicaid Expansion

By Brittney Lofthouse

North Carolina is one signature away from no longer being on the list of a handful of states that have rejected Medicaid Expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

Expansion cleared the NC House of Representatives Wednesday afternoon in a concurrence vote, sending the bill to Governor Roy Cooper's desk for his signature before becoming official.

In a near unanimous vote, House Bill 76 passed the NC Senate last week – with an amendment to the bill in the Senate, House leaders had to take up the bill on a concurrence vote,

• See MEDICAID page 16



Community hears stories of H-C Hospital's emergency move from the Peggy Crosby Center to the current campus 30 years ago due to the Blizzard of '93.  
- Photos by Brian O'Shea

## H-C Hospital celebrates 30th anniversary

By Brian O'Shea

Plateau Daily News

Members of the community gathered to recognize the 30th

anniversary of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital on March 15.

HCH CEO Tom Neal spoke about how far healthcare has come

on the Plateau since the first hospital was created in downtown Highlands at the Peggy Crosby Center

• See HOSPITAL page 15

## Citizens rail about tax appraisals

By Brittney Lofthouse

Citizens of Macon County stacked the public comment period of the Macon County Board of Commissioners last week to voice their anger surrounding the recent reappraisal process.

In January, Macon County Tax Administrator Abby Braswell presented to commissioners that after the completion of the 2023 reappraisal, the total taxable property value in Macon County is \$12.6 billion, nearly a \$5 billion increase over 2022.

The increase in total taxable property values is a result of the property revaluation process, which all counties in North Carolina are required to undergo every 8 years.

According to North Carolina General Statute, every county must revalue all property (land and buildings) to its current market

• See APPRAISALS page 22

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

## • HIC'S VIEW •

### Town Board roundup

At last Thursday's meeting, the Highlands Town Board approved a number of items that will now move forward. Let me review several major decisions that were made.

First, the board approved the new leases for the HAM Radio and WHLC antenna located on the town's Big Bear Pen Tower. These leases will now be published in the newspaper during a 30-day period before the final lease can be signed.

Second, the board approved the placement of the Highlands Greenway new way-finding signage throughout town. The greenway directions will be placed on 5" x 5" posts at the height of four feet. These signposts, a long-awaited improvement, will help folks better find and navigate the greenway.

After signage was approved, I encouraged the greenway board to ask the county to provide funding for future improvements. The county commission has on several occasions provided funding for the greenway in Franklin, but never have they



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

provided funding for the Highlands Greenway. There needs to be equitable support for our greenway since Highlanders represent a major portion of the county tax base.

The board also approved \$5,500 to survey the portion of the proposed NC 106 sidewalk that would be located on the Shelby Place Homeowners' property. The homeowners are requesting a specific location for the walkway in order to make a final decision. The survey

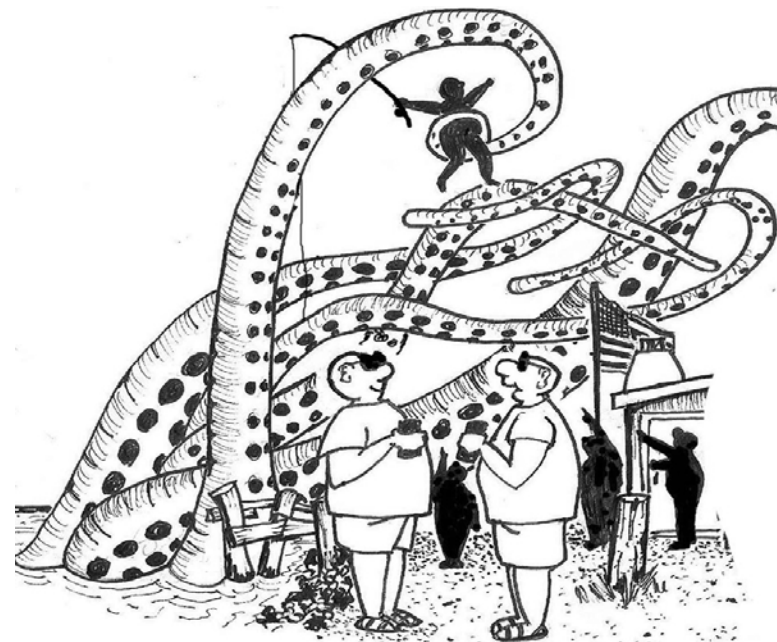
is an important step in the town securing an easement and building the sidewalk.

Final approval was given to the ABC Board to begin the conversion of the old fire station to a new ABC Store facility. The ABC Store is a state-controlled operation owned by the Town of Highlands. In accordance with state statutes, the town board appoints a five-member ABC Board that is in charge of the total store operations. In North Carolina, ABC stores sell all spirited alcohol (liquor) in a designated service area, i.e., The Highlands Township. Bars and restaurants have to purchase liquor from the Highlands ABC Store. Both these components will be enhanced at this new facility.

The ABC Board has retained substantial funds to make the conversion and begin operations at the new location in a short period of time. This new facility will generate several hundred thousand dollars yearly in additional town revenue.

The board also approved several budget amendments. Fifty thousand dollars was approved for an extensive study of our electrical grid. A similar study of over \$200,000 was approved to evaluate the condition of critical points in our main sewer lines. Given the recent sewer line failure, this study hopes to identify any additional problems.

Finally, the town staff and the fire chief were given the go-ahead to begin staffing the fire department with full-time personnel. This staffing can be accomplished without raising the fire tax at this time or in the near future. Also, approved was the immediate hiring of additional seasoned electrical linemen. The new linemen will replace a number of veteran linemen who will be retiring.



"Dredging Mirror Lake was going just fine until this nonsense."

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 23-Mar	Fri, 24-Mar	Sat, 25-Mar	Sun, 26-Mar
70°F 50°F	71°F 52°F	67°F 43°F	65°F 50°F
Partly sunny	Mostly cloudy and warm	A shower early in the morning	Sun followed by clouds
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## • INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft •

### Need a Reason to Invest in Real Estate? Here are 10

**H**ave you been considering if it's the right time to be investing in real estate?

#### 1. Potential for long-term appreciation and value growth

Have you appreciated your home's appreciation? Depending on the latest tax appraisal of your property, you may be elated to find how much your property's value has changed in the last four years. With the tidal wave of sales in the last three years, we should have seen it coming.

#### 2. Passive income through rental properties

Whether you are buying a home to use as a short-term, vacation, or long-term rental, you must understand that buying a home with the expectation that it will pay for itself is a 99.9% false hope.

Yes, you can make money, but if you have a mortgage, HOA dues or rental restrictions and home management fees, you will net less. Throw in the known monthly expenses such as utility bills, internet, lawn care, gas or oil, and pest control, and well, you get the picture.

Two other large annual expenses are your home insurance and property taxes.

The good part about renting your home long-term is that the main expenses you will have are your insurance, taxes and any HOA fees. You can structure your rental base to help make sure those are covered by your expected rental proceeds. The renter is responsible for all utilities and the exterior. They should get renter's insurance if they have their personal property in your home.

The bad side: you don't get to use your home. (Of course, we can handle that. Buy another home for you to use. Wink. Wink.)

