

Highlands Newspaper

Happy Thanksgiving!

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 20, Number 46

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

Wed., Nov. 22, 2023

Commissioner Shearl's version of discussion with SOG attorney about ARPA funding doesn't line up with the public records account

By Brittney Lofthouse
Tuesday night Macon County

Manager Derek Roland presented
commissioners with a proposal for
expending the county's remaining
• See SHEARL page 10

Playground plans are unveiled

An anonymous donation of \$50,000 given to upgrade the Highlands Rec Park playground is now seed money for a much bigger project.

A Playground Committee has been meeting over the last few months and at Thursday's Town Board meeting, committee members Commissioner Brian Stiehler and soon-to-be commissioner Jeff Weller presented a plan for an extensive and drastically improved playground.

The playground will be for children up to 12-years-old and instead of just replacing components and adding new ones, what is envisioned is an all-inclusive, nature-themed playground accessible to children at all levels of ability.

The plan is to replace and expand the playground area from its current location down to the tennis courts and situated near the skate park. The playground

• See PLAYGROUND page 21

The Town Lighting is Sat. Nov. 25!



Photo by Brian O'Shea

Saturday night kicks off the Holiday Season in Highlands with the "Light up the Park & Main" event held in K-H Founders Park on Pine Street.

Christmas caroles will be sung while the crowd waits for the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus.

On his count of 10, the lights in the park and throughout town will come on and so it begins...

Highlands annual Christmas Parade is Sat., Dec. 2 10 a.m. to noon on Main Street.

Santa will be in the park to hear wishes Dec. 2, 9 and 16.

And new this year, the lighting of the Monorah is Thursday, Dec. 7 at 5:30 p.m. in the park.

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Hotwire service is expanding

Residents and businesses are encouraged to give them a call

At the November Town Board meeting, Sr. Director of Sales Mike Hall and VP Service Delivery Sue Galletto of Hotwire Communications presented a "2024 Capital Improvement & Maintenance Plan."

So far 50% of the Legacy Altitude customers (those who were on the town's Altitude system) have been converted to Hotwire with 100% completion planned for 2024.

Several businesses in town have hooked on to Hotwire and the buildout of the Highlands Mountain Club and the Ravenel subdivision are complete with Hotwire working to contact part-time residents there and elsewhere in town.

A complimentary WiFi upgrade was provided K-H Founders Park as well as TV service to the 15 complimentary TVs Hot-

• See HOTWIRE page 8

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Upcoming projects

Despite the recent drought triggering water and burning restrictions, Highlands has a lot to be thankful for. Our economy is very strong, and our citizens prosper and are engaged in community life while supporting one another. On the weather front, I am optimistic that weather patterns are about to change, which may end the drought situation — a needed blessing. So, as we pause to celebrate our blessings, friends, and families, I wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Let me update everyone on a couple of situations — first, the status of the Big Bear Pen paving project. NCDOT had a contractor clear the new right-of-way of trees and vegetation over the last several weeks. They did this work

now since the bat moratorium was suspended during this time of the year. However, NCDOT must cease this activity now as they cannot remove trees during the designated period when the bat's endangered habitat won't be disturbed.

Big Bear Pen Road will continue to be open to normal traffic flow during the winter months. Some periodic delays may occur as utility crews re-

locate power and communication lines onto new poles on the edges of the planned road widening. This spring, a contractor will begin grading and paving the road.

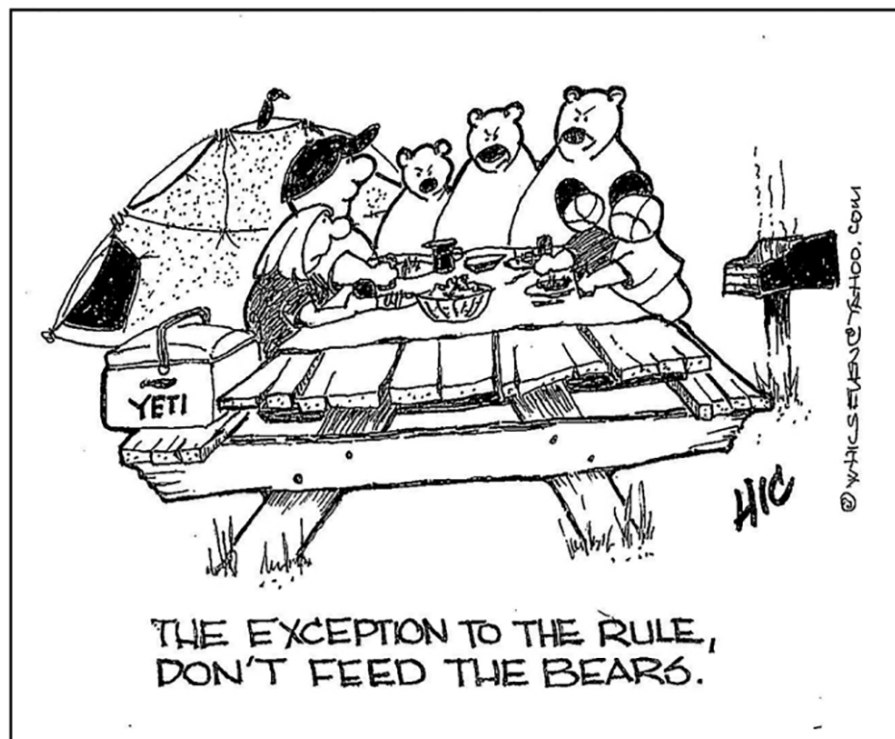
Second, NCDOT will hold a meeting in Raleigh next month to review the town's request to take over sections of Wingina and Upper Lake Roads. Currently, these small road sections are state roads. I expect NCDOT will give them to the town so we can pave those sections and tie them into our currently owned road system. It makes sense that the town owns all aspects of the roads and provides continuous maintenance.