Short-term Rentals have been under fire all over the country as if they're a bad thing. They aren't. If you go to a family reunion where there's a huge spread of food and you get food poisoning, it doesn't mean all family reunions are bad. It means that at least one person who did their food preparation didn't follow the guidelines for ensuring their dish would withstand hours without refrigeration. It's the same with STRs.

They aren't ALL a bad thing. Look for



**Jeannie Chambers**  
Chambers Realty  
& Vacation Rentals

the ones who have been managed properly, following the guidelines. Even though a rental home probably will not pay for itself, you will receive income and at the end of the day, you still own the property. It's like having your cake and eating it, too.

#### 3. Diversification of assets beyond traditional stocks and bonds

Stocks and bonds are way out of my wheelhouse, but I'm pretty sure the Easter Bunny is the only one who believes you should put all your eggs in one basket. According to Investopedia, comparing stocks and bonds to real estate is like comparing apples to oranges, but "investing in real estate is an ideal way to diversify your investment portfolio, reduce risks, and maximize returns."

#### 4. Ability to leverage investments with mortgages and other financing options

We learned a lot from the 2008 housing crisis, and some learned the hard way. The adage, "If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is," comes to mind. Another one is "Never bite off more than you can chew." Listen to lenders, but get a second opinion. There are so many options. 30 year? 15 year? Seller financing? 1031 Exchange?

#### 5. Tax benefits, including deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes

If you own a second home, you probably have an accountant on speed dial. There are many situations that will work to your benefit, but one size may not fit all. One of the best tax deductions is the interest you pay on your mortgage, for your primary OR second home.

#### 6. Inflation protection through rental income and property value increases

We are not in a housing bubble. 2008 should never happen again. Could there be short sales? Yes, but we shouldn't see a repeat. Real estate is not liquid and the days on the market may be longer.

#### 7. Potential for improvement and renovation of properties to increase

• See INVESTING page 19



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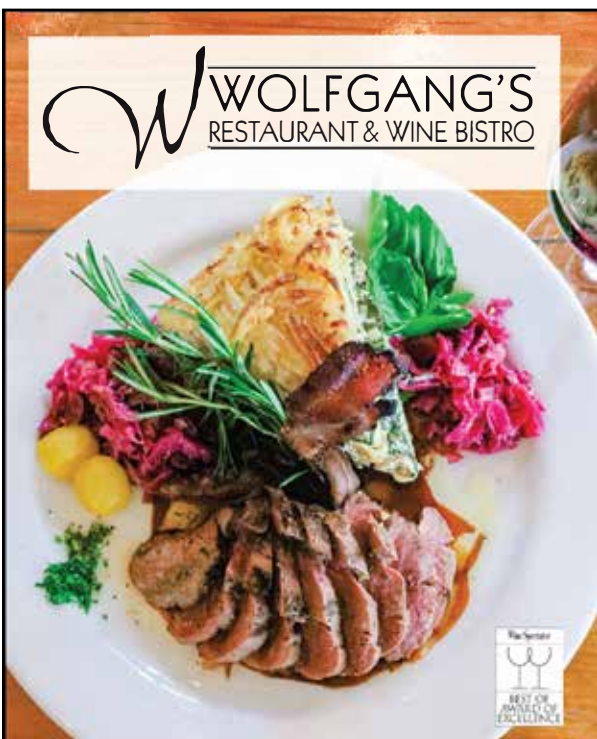
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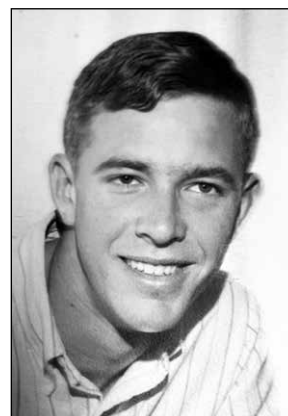


# • OBITUARIES •

## Frederick Bryan Runken

Frederick Bryan Runken, 72, of Scaly Mountain, passed away Monday, March 13, 2023. He was born June 16, 1950 in Darmstadt, Germany to the late Roy and Johanna Becker Runken. He owned and operated Scaly Mountain Builders, he loved motorcycles, camping, RVing, jewelry making and woodworking.

He is survived by his children, Leslie Dryman (Stacey) of Scaly Mtn., NC, Mandy Barnes (Richard) of Dillard, GA, Lori Brooks (Ross) of Myrtle Beach, SC, Charles Robinson and Kendra Johnson both of Scaly Mtn., NC; grandchildren, Christopher Barnes, Bryant Barnes, Kelli Barnes, Carol Barnes, John Barnes, Danielle Reese, Ethan



Crisp, Caleb Moore, John Brooks, Payton Robinson, Karalee Robinson, Susan Johnson and Kenneth Robinson; brothers, Jeffrey Runken (Michaelle) of Franklin, NC and Michael Chris Runken (Becki) of Raleigh and Highlands, NC, and his former wife, Karen Runken of Florida.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held Sunday, March 26, 2023 at 2pm at the Scaly Mountain Fire Department. The family will receive friends following the service.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is serving the Runken family.

Online condolences may be made at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com).

## Thomas Dallis Champion, Jr.

Thomas Dallis Champion, Jr. passed away Friday, March 17, 2023 after cardiac arrest just 3 weeks prior to his 85th birthday.

Born in Elberton, GA and raised mostly in Atlanta, he graduated from North Fulton High School. He was a true Buckhead Boy and celebrated with friends every year of his life in the Buckhead Boys Club. Dallis graduated from the University of Georgia where he was a member of SAE fraternity. He began a successful career in Commercial Real Estate and later Residential Development with Champion Realty Co. in Georgia and Florida. He joined Capital City Club in 1962 and enjoyed 61 years of friendships and playing golf with close friends who called themselves The Traveling Golf Association or "The TGA." There would be many years of golf here and abroad which led most of



them to discover Highlands, NC.

Dallis was a longtime member of Highlands Country Club and played golf up until his death. He enjoyed many years with his family on Lake Lanier and as an avid snow skier, took frequent family trips out West. He also enjoyed hunting and fishing with his grandsons.

Dallis will always be remembered for his quick wit, innate Southern charm, love for his wife and family and the UGA Bulldogs.

He was preceded in death by his parents Dorothy Hill Champion and Thomas Dallis Champion, Sr and son Scott H. Champion.

Dallis is survived by his wife of almost 50 years Dot (Dottie), daughters Carol Champion Turner (Mark), Leigh Champion, Tammy Hodges and son Tom Champion (Angie); brother Hill Champion (Donna) and sister Mary Merritt (Johnny); grandsons Peyton Turner, Will Turner and Chase Champion; granddaughters Dallis Mason, Savannah Champion and Ashley Capps; great granddaughters MacKenzie Lowry and Addelyn Champion.

There will be a Celebration of Life on Saturday, April 8, 2023 at 2pm at the Sky Valley Community Bible Church at 696 Sky Valley Way, #447, Sky Valley, GA 30537

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Thursday AM**

Dear Editor,

The folks who were raised in Highlands and many long term seasonal residents remember the fun filled days they once spent on or in Mirror Lake.

Over the years they have observed with sadness the toll that time and neglect have taken on their lake.

Mountains erode slowly over time resulting in siltation. That's a fact of nature. With development and the resulting land disturbance caused by it siltation increases exponentially.

Highlands has seen more than its share of development over the past few decades. Modern building techniques have made the unbuildable lot the perfect location for a home that captures the view of our amazing plateau.

More dense development has meant that more silt has found its way into our streams and rivers.

That is not to say all development is bad but it does come at a cost that has been ignored.

In our area much of that cost has been borne by Mirror Lake. Today there are few fish in the lake or in the river leading to it because it has become too shallow. So much so that there are islands popping up near the bridge.

Over the last twenty-five years former mayor, Buck Trott, and others attempted to call attention to the problems of Mirror Lake and to raise the money to address them. Sadly none of those attempts gained financial traction.

## • LETTER •

### Help us save Mirror Lake!

Those who love mirror lake or simply understand its importance to the Town are understandably reluctant to support yet another movement to Save Mirror Lake.

What's different this time? Money, leadership and a plan of action.

This time the movement was primed by the generous \$100,000 donation to MIRROR LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSN (MLIA) from seasonal Mirror Lake resident Lou Pollack. With that amount in hand, Pat Gleason, president of MLIA, moved forward to interview and retain a professional dredging company which is handling the necessary permits so that work can commence and silt removal actually start. In addition, MLIA has already collected nearly a half million dollars for the project from individuals and has grant requests before the Town of Highlands and the State of North

Carolina for much more. The responses to those grant requests have been very encouraging.

Please do not assume from all this good news that your contribution is unnecessary because others will pay for the entire project. Every dollar raised expands what can and will be done. More silt removed equals more depth for aquatic life, more distance for canoeing up the Cullasaja River.

Mirror Lake's restoration needs your involvement. Contact MLIA today to learn more or to contribute to the dredging fund: Mirror Lake Improvement Association, P.O. Box 606, Highlands, NC 28741

**Mike King**  
VP MLIA  
Highlands

### ...PROJECT continued from page 1

upgrades to the media center as well as renovations for the school's Career Technical Education (CTE) classes.

During the March meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners, residents addressed the board during public comment period, expressing their frustration with the board for cancelling the project and urging commissioners to reconsider.

What has been continuously referred to as the "Highlands Pre-K Project" during public meetings, resulting in both opposition and support being focused on the need for pre-k classes to serve the Highlands area, was actually much more than that.

In fact, the two pre-k classrooms was a side project to other high priority needs within the aging school facility.

The renovations at Highlands School encompassed 12,000 sf within the main school building to expand the school's media center and to renovate and reconfigure labs and classrooms to accommodate enhanced CTE/PBL (Project Based Learning) labs for students, while also accommodating the needed new pre-k classrooms.

The main building renovations, which has remained and continues to remain a top priority for the Macon County Board of Education, despite county leaders claiming otherwise, was estimated to cost around \$3.5 million with just a fraction, about \$300,000, of the overall project being estimated for the pre-k portion.

The two largest ticket items included

in the main building renovation was the 3,160 sf renovation/expansion of the media center — estimated to cost around \$549,220 and lab space configuration for a computer lab and other classrooms at just shy of \$600,000. The other items included in the estimated \$3.5 million project that was stopped by commissioners last week included \$19,000 for an outdoor reading area for the media center, \$40,000 for an outdoor classroom at the CTE lab area, \$60,000 to replace the boiler burners and \$53,000 to cover the walkway between the main Highlands School building and the middle school wing.

However, despite approving the contract with LS3P for the design work on November 8, 2022 in the amount of \$329,255 and allocating funding for the work, the Macon County Board of Commissioners canceled the contract, costing taxpayers \$35,262.40.

Jerry Moore, of Highlands, addressed the board during public comment period and said he would like to hear from the county about what commissioners think the county can afford in terms of capitol projects within the school system.

Referencing other emergency needs such as leaking sewer and dangerous sports facilities, Moore said those, too, were prioritized like the Highlands School Project, however the county essentially cut off funding consideration at the school reno-

• See PROJECT page 16



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# • INK PENN •

## Two novels by Elly Griffiths

I stumbled across author Elly Griffiths years ago and read quite a few of her Ruth Galloway books. Ruth is a forensic archaeologist who teaches and works on digs around England—some locally and some a bit farther afield. Why I haven't kept up with the series is a mystery to me as I never fail to enjoy them. The first book, "The Crossing Places," won the Mary Higgins Clark Award, and there are 14 more to read after that.

Somehow, I managed to get hooked on her standalone novels too, and in the same month, I read one Ruth Galloway novel and one standalone.

### A Dying Fall

In Book V, Ruth travels to Lancashire to investigate the find of an old university friend. He died shortly after writing her about his discovery.

I couldn't put this one down because it concerns Arthurian legend. I always get hooked on books about the legendary king. Who knew that the Raven King was an ancient name for King Arthur? Given how many books I've read about him, I was surprised and delighted to learn something new.

Did Ruth's friend find the remains of King Arthur? What happened to the bones he unearthed? As is the case in any good series, the relationships among the ongoing cast of characters are as important as the mystery. Ruth is a single mother who's trying to juggle a new romantic relationship, the presence of her little girl's father, and her job.

If you haven't read the series, I suggest you start with Book I so you can more easily follow the ups and downs of Ruth's personal and professional life.

### Bleeding Heart Yard

The main character in this book, billed as a thriller, is DI Harbinder Kaur. She has



Kathy Manos Penn

appeared in two previous Elly Griffiths books, though the three are not described as a series. Still, it's interesting to follow Harbinder's career progression from a post in Shoreham to a position as a DI in the Criminal Investigation Department of the Metropolitan Police. For the first time, she has a

team to manage, and she's only just arrived in London when she has a murder to investigate—a high-profile murder of an MP.

This one kept me guessing. The murder takes place at a school reunion, and another death, one that happened nearly twenty years ago, keeps coming up. At the time, it was deemed a drug-related suicide, and the friends of that earlier victim are still haunted by it. When Harbinder arrives on the scene, she finds that her detective sergeant, Cassie Fitzgerald is one of the attendees. Is that a pro or a con? Will Cassie help the investigation or hinder it?

The deceased MP and Cassie Fitzgerald are both part of a group of close-knit friends, or at least they were close when the first death occurred. The relationships have shifted over twenty years. In alternating chapters, Harbinder, Cassie, and Anna—another classmate—share the narrative. The shifting perspectives set up a well-plotted whodunit with plenty of red herrings.

"Bleeding Heart Yard" is an Amazon Editor's Pick, and I can see why. I'm hoping the author has another Harbinder Kaur book planned. Meanwhile, I've reserved the next Ruth Galloway at the library.

• 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](mailto:inkpenn119@gmail.com), and follow her on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/KathyManosPenn.Author/](http://www.facebook.com/KathyManosPenn.Author/).



# The Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team traveled to Asheville

By Coach Steve Hott

On Saturday and Sunday March 18 and 19, 25 swimmers of the Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team traveled to the Asheville Jewish Community Center (AJCC) for the Post Purim Palooza.

With 119 PRs (Personal Records) the Hurricanes finished 2nd to AJCC -- 1745.5 to 1735 -- and well ahead of Waynesville's SMAC (Smoky Mountain Aquatics Club) score of 647.5.

Paolo McRae, Chase Kenter, and Anton Halldin all qualified for the 2023 Jr. Olympics to be held in Des Moines, Iowa this summer. They join Finneaus Garner, Aniah McKim, Dasha Halldin, and Corena Dearth on the national team who have previously qualified for the 2023 JOs.