Finally, the new design for the sidewalk on NC 106 from the post office to North Cobb Road is in process. When the engineer completes the preliminary design, it will be shared with the public. No acquisition of private property will be required.





Let's not forget the Annual Christmas Tree lighting at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park this Saturday at 6 p.m. I have it on good authority that Santa Claus will make an appearance.

To one and all, have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 23-Nov	Fri, 24-Nov	Sat, 25-Nov	Sun, 26-Nov
			
56°F 31°F	51°F 32°F	51°F 32°F	49°F 34°F
Clouds and sun; not as cool	Mostly cloudy with a shower	Sun and areas of low clouds	Mainly cloudy
RealFeel®	RealFeel®	RealFeel®	RealFeel®
High: 60° Low: 26°	High: 56° Low: 38°	High: 54° Low: 40°	High: 51° Low: 34°

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

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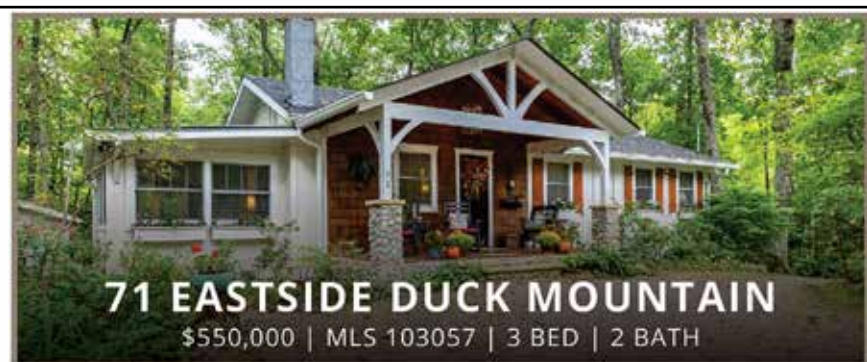
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Mike Kinnebrew



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• **INVESTING AT 4,118 FT.** •

GRATE-FUL-NESS

(noun: appreciative of benefits received, expressing gratitude, affording pleasure or contentment)

Happy Thanksgiving from all 312 Real Estate Brokers along the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau. We are grateful to you as our friends, customers, neighbors, and residents. It's both a pleasure and a privilege to serve with you and to accept the service you willingly share with us and with others.

If you're reading this column, perhaps you're a full time resident of Highlands or Cashiers; you might be a local business owner (or would like to start you're own business here); maybe you're out there in another city or town and considering either moving to the mountains full time, or purchasing a second home in this paradise we call home; you could be contemplating the next chapter of your life wondering if it's time to sell; you may have inherited the family cottage from a loved one, and are thinking about what you should do next. No matter your current circumstances,



Deborah "Bee" Gleeson 404.307.1415

and

Pat Gleeson 828.782.0472

Christie's International Realty

be grateful for them. Again, speaking for Real Estate Brokers everywhere, coffee and conversation are yours for free, and we're grateful to provide guidance, expertise and friendship.

Our collective gratitude overflows for the ones who provide the benefits we receive and make Highlands and Cashiers one of America's "last best places to be". It begins with the men and women in the trenches like our Police, Fire, and Rescue teams who protect us 365 and 24/7. And "cheers" to those who own and operate our restaurants and bars, Hotels, and retail community, the management & staff, masseuses, maids,

bartenders, wait staff, and hostesses who travel great distances to serve others with excellence, friendliness, and a smile. We salute the army of volunteers who donate their time to preserve our lands, blaze the trails we hike, and protect our forests. The Highland's Greenway, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, The Highlands Nature Center,

• See **INVESTING** page 30

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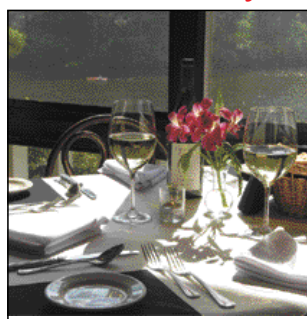
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• LETTERS •

Project 2025 - Hate is Taught

Dear Editor,

I was recently in New Orleans walking in a park when I came across a group of 20 to 25 kindergarten children. They were with a teacher, and she gave them a short lesson as they sat together on the grass. Then they rose, took the hand of the next child, and all walked together in a line, holding hands, to the next area. The children were adorable; they were of all different races, all sitting and learning together. As I watched these innocent young children, I had a terrible thought: I wondered when they would be taught to hate each other just because they were different.

What made me think of that was I had asked any Vet who supported Trump and could overlook his disparaging conduct toward veterans to please let me know how they could.

USAF Colonel, retired, Paul Schowalter had responded to my request in my letter-to-the-editor concerning veterans voting for Trump in a letter he wrote in the Nov. 2 edition entitled "Excoriating veterans who back Trump."

A wife, who had read the letter confronted her husband with all of Trump's statements and actions about veterans. He responded by saying that he didn't care what Trump is or does because Trump was still better than any Democrat. I wonder when he learned to unconditionally hate, or at least disrespect and dismiss, an entire group of people — the Democrats group, which includes his wife. Prejudice and hate are not born to the person; they are learned. And I guess this particular vet learned it well.

Unfortunately, hate is on the rise, and Trump has become the great facilitator of hate in America. His rants against Muslims, Democrats, illegal immigrants (his wife was one), judges with Latin heritage, Latin and black men falsely accused of rape (Central Part Five - convicted and later found innocent), and the DOJ and the FBI (Reuters April 2023) are legendary and golden news stories for the Fox "It doesn't have to be true to be reported" News station. And now the twice impeached, four times indicted, three times convicted of fraud (Civil Fraud – Sept 2023, Trump University – March 2017, and criminal tax scheme - Jan 2023), liable for sexual abuse (May 2023), and speaker of 30,573 lies while President (NY Times Jan 2021) has started his campaign for President by choosing Waco Texas, the site of Branch Davidian standoff where 80 people died, for the announcement of his platform, which includes "I am your retribution" (March 2023).