Garner broke the 2017 team record in the boys 50-yard freestyle with 23.50.

Kenter and both broke the 2019 team record in the boys 200-yd backstroke. Kenter retains the record by winning the race in 2:28.36.

Alyse Remery broke the 2019 team record in the girls 200 backstroke with a time of 3:00.22.

High scorer for Highlands was Aniah McKim with 170 pts. and 5 first place and 2 second place finishes. Garner scored 162 (3 firsts and 2 seconds), Kenter 159 (2 firsts and 4 seconds), and Dasha Halldin 150 (3 firsts, 2 seconds), Paolo McRae brought home 145 (2 seconds, 1 third), Justin Pow-

ell 129.5 (1 first, 1 second), Remery 122 (2 thirds) and Ian Batista 116.5 (1 second, 1 third), Ivan Shchelgachov scored 114.5 (2 firsts, 1 second), Elizabeth Burnette 93 (1 second), Corena Dearth 63, Max Jestin 55, and Charlie Hinton 49 (1 first, 1 third).

Anton Halldin brought home 47 (1 third place finish), Alex Petric 45.5, Penelope McRae 33, and Bella Batista 29. Jayce Powell scored 18, Wylie Hinton 13, sister AnnMarie Hinton 11, and Annabelle Searles 7. Bo Curcuru brought home 2 pts, and Morgan Mason 1. Also swimming for the Hurricanes were John Bradshaw Spencer

and 6-year-old Stefan Halldin.

The Hurricanes Jack Sumner, and Aja Garner were out sick and Ben Halldin was out due to injury. They were all 3 sorely missed.

The Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team is a Highlands Recreation Park Team that practices in the evenings at the Highlands Recreation Park Pool. The only requirement to join is that a prospective swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards (one length of the Recreation Park Pool) unassisted. For more information, please call Steve Hott, Head Coach at 828.421.4121.



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# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

## THE POOL IS OPEN

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

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

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands Mountain View Group holds open meetings in Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. The Cashiers Val-

ley 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](http://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 5-6:30 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](mailto: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](http://www.maconncliteracy.org), call 828-526 – 0863 or email [info@maconncliteracy.org](mailto: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 Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

## 2nd Saturdays

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

## 3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in their Community Room/909 Chapel. We serve breakfast at 9am and hold our monthly meeting at 10am We invite ALL Veterans to attend. Contact Ed Mc-

Closkey, 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.

## Through May 31

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

• At PAC, Rhythm of the Dance. For tickets, email [highlandspacnc@gmail.com](mailto:highlandspacnc@gmail.com)

• Join us at HMH on Friday, 8:30-10:30 pm for a Salon Series featuring Daniel Tashian, arguably one of the most dynamic singer-songwriters in the world. A native of Nashville, he has spent his career in Music City honing his craft with the best of the best, writing and producing for a long list of impressive artists. Tickets are \$25.

## Sun., March 26

• Bowl for Kid's Sake from either 11a-1p or 1-3p local churches and civic groups can have fun while also supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters. The event for Jackson, Macon and Swain counties is at the Galaxy Lanes in Sylva.

## Wed., March 29

• The Highlands American Legion Post 370 will conduct a commemorative service honoring Plateau Vietnam Era veterans on March 29 at 10 AM at

## April wildflower walks at the Nature Center



Spring is in the air! The Highlands Botanical Garden is waking up, and with it, an abundance of wildflowers is beginning to display. Join the Highlands Nature Center for an easy stroll through the Botanical Garden each Wednesday & Saturday this April between 4 and 5 PM to explore what spring ephemerals are blooming. Along the way, you'll learn tips for identifying them and a little about their unique characteristics. These programs are free and open to the public, no registration is necessary. For more information, visit [highlandsbiological.org](http://highlandsbiological.org). The Highlands Nature Center & Botanical Garden is part of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University.

- Photo by Dylan Lytle



# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

the Highlands Community Building on Highway 64 next to the town baseball field. Veterans families, friends, and the public is invited to attend as a symbolic way of saying thank you for your service to all those that served during the Vietnam War.. The Vietnam War 50th Anniversary ceremony will include remarks by Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor an Army Vietnam Veteran, American Legion Post 370 Commander Ed McCloskey U.S. Marines, Vice Commander Paul Schowalter Air Force Vietnam Veteran, Chaplain and Army Vietnam Veteran Zach Claxton , Post Sergeant at Arms Bob Trevathan Air Force Vietnam Veteran, Linda Edwards Army Nurse and Vietnam Veteran, and Post Adjutant Ken Knight, Navy Vietnam Veteran. Vice commander Paul Schowalter will invite every Vietnam veteran to step forward to receive a Vietnam Service Ribbon as a token of thanks from our Highlands American Legion Post 370. Following the ribbon presentation veterans will be offered an opportunity to say a few words and present their name and branch of service

## **Fri., March 31**

• Community Coffee with the Mayor at Hudson Library at 11a in the Hudson Library Meeting Room. Mayor Taylor will discuss Highlands Budget Priorities for this coming Year

## **Wed. & Sun. in April**

• Spring is in the air! The Highlands Botanical Garden is waking up, and with it, an abundance of wildflowers is beginning to display. Join the Highlands Nature Center for an easy stroll through the Botanical Garden each Wednesday & Saturday this April between 4 and 5

PM to explore what spring ephemerals are blooming. Along the way, you'll learn tips for identifying them and a little about their unique characteristics. These programs are free and open to the public, no registration is necessary. For more information, visit [highlandsbiological.org](https://highlandsbiological.org). The Highlands Nature Center & Botanical Garden is part of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University.

## **Sat., April 1**

• Students from Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School invite you to join them for a 5K Fun Run fundraiser, Saturday at 9AM. All of the profits will benefit underserved women in the community by putting together care packages. Planned by Leela Chrestman, Juniper Sperry, Mary Travis Boswell, and Ava Klapdohr. For more information, email [Ichrestman@rabungap.org](mailto:Ichrestman@rabungap.org).

## **Fri.-Sun., April 7-9**

• At Half-Mile Farm an Easter Celebration and Hosted Weekend at Half-Mile Farm with Chef Craig Richards. Stay at Half-Mile Farm for a grown-up Easter weekend. The Weekends Events: Friday, Fresh Pasta demo and tasting with Executive Chef Craig Richards in the Woodland View Room from 5-6 pm during Social Hour with additional complimentary hors d'oeuvres and live music until 8 pm. Craft beverages are available from the J. Henry Farmhouse Tavern. Saturday, Special Breakfast Creations from 8-10:30 am. Social Hour from 5-6 pm will feature complimentary hors d'oeuvres, and live music from 5-8 pm. Craft beverages are available from the J. Henry Farmhouse Tavern. Grown-up Easter Egg Hunt (outside

weather permitting) from 4-6 pm with prizes including J. Henry Farmhouse Tavern cocktails Half-Mile Farm merchandise, an overnight stay, and more! Hosted events are for Half-Mile Farm guests only. To book your stay <https://www.oldewardshospitality.com/half-mile-farm/#/booking/step-1>