"Project 2025" was revealed (Nov 6), which includes a list of people to investigate as soon as Trump takes office, including General Milley, Attorney General Bill Barr, Attorney Cobb, and General/Chief of Staff John Kelly, as well as a plan, that includes executive orders, that would deploy the military domestically under the Insurrection Act (Washington Post Nov 6, 2023). On November 12, there was an appalling announcement by Trump as he is now referring to Americans who don't support him as "Vermin," the same word used by the Nazis. I cannot fathom how none of the above matters to his supporters.

My lady's stepfather is a 99-year-old WWII veteran, and each Saturday, he has a station in the World War II museum in New Orleans where people visit with him and learn

about his service in WWII. He is a remarkable man. Whenever I am in NOLA, I visit the museum. It has the most incredible displays of individual soldiers and their personal stories and sacrifices. It is a monument to Democracy and a testament against hate.

During WWII, in response to the Nazi threat, Winston Churchill famously said, "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the landing ground, we shall fight in the streets. We shall never surrender." "We are not facing the Nazis today in America, but we are facing a Trump-induced threat to the very fabric of our Democracy. I am not a Winston Churchill; I am just an American citizen.

For my part, I will fight this new threat: Trump. I will fight him with my words, I will fight him by campaigning, and I will fight him with my vote. I will never surrender to him, his lies, and his campaign to end Democracy in America. Too many have paid the ultimate price to preserve it. If Trump wins, I fear he will never leave the White House, and our great experiment in Democracy will end with him.

These letters should not be just about blowing off steam or requests for face-to-face confrontation; they should ask for an action or seek a solution. At the very least, they should make you think. I am asking you to think about the future of our children and grandchildren and what the country would be like for them under the Trump rule. For those who have supported Trump and these few words have moved you to possibly open your hearts to another way, we welcome you back to democracy with open and forgiving arms.

The Office of the President is all about honor and integrity, and Trump has none. The character of the President of the United States has to matter. And the rest is just crap.

**Matthew Eberz
Highlands**

- NOTE -

Part of this letter was omitted last week.

We regret the error and are happy to set the record straight.

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• INK PENN •

Never underestimate a senior sleuth

My latest mystery reads are set in England and have amateur sleuths as their main characters. If you're a Miss Marple fan, you're sure to enjoy these modern-day senior sleuths. And in the case of the second book, if you were a fan of Queen Elizabeth, you'll be intrigued by the glimpses into the family life of the royals.



Kathy Manos Penn

one transports the reader to Sandringham Hall for Christmas the same year.

I credit this series and Kate Quinn's "The Rose Code" for piquing my curiosity about Prince Philip. While he's not the main character in either, I enjoyed the glimpses of his personality in both. Yes, Queen Elizabeth is the star, but her staff and the prince are also

The Last Devil to Die by Richard Osman

The fourth installment in The Thursday Murder Club series is spectacular. As always, the murder mystery is cleverly plotted. What makes this series for me, though, is the cast of characters—the retirees living at Coopers Chase Retirement Village. Ron, Ibrahim, Joyce, and Elizabeth enjoy the amenities at the posh village near the coast of England, but more than that, they love solving murders.

This group of seventy- and eighty-year-olds meet every Thursday afternoon in the game room at the village, just like other retirees. But this quartet doesn't play games. They work on murder cases. Way back in book one, it was unsolved cold cases. More recently, they've been drawn into an up to the minute case or two.

This time, the victim is an old friend of Elizabeth's husband, Stephen. As the series has progressed, so has Stephen's dementia. Elizabeth has always been the leader of the crime solving retirees, but as Stephen's health deteriorates, her priorities shift. She's on the case but to a lesser extent, and this forces the others to step up. The result is a poignant portrayal of love, loyalty, and sacrifice wrapped around a murder mystery.

Murder Most Royal by SJ Bennett

Queen Elizabeth II is the sleuth in this mystery, the third in the "Her Majesty the Queen Investigates" series. "The Windsor Knot," the first in the series, is set in the spring of 2016 at Windsor Castle, and this

key players in the mystery.

It's the affection and humor in the relationship between Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip that will surely warm your heart as it does mine. Does it tell you anything to learn that I ordered a biography of Prince Phillip after reading "The Windsor Knot"? Have I read it yet? No. But perhaps one day.

In "Murder Most Royal," I felt like a fly on the wall as I read about the holiday traditions of the royal family. What a treat to learn that Kate Middleton is known for her humorous gifts, and that she once gave Harry a "grow your own girlfriend" kit. This was pre-Megan Markle—of course.

All three books kept me guessing, but more than that, they made me realize how very human the royal family is. As one review says, "Pitch-perfect ... If "The Crown" were crossed with Miss Marple ... the result would probably be something like this charming whodunnit." I'm eagerly awaiting Queen Elizabeth's next sleuthing adventure.

I highly recommend you spend a winter evening or several visiting with the senior sleuths in both of these series. Their intelligence and wit are a treat.

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/.

...HOTWIRE continued from page 1

wire provided the Highlands Fire Station.

In 2024 Hotwire's plan is to have all Legacy Altitude customers within the service area on broadband and wireless. Eleven communities are in Hotwire's sights as is communicating with the residents there.

Hall said residents in their target areas are part-time so contacting them has

proven difficult. He asked that anyone who wants on the system to call.

For those not covered by the town's infrastructure, Hotwire is in the redline stage of negotiations to get a pole agreement with Haywood Electric which services Rainbow Road and the Clear Creek

• See HOTWIRE page 14



Don't miss the
Highlands Christmas Parade!

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...SHEARL continued from page 1

\$1.8 million of ARPA funding which is in line with the federal governments Revenue Replacement category of allowable expenses.

Roland's proposal would ultimately free up funding within the county's general fund that would reinstate a \$2 an hour retention bonus for county employees.

Commissioner John Shearl responded to Roland's proposal by accusing him of asking commissioners to "manipulate the budget" to provide employees with a bonus. Commissioner Shearl told Roland that he had spoken to an attorney at the North Carolina School of Government and according to the attorney, Roland's proposal was illegal.

Roland assured Shearl that he, too, had consulted with an attorney at the School of Government when crafting the policy and that the information he provided commissioners within his proposal was accurate and legal.

Because Roland said that the information Commissioner Shearl claimed to have from the school of government was not accurate, Commissioner Shearl accused Roland of calling him a liar and because of such, called for him to resign from his position as Manager of Macon County.

A public records request for the emails Commissioner Shearl referenced as his basis for accusing Roland of manipulating the

county's budget reveal that Shearl had misrepresented the information he received from the School of Government.

While Shearl claimed the attorney informed him during their correspondence that the county's plan to spend the money was illegal, the public records request actually show that the attorney specifically informed Commissioner Shearl that is how the county should spend the funding.

An email sent to Commissioner Shearl on November 14 from Rebecca Badgett, Teaching Assistant Professor at the UNC School of Government stated that her email contained an attachment explaining "premium pay and what ARPA funds may be spent on under the revenue replacement category, which allows the funds to be spent on any government service."

Commissioner Shearl responded the same day acknowledging the receipt of the information and asking the follow-up question, "What could the ARPA funds be used for initially? All inclusive list if available please."

Badgett responded the same day and informed Shearl that it would be difficult to provide a comprehensive list because there are many types of projects that are eligible. Badgett then provided details regarding the four allowable categorized: projects that respond to the public health

• See SHEARL page 12

Highlands

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On Oak Lane, only 2 blocks from Main Street, this totally renovated home is move-in ready and features 3 bedrooms and 2 baths within the main house, plus an office and a large storage closet. There is an additional guest suite with a full bath over the 2-car garage. Large entertaining porch and deck. All is done in A Plus finishes and a must see in a convenient location to downtown. Priced significantly less than the neighboring new homes in the area. Offered at \$1,995,000. MLS #103079.



Located off Buck Knob Road, this one-of-a-kind log cabin of which the logs were selected each one by the Owner and used to construct his dream cabin on top of the knoll with a lovely yard and view. 2 bedrooms and 2 baths on the upper level, main level has living room, dining room, kitchen, bath and two large porches. Lower level has a garage, family room and bath. Offered at \$1,695,000. mls #102878



Located at the end of the lane and needs someone to rebuild and restore it. 2 bedrooms, 1 bath plus an attic in the roofline. There is a carport and storage above. The lot is wonderful, with end-of-the-road privacy and a grassy usable lot. Loads of potential with city water and power. \$425,000 mls #103136.



On Retreat Lane, sitting on over 7 acres, this artsy cabin was lovingly planned and constructed to take advantage of a mountain view, but also the babbling stream, off the covered porch. Inside is a massive stone fireplace, kitchen dining area. Primary bedroom, bath and sleeping porch. Upstairs loft has a bedroom. Lower level has an art studio, with a workshop and storage. There is room on the site for another house, if you want to make your own story and keep the cabin as a guesthouse. Offered at \$1,395,000. mls #103076



Featuring many upgrades. The home has wood floors in every room, in addition to the open floor plan, double pane cathedral windows and solid wood doors. This home has been lovingly cared for. Boasting an updated kitchen, bathrooms and a great screened in porch with tile floors for enjoying the fresh mountain air. Come enjoy our Mountain town in your new home! Offered at \$1,450,000. mls #102818



Dillard Road This home is over 100 years old and is ready to be brought back to the condition it deserves. 3 bedrooms, 1 bath plus an office. close to town and great location, walk to great food. nice usable yard. Offered at \$1,300,000. mls #102847



All you need are clothes and a toothbrush to move into this completely furnished home. Two bedrooms, two baths on a secluded hill in town. Gas fireplace for those chilly nights. Full kitchen, nice covered and open deck to enjoy. Covered carport and ample parking. All for only \$599,000. mls #102004



Highlands Cove at Old Edwards Club This lovely condo features easy access directly Off of Highlands Cove Drive and is close to the clubhouse, swimming, tennis courts, and Golf course. Three bedrooms, three baths, all on the main level, Coffered High ceilings, move in condition. Lovely decks and porches to enjoy the cool summer air. Furnishings are negotiable. Offered at \$1,100,000. mls #101007



This authentic Highlands charmer is close to town near the Mirror Lake dam on all paved roads, with a side yard and a firepit. The cottage has a kitchen/dining room, primary bedroom and bath on the main level with porch. The terrace level has a living room that opens to the side yard, 2 bedrooms and a bath. This one is a grandfathered Short-Term Rental. Ready to use and bring back some income. furnishings negotiable. Offered at \$749,999. mls #103317



This charming, classic Highlands log cabin is in Highland Hills, only minutes from downtown Highlands and is adjacent to Old Edwards Half Mile Farm with deeded access to Apple Lake. Renovated in 2022 with the most desirable finishes, like solid pine floors. Remodeled kitchen, bathrooms, bedrooms, vaulted ceilings, covered porch with fireplace, parking for 5 cars, landscaping and extra lot. Offered at \$1,499,500. mls #102945