## **Sat., April 15**

• Plateau Pickup 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Volunteers will begin at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park on Pine Street, where they will receive their geographic assignment. Groups, individuals, and families

are welcome! A light breakfast and lunch will be provided, and participants will receive a free t-shirt. Volunteers will also receive gloves, pick up tools, safety vests and garbage bags. The project includes parts of U.S. 64, N.C. 28, N.C. 106 and streets in downtown Highlands. Plateau Pickup is part of Litter Sweep, the N.C. Department of Transportation's biannual statewide roadside litter removal initiative traditionally held the last two weeks of April and September. To participate, send an email to [events@highlandschamber.org](mailto:events@highlandschamber.org)

• See **EVENTS** page 14

## **Plateau Pick-up is coming up**



The annual spring Plateau Pickup 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. Volunteers will begin at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park on Pine Street, where they will receive their geographic assignment. Groups, individuals, and families are welcome! A light breakfast and lunch will be provided, and participants will receive a free t-shirt. Volunteers will also receive gloves, pick up tools, safety vests and garbage bags. The project includes parts of U.S. 64, N.C. 28, N.C. 106 and streets in downtown Highlands. Plateau Pickup is part of Litter Sweep, the N.C. Department of Transportation's biannual statewide roadside litter removal initiative traditionally held the last two weeks of April and September. To participate, send an email to [events@highlandschamber.org](mailto:events@highlandschamber.org) or call 828-526-2112.

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## ...EVENTS continued from page 13

landschamber.org or call 828-526-2112.

### Thurs., April 20

• OEI's Orchard Series. 6 - 8 pm Celebrate the beauty of springtime in Highlands with the return of the live concert series - Orchard Sessions. Settle into comfortable seating and relax under heirloom apple trees as a stellar lineup of musicians fill the mountain air. In the magical surroundings of The Orchard, enjoy light bites, a cash bar, and an enchanting evening. The sessions kick off Thursday with the return of Atlanta native Mike Kinnebrew. The Orchard Sessions are held at The Farm at Old Edwards at 336 Arnold Road in Highlands. Tickets are \$40. Book Online: <https://www.simpletix.com/e/mike-kinnebrew-orchard-sessions-at-the-far-tickets-124433>

### Fri., April 28 – Sun., April 30

• Bear Shadow Music Festival, a weekend of celebration that highlights world-class music acts and outdoor experiences as we emerge from winter's hibernation. Brought to you by

Highlands Festivals, Inc., the three-day festival will take place at Winfield Farm. Headliners include Spoon, The Head and The Heart, Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit. Bear Shadow is a sister event of the bespoke Highlands Food & Wine Festival. For more information and tickets, visit [bearshadownc.com](http://bearshadownc.com) or email [info@bearshadownc.com](mailto:info@bearshadownc.com).

### Fri. - Sun., May 5 - 7

• At Half-Mile Farm, live fire cooking with Old Edwards Executive Chef Chris Huerta & Half-Mile Farm Chef Jason Tardo featuring locally grown Providence Farmstead protein. Social Hour Friday and Saturday evenings from 5-6 pm with complimentary hors d'oeuvres and live music from 5-8 pm. Craft beverages also are available from the J. Henry Farmhouse Tavern, years in California, raising their family, and developing a nationally recognized Jersey Dairy, the couple has turned their compass back East towards the Blue Ridge Mountains. Hosted events are for Half-Mile Farm guests only. To attend these complimentary events at Half-Mile Farm from

May 5-7, book your stay today. Book Online: <https://www.old-edwardshospitality.com/half-mile-farm#/booking/step-1>

### Sun., May 14

• At PAC, Steep Canyon Rangers. For tickets, email [highlandspacnc@gmail.com](mailto:highlandspacnc@gmail.com).

### Wed., May 17

• At Acorn's a book signing from 2-4 pm, with Chef Steven Satterfield of Miller Union in Atlanta who will be signing copies of his book, "Root to Leaf: A Southern Chef Cooks Through the Seasons."

### Thurs., May 18

• At OEI's The Farm from 6-9 PM, James Beard Foundation award-winning Chef Steven Satterfield of Miller Union in Atlanta. Indulge in a multi-course menu of the season's most delicious flavors from Old Edwards gardens and greenhouses, accompanied by delectable wine pairings, during this enchanting evening at The Farm with a cocktail reception in The Orchard. You'll love these special recipes from Satterfield's wildly successful first cookbook "Root to Leaf: A Southern Chef Cooks Through the Seasons" (featured on CBS This Morning). \$185 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Book Online: <https://www.simpletix.com/e/chef-steven-satterfield-dinner-tickets-123309>

### Sat., May 20

• "Meander in May," the free, self-guided arts festival organized by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC returns Saturday. The annual event includes painting, woodworking and ceramics demonstrations along with performances by a myriad of bands and musicians. The immersive arts experience begins at 11 a.m. and culminates with a free concert by The Boomers in Kelsey-Hutchinson Park from 6 - 8:30 p.m., part of the Chamber's "Saturdays on Pine" Outdoor Concert Series.

## Meander in May is Sat., May 20



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# • BUSINESS/ORG NEWS •



From left: Nancy Butler, Becky Byard, Susan Hood, new member, Mellie McHafferty, Paula McDonald, Patty Hutchins, Sarah Wallin and Alice Canup.

## P.E.O. is growing

The Cashiers-Highlands P.E.O. recently initiated another new member and continues to grow. P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization) is an organization formed to strengthen the bond of women and advocate for women who do not have opportunities to expand their education. Through its several scholarship programs, P.E.O. has impacted the lives of millions of women worldwide.

## ...HOSPITAL continued from page 1

in 1951.

He talked about the courageous efforts of the hospital staff and community who pulled together during the great Blizzard of '93 and moved the hospital and all its patients to the facility that stands today battling 6-foot snow drifts and failing generators.

Neal said HCH continues to add medical services and attract medical professionals to the area, some of which include the first surgical services conducted last year, cardiological telemedicine, and a CNA training program that provides a pathway for individuals who are passionate about starting their healthcare career.

"Living in a small community where everyone knows each other makes it personal and challenging because we have to get it right," said Neal. "Caring and compassion are words we live by every day."

HCH Chairman of the Board of Trustees Peter Pavarini said for HCH to continue to grow is unique throughout the country.

"This hospital is not the norm, but more of an exception," said Pavarini. "Hospitals of this size are closing down all over. Having a hospital survive, and most importantly thrive, is a testament to the generosity and efforts of a community."

He also applauded the hospital's ability to maintain a passionate and energetic staff.

"If we weren't able to recruit and attract quality help, it would be an empty building," said Pavarini. "In fact, it's one of our biggest challenges. But we're looking ahead and working with local educational institutions encouraging young people to pursue a career in healthcare."

Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor praised the hospital for its commitment to adding new services and attracting qualified faculty.

"At the 50th anniversary, I want young people to think why would anyone ever think this hospital would close," said Taylor. "We have the energy and commitment to move this hospital forward."

### Great Blizzard of '93

The move to the current hospital was forced upon hospi-

tal staff when the Plateau was hit with a fierce blizzard in March

• See HOSPITAL page 17



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## ...MEDICAID continued from page 1

meaning they voted the bill up or down, before the bill could move to Governor Cooper's desk.

"The Senate's version of House Bill 76, "Access to Healthcare Options," expands Medicaid for adults making up to 138% of the federal poverty line, which is nearly \$38,300 for a family of four. This will help end the hidden tax that North Carolinians currently pay by covering uncompensated care in the form of higher private insurance premiums," according to a press release from Senator Ralph Hise's office.