About 5 miles from town, this home has 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2-car carport. The main room has a pellet wood stove, updated kitchen with room for expansion. The lower level has a huge unfinished room with a laundry, work area and is stubbed for a bath. Additional storage building has 2 levels. All on an acre of land with great winter views and a usable yard. Offered at \$519,000. mls #100826



A Highlands Country Club property with Membership not required. 4BR/4BA home with post and beam great room and cathedral windows and wrap-around porch. The master bedroom and bath on the Main Level adjoins an outdoor living area with fireplace. Second bedroom and bath on the main level, The other two bedrooms, have en-suite bathrooms. Deck on the lower level with walk-out steps. Offered at \$1,399,000. mls #103156



Located on over 2 acres, this enchanting cabin is tucked away in the privacy of a rhododendron thicket. Lovely covered porch, living room is open to the kitchen and dining area, A full basement has single doors and a garage door for covered parking, workshop, or expansion. Offered at \$495,000. mls #102893



Upgraded and renovated, take in the long mountain views of Whiteside and Big Bear Pen. This in town property includes the lot below, build on it, or sell with sewer access. 2BR/2BA, wood floors, heated tile in bathrooms, wood burning fireplace, vaulted ceiling in living room and a large loft for office, studio & overflow. Nicely landscaped yard with circular driveway, parking pad and firepit. Fenced side yard. Close to Main Street Highlands, Mirror Lake & Lake Sequoyah. Offered at \$1,050,000. mls #103067



Located close to town, this Starter cottage features 2 bedrooms and 3 baths. One-car garage could be converted to a family room. 3 levels that house a livingroom/kitchen/dining on main, bedroom and bath on 2nd level. Offered at \$499,000. mls #101709

...SHEARL continued from page 10

and the economic impacts of COVID19, replacing public sector revenue, premium pay, and infrastructure projects.

Badgett explained that the revenue replacement category “allows you to spend up to \$10 million on any government service/expenditure that the local government would otherwise be authorized to undertake. All local governments that received \$10 million or less can spend all of their funds

in this category. There are fewer compliance requirements for expenditures in this category. For example, federal procurement rules do not apply.”

She also provided a link to the US Department of Treasury’s website directly to the grant programs Final Rule Overview.

Badgett then advised how the county should spend the money by saying, “There’s no reason for your unit to expend funds in any cat-

egory other than revenue replacement. That’s the easiest way to spend the remainder of the award. This should allow you to free up general fund revenue and expend the freed-up funds on projects or programs that you would otherwise be unable to do.”

Shearl almost immediately responded, thanking Badgett for the information. With Badgett specifically informing Shearl that the county can and should spend

the funds under the revenue replacement category, as Roland had proposed, Shearl’s follow up questions suggest that he understood Roland’s proposal to be right and legal,

“I have been trying to figure out how much money that Macon County received of the ARPA funds,” Shearl asked. “Does it affect any of this information if they received more than 10 million dollars?”

Badgett told Commissioner Shearl that if the county received more than \$10 million, only the first \$10 million could be considered revenue loss. Macon County received \$6.9 million, less than the \$10 million threshold.

During Tuesday night’s meeting Commissioner Shearl continued to claim that according to Badgett, the funds couldn’t be spent under the allowable category of premium pay after April 2023, which is accurate.

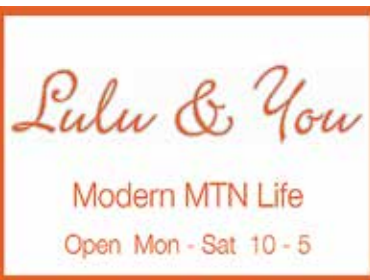
However, Commissioner Shearl’s final email to Badgett reveals that he fully understood that County Manager Derek Roland’s proposal was not seeking to spend the funding on premium pay as it relates to one of the four categories identified by the federal government. Despite acknowledging this within his emails to Badgett, Commissioner Shearl misrepresented the information he was provided and misrepresented his communication with the attorney.

As per his email to Badgett, Shearl said, “Yes, they spent ap-

proximately half of the money received for premium pay. We halted that by the order of the federal government in April 2023. The County Manager has this on the agenda to discuss retention pay to employees at \$2 per hour. I will let you know how this turns out tomorrow. Thank you for all of your help today.”

A public records request for the email communication Roland referenced during the meeting between himself and an attorney at the UNC School of Government revealed that just as Roland stated during the meeting, SOG attorney Kara Millonzi advised Roland to spend the remaining funds out of the allowable category of revenue replacement.

“Because the county received under \$10 million total allocation, it can spend all of its funds as revenue replacement,” Millonzi wrote in her email to Roland. “I suggest keeping the premium pay policy (assuming the board still supports it) but swapping out how you are paying for it. You can legally use your \$6.94m to reimburse almost any county expenditure dating back to March 3, 2021. The board could amend (or adopt) its grant project ordinance to reflect the specific reimbursement expenditures totaling the full amount. That legally “obligates and expends” all the ARPA funds, which frees up non-grant revenues that can be used to cover all the premium payments.”



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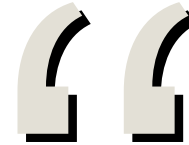
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Staging Map for Christmas Parade Participants

Please be aware of this year's staging route which may affect access on these roads from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Saturday, December 2, 2023.



• THEN & NOW •

Thanksgiving in the Mountains

For generations, Thanksgiving did not loom as an important holiday in mountain culture as it does today. Nor did Christmas. Easter was far more important. But why?

To moderns, Thanksgiving means families coming together to break bread and consuming perhaps the unhealthiest meal of the year, a time of joyous celebration, meeting new members, and remembering those who “went to see the Lord.” Or meet the devil. Or perhaps it might degenerate into the dramedy of Meryl Streep’s August: Osage County.

Mountain men frequently brought their handguns and “long guns” and engaged in target practice in a nearby field. Someone always had a new handgun, shotgun, or long rifle that they wanted to show off. In “olden times” they also brought their dogs to church and afterward baited them with rabbits and squirrels for a quick kill while women gathered their fried chicken, always with a special personal baste, various puddings, green beans, cornbread, and biscuits for the meal.

Previous generations of mountaineers, not as scattered as moderns generally are, clustered together in small, familial communities like Culvin Creek, Revere (aka Devil’s Fork), or Ebbs Chapel typically celebrated with a pot luck at granny’s house. Or at a special church service. Or both. Or, if the weather allowed, in a field on “groaning boards” supported by saw horses. Be assured that there would always be a prayer service included as well as the singing of hymns as loudly as possible. Still, one woman always had a special voice that overwhelmed the others while men seldom did.

Often not allowed to eat mom’s delicious pie or auntie’s special chocolate or coconut cake, only torturously gaze at their temptation and guess which to try first, chil-



Milton Ready

dren, unless they egregiously misbehaved, typically were ignored. Boys, forever obnoxious, always behaved the worst. Banana and bread puddings always were in demand. So was ambrosia.

Men often “took a smoke” outside, no women allowed, chewed tobacco, took a swig or two of moonshine, and talked about important subjects like preachers and politics. Women only “gossiped.” Such was their patriarchal society.

With a much lessened school calendar, children might frolick in a nearby stream if available, sneak a cigarette or a chaw behind the barn, and snicker about the latest cousin to have breasts. None relished the long and inevitable prayer of thanksgiving. Some might complain of the “puffed up” preacher or MOG, man of God, who languorously delivered it and sometimes even blessed the tractor.

The entire day typically was consumed by church services, singing hymns, talking and catching up on family and friends, and setting up and eating the meal. Women cleaned up afterward, washed dishes, traded recipes, and talked about their families. Men talked about trucks, dogs, jobs, and, if they mentioned their family, it typically was about their mothers, not their wives. Around four o’clock, women began packing up, calling their children, and loading the car or truck. Now it’s frequently an SUV.

For the rest of the evening, families gossiped about those who attended and who didn’t, those who had been unfaithful, almost always a man, and about the latest foibles about cousins and children. Most of all, they vowed that they probably would not attend next year. Yet they always did.

Now, what was your family Thanksgiving like?

...HOTWIRE continued from page 8

community.

They are also in the beginning stage of negotiations to get a pole agreement with Duke Power.

The resident hookups planned for 2024 are 18 in Townplace Condominium, 32 in Upper & Lower Brushy Face, 18 at Trillium Place, 11 at Sanctuary on 1st, 8 on Thistle Drive, 13 in Riverwalk in High-

lands, 18 in Brushy Face Preserve and 15 in Hardcrabble Ridge.

A resident of Hardcrabble said that contracts discussed with that community early on made hooking on financially unwise.

Since the infrastructure is going to be underground at Hardcrabble, he said the

Happy Thanksgiving



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• HOSPITAL NEWS •

It's important to cultivate an attitude of gratitude as we count our many blessings

I enjoy writing my CEO column each November because I get the opportunity to focus on the gratitude that everyone at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) has for our community, patients, and families, and the gratitude that we receive daily from these same groups. It's why I, and every colleague here, believe healthcare to be the most rewarding career there since we strive to make a meaningful and healing difference in people's lives.

In contemplating what I'm grateful for as 2023 winds down, the most significant gift I see is our community's unwavering long-term support, and through periods of change that haven't always been easy. Change can be exciting, but uncertainty and challenges often accompany a transition as significant as the one we experienced in 2019, when Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) became part of HCA Healthcare.

I had little time to gain an understanding of our hospital and community before Covid-19 came, shortly after I arrived in December, 2019. While much happened during the pandemic that we'd prefer to forget, this period did allow us to create a strategy for our future. Tomorrow hinges on growth coupled with a culture committed to the best care and service you can expect from any hospital. Allow me to share some of the changes we're most proud of.

We recently restarted our surgical services program after being shut down 10 years ago. We currently offer same day surgery, meaning you arrive in the morning and go home the same day. We provide general surgery, colonoscopy, and orthopedic surgery again — our newest service, thanks to the arrival of Dr. Michael Moriarty. In fact, he performed our first orthopedic procedure in August. It's a big win for our community that they can access this care right at home, and



**Tom Neal CEO, CNO
Highlands-Cashiers
Hospital**

I hear this when I get out into the community. We will continue to explore new services we can add.

Our extraordinary caregivers and committed team members across HCH create every patient's experience. They drive the care journey and whether a patient remembers if they were the focus, from their treatment to whether they felt listened to and treated with dignity and respect.

I'm often asked by my HCA Healthcare peers what the "special sauce" is here, as we rank at the top of our company and the industry for our patient experience and quality outcomes. My answer? We have a great culture. Our people, while highly qualified, also care like family.

This culture drives great outcomes. For example, it has been a full decade since we had a patient develop a hospital acquired infection related to urinary catheters (known as a CAUTI infection) or a blood stream infection associated with a central intravenous catheter, or CLABSI. Trust me when I tell you this is uncommon. It reflects our daily focus on assuring the high level of patient safety we're known for, thanks to HCH's extraordinary team members.

We are also excited with our recent certification as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital (ASRH). In conjunction with the Joint Commission, the American Heart As-

sociation and the American Stroke Association accredit hospitals that meet the highest, most current standards of stroke care, nurture efficient caregiver teams, and provide excellent care consistency within the hospital and the health system. This accomplishment reflects the commitment our great emergency room nurses and doctors, and their EMS provider partners have to best practices. You should feel confident that you can receive the best care possible in our ER.