The bulk of expanding Medicaid will be paid for by the federal government but North Carolina will have to provide some funding as well.

"While the federal government covers 90% of the cost of expansion, the non-federal share in North Carolina will be covered by an assessment to hospitals. That means instead of using

taxpayer funds to cover the 10% non-federal share, hospitals will pay that portion," according to the press release. "The expanded coverage would not be effective until the budget becomes law."

North Carolina Senator Kevin Corbin, who has been a vocal advocate for Medicaid Expansion since he was first elected to the General Assembly as a member of the House of Representative, stood on the Senate floor last week in support of the bill's passage.

"As I have said a dozen times before, the working folks of our state need Medicaid Expansion," said Senator Corbin. "Let me tell you about Jim. Jim was the father of three girls, worked every day of his life at good paying jobs, \$15 an hour jobs, but he made too much for Medicaid and not enough for a subsidy under the affordable care act, so he couldn't get health insurance. Today, I am casting my vote in support of House Bill 76 in



Sen. Kevin Corbin on the NC Senate floor fighting for Medicaid expansion.  
- Photo by Brittney Lofthouse

memory of Jim, who passed away from liver cancer."

The amendment to House Bill 76 was agreed on before the Senate ever made the amendment public, according to a joint press

release from leaders of the North Carolina Senate and House of Representatives earlier this month.

"We reached this deal late last night, but put the finishing touches

on this morning, and felt like we needed to go ahead and get it out there," said House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Kings Mountain).

While Governor Cooper is likely to sign the bill, expansion is not a done deal for North Carolina yet ... House Bill 76 includes a provision that states Medicaid will not be expanded unless a state budget for the coming biennium is passed and enacted.

Gov. Cooper noted his disagreement with tying expansion to a budget shortly after the deal was announced.

"Since we all agree this is the right thing to do, we should make it effective now to make sure we leverage the money that will save our rural hospitals and invest in mental health," Cooper said in his statement about the Medicaid expansion agreement.

The governor is expected to sign the bill on Monday

## ...PROJECT continued from page 8

vation project without ever giving a budgeted or anticipated budgeted amount to be available for the school system's needs.

During a presentation by Macon County Finance Director Lori Carpenter during the county's budget kickoff meeting, she reported that the county is currently reporting an excess of \$11.2 million collected in revenues compared to the budgeted expenditures. This means the county will again have undesignated funds at the end of the fiscal year, that could potentially just end up in the fund balance, a fund balance that is already around 10 percent higher than average for North Carolina counties.

The roughly \$300,000 that was remaining on the LS3P contract for the architectural services was reverted back to the county's continuously growing fund balance.

Members of the public noted with projected excess funding this fiscal year alone, the county could fund the Highlands project immediately,

with existing funds within the county's fund balance without having any impact on the county's financial position.

Moore also noted Highlands residents continue to supply 50% of the county's property taxes, despite having a fraction of the residents.

"Highlands' properties generate approximately 50% or more of the \$33,000,000 in property tax revenue, but the approximately 3,500 year-round residents only need a small portion of this revenue to meet their needs," said Moore.

Commissioner Josh Young responded to Moore by pointing out that 97 percent of the county's exiting debt services are associated with the school system, with the county considering taking on more debt with a more than \$100 million project in the works to construct a new Franklin High School.

Currently, out of the county's total \$28,879,271 in existing school debt, roughly \$350,000 a year is associated with the Highlands

School, with \$150,000 of that being paid in full this year and the remaining \$200,000 debt line item being from a joint project involving Union Academy.

Annual debt payments for Macon County surpassed \$1 million annual in the last budget cycle, with about \$300,000 of the \$1 million coming from NC Education Lottery Funds, leaving the county to cover the rest.

A brief look at loans/debts associated with Macon County Schools include a \$2.6 million loan for the Sanders/Owens property that was purchased in 2007 to construct Mountain View Intermediate (MVI); a \$20 million loan issued in 2008 to construct MVI and the expansion of East Franklin Elementary; the \$12.8 million loan to construct Iotla Valley Elementary School issued in 2010; a \$2.92 million loan for a 6-classroom addition at South Macon Elementary issued in 2018; a \$8.1 million loan for renovations to Macon Middle School; a \$2

• See PROJECT page 17

## THE FIREWOOD COMPANY



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## ...PROJECT continued from page 16



Highlander Jerry Moore addresses the commission during the public comment period.

million QZAB loan to renovate East Franklin Elementary issued in 2007; a \$1.8 million QZAB loan issued to renovate Nantahala School in 2010; a \$1.5 million loan used to purchase technology for Macon County Schools in 2012; a \$374,000 loan in 2013 used to purchase new defibrillators; a \$1.5 million loan issued in 2013 to renovate Highlands School; and another \$2.9 million QZAB loan issued in 2015 to renovate both Highlands School and Union Academy.

The 2013 loan issued for the Highlands School renovations was issued at zero interest with the \$1,500,000 scheduled to be fully paid during this budget year.

The 2015 QZAB loan that was issued in a combined project for Union Academy and Highlands School was issued for a term of 15 years at no interest — which would have the \$2.98 million loan rolling off the county books in 2030.

Currently, out of the county's total \$28,879,271 in existing school debt, roughly \$200,000 a year is associated with the Highlands School, and even that debt line item is from a joint project

involving Union Academy.

Commissioner Young said when looking at the overall needs of the entire school system as well as other county department needs, commissioners are tasked with balancing it all.

"Someone has to be the bad parent," said Commissioner Young. "Highlands does need a Pre-K. They genuinely need a Pre-K. I don't think there is anybody in this room that would dispute that."

Commissioner John Shearl, who represents the Highlands District, addressed citizens by saying that he doesn't think the \$35,000 spent on the LS3P Contract prior to it being cancelled was a waste of money because he doesn't think the project is entirely dead.

Shearl acknowledged that the main building/Pre-K renovation project remains a top priority for the school board, it just did not rank high enough in the upcoming budget cycle to be considered by commissioners this fiscal year.

"When we voted to defund that project, it was all based on the school board having the same vote, and they voted the same way," said Commissioner Shearl.

"Had the school system voted and said 'no, Pre-k in Highlands is number 1, it would have come back to this board [county commissioners] and we would have funded it."

While Commissioner Shearl said the vote to terminate the contract with LS3P was contingent on the school board also voting to terminate the contract, the board of education never really held a vote to that effect. The vote the Board of Education took during the February board meeting was merely to accept the fact that commissioners voted to terminate the contract.

Nantahala Board of Education representative Melissa Evans stated, "I make a motion that this board accept the commissioner's decision in respect to the Highlands Pre-K project," she said.

This was after Board of Education Chairman informed the board that commissioners would like the school board to hold a vote concerning the decision made by commissioners to end the contract with LS3P.

Board of Education member Stephanie Laseter asked for clarification regarding Evans' motion — specifically asking, "is the motion on the floor to deprioritize the Highlands Project?" to which Chairman Breedlove responded, "No the motion is just to accept the commissioners' decision with the understanding that we [board of education] will not be removing this as priority."

Laseter again clarified, "so we are just accepting their decision?"