I am also proud to share that of the 190+ emergency rooms in HCA Healthcare, ours was ranked as the #1 ER in the company for patient experience. This reflects sustained top box ratings over the last year. We were also recognized with having the best ER physician in the company, Dr. John Worthington. Having worked in this industry for more than 35 years, I feel well-qualified to note that Dr. Worthington is one of the best you will find anywhere. His experience, expertise, and bedside manner are without comparison.

I give thanks to our providers, pharmacy, lab team, radiology team, and our EMS partners. As they say, it takes a village, and the HCH "village" enables our larger community village to be cared for compassionately. I also have deep gratitude for the unwavering support of our community, without which we wouldn't be where we are.

While many rural hospitals in our country face struggles that are causing them to reduce or curtail services, and even to close, we're growing at HCH. We are poised for a powerful future and fully supported by HCA Healthcare, which continues to invest heavily in us, and to which I give one more note of gratitude.

I wish all the best to our community for a Thanksgiving that is peaceful and filled with family and friends.

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

Shop-with-a-Cop Rotary Bingo is Dec. 7

It wouldn't be Christmas without Shop-With-A-Cop Rotary Bingo. SWAC Rotary Bingo will be on Thursday, December 7th 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Community Building next to the Ballfield. This is a guaranteed night of fun for a wonderful cause.

Shop-With-A-Cop is celebrating its 30th year helping children who would have little or no Christmas. It provides a positive experience with police officers letting the children understand that Cops are not the bad guys. The children are given a \$200 gift card to shop with at Walmart with the assistance of police officers or other personnel. Many times, the children only buy necessities for the home because the need is so great. This program helps children in Macon County, including Highlands, Otto and Franklin.

Shop-With-A-Cop Rotary Bingo is a great way to support SWAC. The night of the event Rotary members sell Bingo Cards for \$15 for the players to play 15 games that are played. There will be times of excitement as the players get closer and closer to winning. Rotary Bingo is an evening of



Highlands Police Chief Andrea Holland on last year's Shop with a Cop shopping trip.

fun for the whole family. So, bring your children and grandchildren.

This being a special Bingo there may be a surprise visitor or two. There will be plenty of refreshments for all to enjoy.

Bingo is sponsored by The Rotary Club of Highlands and is licensed by the State of North Carolina.

- Submitted by Carolina Cook

...HOTWIRE continued from page 14

original contract required all properties to be connected or there would be a 4% increase each year until so. But he said the main reason that wouldn't work is because one resident bought up numerous lots for privacy so it's really just one owner.

Hall and Galletto said they weren't aware of that contract and understood why it wouldn't be workable for residents; they said they would look in to the situation.

Hall said the company has run into pushback in three communities which means Hotwire's buildout plan to reach those 56 residents is in jeopardy.

On Worley Road where there are 8 units, a resident said he owns the street and he will not allow Hotwire to build; the property manager at Old Highlands Park on Spring Street told them to stop designing because they would not be allowed in; and the HOA at Fairway Condos said Hotwire was not allowed to build into the units. Attaching fiber to each home is the

objective.

Meanwhile, Hall said the company will continue to perform continuous routine maintenance including capacity checks and planning and system upgrades to the tune of \$100,000 in 2024.

Within the in-service area that is built there are 58 remaining, 100 converted to fiber and 47 disconnected from Altitude.

Within the in-service area not yet built, there are 24 remaining, zero converted to fiber and 12 disconnected.

Within the out-of-service area 66 are remaining and 4 were disconnected.

Hall said the pole agreement with Haywood and Duke will definitely help in those areas.

In the end, Hall encouraged anyone in town or away for the winter who is interested in getting on board to contact the office at 670 N. 4th Street. The toll-free number is 833-986-1570 or to email highlands@hw.com.

- Kim Lewicki

Highlanders For Good Government

*"We believe in honest and open
government for
Highlands and Macon County"*



After witnessing the worst personal attack on a county employee by a seated commissioner in the history of the county at the November 14th Macon County Commissioner meeting, Highlanders for Good Government wants you to know we support our County Manager, all our firefighters, EMS, police, teachers, county employees and our board of education. Our county is lucky to have the great folks who run it.

Thank you, Commissioner Young, Commissioner Shields, and Commissioner Antoine for doing the right thing and voting to support our hard-working employees and school board. Thank you for voting to uphold the improvement of our county schools.

It's simply the right thing to do.

It's easy to show support through meaningless rhetoric, but quite another to have the courage to use your vote to do it.

Citizens of Macon, please remember what happened on November 14th at the Macon County Commission meeting when you vote in the next elections.

- Paid for by Highlanders for Good Government -



We're thankful for the local and family-owned businesses that add to the vibrancy and character of our beloved community.

Please support them this Saturday.

Small Business Saturday

NOVEMBER 25



• FINANCIAL MATTERS •

Planning for your vacation home

Acquiring a vacation or second home involves a strategic approach to ensure that the investment aligns with your overall financial goals. Here are key considerations and insights to guide your decision-making process:

1. Establish Clear Financial Goals: Before delving into the market, define your financial objectives for the second home. Determine whether it's primarily an investment for potential appreciation, a rental property for additional income, or a personal retreat for family vacations. This clarity will shape your budget, financing strategy, and overall approach.

2. Develop a Realistic Budget: Beyond the purchase price, create a comprehensive budget that includes ongoing expenses such as property taxes, insurance, maintenance, and potential management fees. Account for any renovations or upgrades the property may require. It's crucial to have a clear understanding of the total cost of ownership to avoid financial strain in the long run.