And Breedlove again confirmed, "correct."

Commissioner Shearl said he is willing to meet with anyone at anytime to discuss the project, the information he has been presented, and further explain his current stance on the project.

At the request of those in attendance, Shearl said community meetings could be scheduled for the Highlands community specifically regarding the project.

## ...HOSPITAL continued from page 15

1993, a storm with hurricane force winds and dropped several feet of snow.

Dr. John Baumrucker was on duty that weekend and told those in attendance of some of the challenges hospital staff faced. The hospital at the Peggy Crosby Center had no power and was running on failing generators. On top of all that, they had a patient who was in labor.

The roads were not passable, and patients and staff were doing the best they could with what they had.

Dr. Baumrucker remembered making a pizza with bread, ketchup, and parmesan cheese; he said everyone was so hungry they said it was the best pizza they ever ate.

He added that he and other staff began siphoning gas from nearby vehicles using a catheter to keep the generators running, but even that bought precious little time.

The morning after the storm began, a Highlands police officer stopped by the hospital to check how people were doing. Dr. Baumrucker instructed the nurses to provide a polite distraction of coffee and conversation while he snuck outside and siphoned the police car's gas to keep the generator going.

Finally, the decision was made to move to the new facility where there was a working diesel generator. Members of the



Dr. John Baumrucker told stories about the "blizzard move."

community who had vehicles that could handle the dangerous roads volunteered to help.

The move was a day ahead of schedule, but it was a necessity. With the community's help, all patients and necessary equipment were moved to the new facility.

Dr. Baumrucker remembered that in addition to delivering three babies throughout the weekend of the storm, another infant was brought into the hospital after a tree fell on the child's nursery. Branches crushed everything in the nursery except the center of the room, which is where the baby was sleeping.

"Everything that happened that weekend was a miracle," said Dr. Baumrucker.

Other speakers involved in the hospital's move during the blizzard told their stories, including Dr. Patti Wheeler, HCH Radiology Team Leader Laura Ammons, former EMT Bobby Houston, and Macon County EMS Lora Beegle.

Neal closed the celebration and said there is still more work to be done, and the hospital's dedicated staff are prepared for the road ahead.

"We are committed to this community and the Plateau," said Neal. "And we know that to continue to get where we need to go, it's going to take hard work and sacrifice."



Dr. Patti Wheeler told stories about the early days at the hospital.



# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

## The Coming Great Day



Pastor Sam Forrester  
Whiteside Presbyterian  
Church, Cashiers

The writers of the Bible knew of a day that was to come that would be terrible and yet wonderful. It will be a day that exceeds all others in brightness. It will open with an indescribable brightness. All days before this one great day received their light from the sun, this day will receive its light from God himself. Other days dawned with a quietness, but this day will come forth with much noise. Psalm 50:3-4 "Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages. He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people." Jesus shall come in the same way he went up. I Thessalonians 4:16 "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God." On that day men will see and experience things as never before. The brightness of our Lord's return will overwhelm the sun and stars. And the sounds that come with him will drown out the earthly noise. This will be a day of great and marvelous wonders. It will begin with, be filled with, and closed with such miracles as men cannot even begin to imagine. What will be even more amazing will be the results that accompany all of these things. Every act of God toward man will be justified. All evil shall come to its just end. All petty objections shall be silenced for eternity. All judgment shall be brought to its final state.

This day is fixed in time. The time is set by God himself. Acts 17:31 "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed." God knows this day but men do not. To him it is sure, to men it is doubtful. Matthew 24:36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." It comes like a thief in the night. It comes as the flood of Noah's day. It comes as the tempest of God's great wrath came on Sodom and Gomorrah. It is a day set by God and no one can change its coming. Men do not want to think about it but God is ever thinking of it. Nothing can make it come quicker. It will come only when God's purposes are fulfilled.

My friend, consider well what your estate will be when that day comes. Jesus Christ has already come into this world to show you the way to avoid this horrible fate. If you will look to him, placing your hope and trust in him and in him alone you can be prepared to face this great day of judgment and be one of those who come to the Father's banquet Table. If you continue to insist on following your own path that day of judgement will come and catch you unprepared and cause you to be cast into the fires of hell for eternity. Hear the message of grace given in the Gospel in John 3:16 & John 14:6 and come with boldness before God on that great day.

## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

## John 3:16

### BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

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

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

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

### CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

### CHAPEL OF THE SKY

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

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

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www.christanglicancashiers.com

9:30am Sunday School; 10:30am Worship Service. Mon. Night

Bible Study & Dinner, 6pm, call for details.

### CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

www.cashiers.church

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

Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.

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

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

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

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

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

Sundays: Service 10:45am, Children's 10:30am

Wednesdays: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mondays

4:30pm, Tuesdays 10am; Men's Bible Study: Wednesdays &

Thursdays 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

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

### EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

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

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

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

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

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

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

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

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

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Emily Wilmarth, pastor

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

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

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

### GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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

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### HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

### HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

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

### HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily

sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

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

### HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas, Pastor 526-3376

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www.highlandsmethodist.org

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Rev. Ken Langsdorf

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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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

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and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

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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

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Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

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### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am



# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from March 6. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.**

## March 6

• At 9 a.m., officers responded to a call of someone interfering with electric service at a residence on on Picklesimer Road where an electric meter seal was cut.

## March 11

• At 4:30 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident at US 64 west near Holt Knob Road.

## March 12

• At 4:43 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Chestnut Street and US 64 east.

• At 6:21 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64

west near 1st Street.

## March 16

• At 10:30 a.m., officers responded to a report of theft from an automobile where the vehicle's battery valued at \$150 was removed from a residence driveway area on Big Bearpen Road.

## March 18

• A little after midnight, Lecharl Van Der Linde, 34, of Scaly Mountain, was arrested for DUI when he was stopped on NC 106. He provided a written promise as bond. His trial date is May 3.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from March 14.**

## March 14

• At 1 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance on Spring Street.

• At 1:50 p.m., the dept. respond-

ed to a fire alarm at a residence on S. Old Walhalla Road.

## March 15

• At 11:36 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Thornhill Road.

## March 17

• At 10:33 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main street.

## March 18

• At 11:08 a.m., the dept. responded to a structure fire at a residence on Mack Wilson Road.

• At 7:26 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hickory Hill Road.

• At 10:39 p.m., the dept., responded to a Co2 alarm at a residence on Bruner Lane.

## March 19

• At 8:20 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Blue Valley Road.

• At 11:25 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clear Creek Road.

**...INVESTING continued from page 4**

value

This goes without saying, after you buy your home, almost any improvements and renovations will add to its value. According to Forbes.com, the cost for renovation projects should drop nearly 14% from 2022 to 2023. But, as far as contractors lowering their prices, don't hold your breath. Locally, contractors are still reeling from the rise in costs they've had to pay in the last two years.

**8. Tangible asset with intrinsic value and usefulness.**

This one is easy to understand. You can LIVE in your investment. You can RENT your investment and you can SHARE your investment with family and friends. I'm sure there's a study somewhere showing the rise in friends after a second home is bought.

**9. Stable and consistent cash flow compared to other investments.**

Cash flow would be realized from the rental of your home. If you rent your home long-term, the rent will be much lower, but the payout is steady. The short-term/vacation rental market has the potential for higher earnings, but you will need to pay all the costs, plus provide more high-end items and furnishings. It really is a personal choice

and depends if you want to use your home periodically as well.

**10. Real estate can be a hedge against economic volatility and instability.**

I hope not, but we may get the opportunity to see this sooner than later. Everything goes in cycles, and our nation's economy is right in the thick of things.

The more diversification you have the more you have the ability to rob Peter to pay Paul if needed. Rental income can help defray the costs of home ownership. Remember, there's nothing wrong with downsizing or selling off/liquidating one or more of your properties.

There is a buyer for every home, but the days-on-market will be longer than they were in 2021 and 2022. Pricing your home is based on comparable properties that have sold within the last six-twelve months, and of course, amenities and location can be a huge deciding factor with the listing price.

## Realtor's prayer:

Dear Lord, please let my seller and landlords not be greedy and my buyers and renters not be needy.

- Amen



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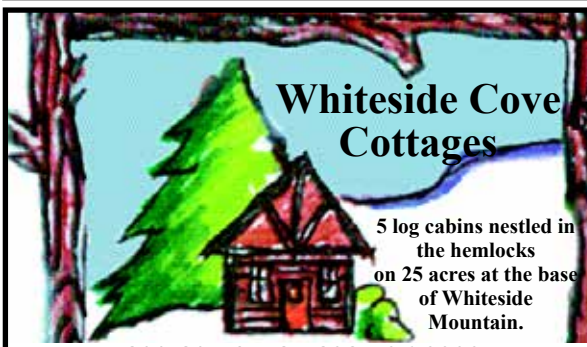


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## • CLASSIFIEDS •

### LOST

**LOST JAN. 29, 2020** - 2 gold bangle bracelets - one thin and one wider. Reward offered. Contact Carol Haughes at 706-982-2658.

### Classifieds:

\$6 for 10 words, 20 cents for each additional word  
\$2 for color block  
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### Business Service ads

\$20 for BW  
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### FOR SALE

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## ...APPRAISALS continued from page 1

value as of an established date.

Since the last revaluation took place in Macon County, property prices across North Carolina have increased significantly and according to Braswell, resulted in some values in Macon County jumping by more than 100 percent. The hike in property values could mean higher taxes for homeowners, but just how much will depend on the tax rate set by the Macon County Board of Commissioners during the annual budget process.

Citizens spoke to commissioners last week questioning the significant rate increases and asking for clarification surrounding the process and metrics used to develop the new values.

"Everything we do in the tax office is dictated by the state," Braswell said to address concerns presented to the board. "We have a Machinery Act that tells us what we can and cannot do and how we do it and when we do it and that is what we go by."

The Machinery Act (General Statute 105, Subchapter II) provides the framework for the listing, assessing, and appraising of both real and personal property in North Carolina. Under G. S. 105-286, all counties are required to conduct a reappraisal at least every eight (8) years. The majority of the counties conduct their reappraisals on this time frame, although a growing segment of counties conducts reappraisals on a four-year cycle. During each year at least 11 of the 100 counties are conducting a county wide reappraisal. A county may choose to conduct its reappraisal "in-house" utilizing their own appraisal staff, by hiring an outside reappraisal firm, by employing consultants to assist their staff appraisers, or any combination of the three.

Referencing documents she printed for the public, Braswell directed concerned citizens to The Department of Revenue which describes the rules and regulations associated with the revolution process. Braswell continued to provide a brief summary of the process in which the county tax office monitors market data to accurately determine the mar-

ket value of all properties. Macon County does not visit every property and parcel in the county and instead conducts mass appraisals. Staff visit and observe properties to verify characteristics, compare similar property sales and consider improvements or changes made. Revaluation captures these changes in value for property tax purposes. In simpler terms, it's how much a home would sell for under normal conditions.

According to Braswell, the county has received 1,700 appeals out of the 44,000 parcels in Macon County — which equates to about 4 percent.

The deadline to file an appeal of the new property values was last Monday, however Braswell said due to ongoing questions and calls the county tax office has been receiving, the appeal deadline was extended to allow for additional time. Appeals can no longer be accepted once the Board of Equalization begins to meet to review appeals, which is scheduled to begin the first Monday in April.

Another contributing factor to the increase in some land in Macon County is associated with an increase in per acre value on the state level. For the first time in more than two decades, the state increased the per value rate for agricultural land — a nearly \$400 per acre increase in base value.

Based on Macon County's current tax rate of .40 percent of \$100 of assessed value, a homeowner with a property valued at \$100,000 today, would pay \$400 in annual taxes. After the revaluation process, if that same home was reappraised at \$200,000, the property owner's annual taxes would double — resulting in an annual tax payment of \$800.

While the state mandates reappraisals are done at least every 8 years, Macon County has elected to complete revaluations every four years, which they are permitted to do under the state's current laws. If the market were to crash, home values would not change for four years until the next appraisals, the same applies for if the market continues to be inflated.

## Man arrested for cyber stalking and felony disseminating obscenity

In October 2022, Miguel Angel Lopez-Hernandez, 30, was charged by the Highlands Police Department with several counts of felony disseminating obscenity and cyber stalking for creating fake social media accounts and posting explicit images. He was later arrested by the Macon County Sheriff's Office on December 28, 2022.

While Lopez-Hernandez was out on bond and awaiting trial, an extensive investigation was reopened by the Highlands

Police Department detective which led to additional charges of felony disseminating obscenity and cyberstalking against Mr. Lopez-Hernandez.

On March 16, 2023, Mr. Lopez-Hernandez was arrested in Highlands, NC, for the most recent offenses, for Cyber Stalking and Felony Disseminating Obscenity, by Highlands Police officers without incident. Victims in the matter are personally known to Mr. Lopez-Hernandez.

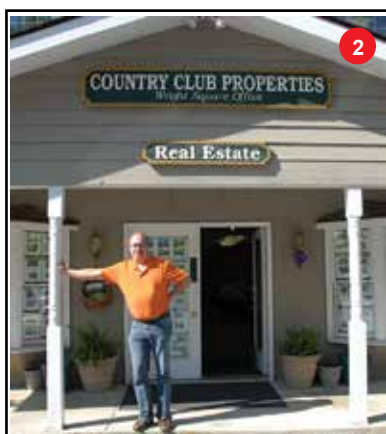


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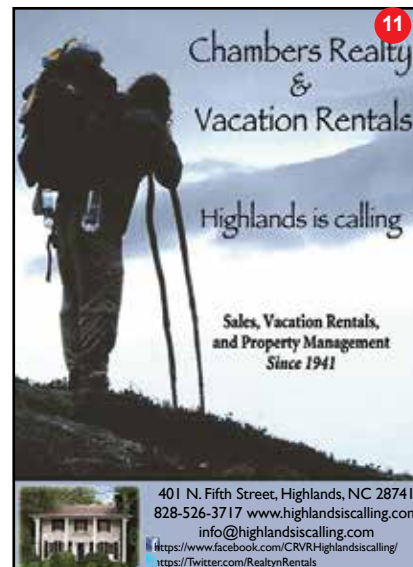
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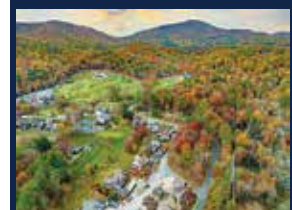
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