3. Financing Considerations: Financing a second home often involves different terms than those for a primary residence. Expect a higher down payment requirement and potentially a slightly higher interest rate. Explore various financing options, compare lenders, and ensure that the loan structure aligns with your financial capacity and goals.

4. Location and Market Analysis: Conduct a thorough analysis of the location's real estate market. Consider not only current property values but also historical trends. Assess the area's economic stability, potential for growth, and any seasonal variations that may impact property values or rental income. A strategic location can contribute significantly to the property's overall financial performance.

5. Return on Investment (ROI) and Income Generation: If your second home will serve as a rental property, carefully evaluate its income-generating potential. Consider factors such as local rental demand, competition, and seasonality. Calculate the expected return on investment to ensure that the property aligns with your financial objectives. Keep in mind that property management costs and potential vacancies can



Michael P Henderson,
CFP® CKA®
Founder/Wealth Advisor
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impact your net income.

6. Tax Implications: Understand the tax implications of owning a second property, including property taxes, income tax on rental revenue, and any deductions or credits available to you. Consult with a tax professional to optimize your tax strategy and ensure compliance with local regulations.

7. Diversification and Risk Management: Owning a second home introduces a level of diversification to your investment portfolio. Assess how this purchase fits into your overall asset allocation strategy and risk tolerance. Consider the potential impact on your financial stability in the event of economic downturns or changes in the real estate market.

8. Long-Term Financial Planning: Look beyond the immediate benefits and challenges of owning a second home and consider its role in your long-term financial plan. How does it align with your retirement goals or estate planning? Evaluate whether the property can serve as a source of passive income or be leveraged for future financial objectives.

9. Regular Financial Reviews: As with any investment, conduct regular financial reviews to assess the performance of your second home in the context of your broader financial plan. Periodically reassess your goals, market conditions, and the property's financial viability to make informed decisions about its continued ownership.

Purchasing a vacation or second home requires a meticulous financial planning approach. By establishing clear goals, developing a realistic budget, understanding financing options, analyzing the market, and considering long-term implications, you can integrate the property strategically into your overall financial plan for both enjoyment and financial success.

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...PLAYGROUND continued from page 1

will be constructed with the topography of the land in mind - for instance, a roller slide is envisioned for the hilly area - with different areas designated for ages 2-5 and 5-12.

The committee has enlisted the help of Carolina Parks and Play which will ultimately design the space with a general contractor hired and sub-contractors used to pour and construct the groundwork and footprint on which components will be affixed.

Though Stiehler and Weller were only asking for a "go-ahead" from the Town Board, the Playground Committee plans to ask for funding from both the town and the county with a fundraising campaign taking care of the rest. If all goes as planned the playground could be a reality in 2025.

Carolina Parks and Play's bid for the project is \$1.65 million.

"That quote is good for 30 days but to hold that price, we'd have to place the order," said Stiehler. "I suspect there will be a small percentage increase by the time we are ready to do that. While this is a quote, I've been treating this more as a guide to know what we realistically need to raise."

There is one week left to make a matching donation to The Bascom

The Bascom is using Giving Tuesday 2023 as part of its fundraising challenge this year.

Giving Tuesday 2023 worldwide is November 28 seen as a day to celebrate the generosity of communities across the globe.

Thanks to an anonymous donor, The Bascom has an opportunity to secure an additional \$5,000 - when 100 donors make a gift of ANY SIZE to The Bascom.

All gifts of all sizes received through November 28 count toward the challenge.

All gifts of \$100 or more will automatically be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a one-of-a-kind ceramic holiday house created by Bascom Studio member, Martha Sutherland-Wright.

Make your gift online, by check or in person at The Bascom anytime through November 28 and the gift will qualify for the Challenge.

No matter the size, every gift is invaluable toward helping The Bascom reach its goal of 100 gifts, meet the challenge, and support its educational outreach across the Plateau.

So far, The Bascom is at 30% of its

At Thursday's Playground Committee meeting, the group agreed to get a little more money or commitments from the community before officially asking the county and the town for funding.

"Now that we know what we would like to see, we are looking at fundraising to start the spring of 2024," said Stiehler. "And then hopefully, depending on how fundraising goes, we can pull the trigger on construction the fall of 2024 with a completion date sometime in 2025."

Stiehler and Weller said they have no idea how long it will take to get the components - spinners, slides, swings, sensory and tactile play elements - so that will determine an opening date as well.

The Town Board unanimously approved the project and encouraged the committee to continue its plans.

Anyone interested in helping out financially is encouraged to contact Commissioner Stiehler at bstiehler@highlandscountryclub.com or Jeff Weller at jeff@summitarchitecturepa.com

- Kim Lewicki

goal of 100 gifts. It needs 70 more gifts of any size to reach the goal to qualify for the \$5,000 match.

To make a gift today and encourage a friend to join you in supporting arts outreach on the Plateau go to <https://thebascom.org/>

- Kim Lewicki

COREY JAMES GALLERY & Estate Consignments

**Bronze sculpture • Paintings
Vintage & Antique Collectables &
Furniture • Costume Jewelry
and much more**



(828)
526-4818

**On the
corner
of 3rd &
Spring**



Ice Skating in the Park Opening Soon!

Thru March 3, 2024

Thursdays 3:30 - 8 p.m., Fridays 3:30 - 10 p.m.,
Saturdays 1 - 10 p.m. and Sundays 1 - 5 p.m.

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park
\$5, with or without skates.

Santa in the Park

December 2, 9 & 16

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park

Light Up the Park & Main

Saturday, November 25
6 - 8 p.m.

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park

Highlands Christmas Parade

Saturday, December 2
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Main Street

Lighting of the Menorah

Thursday, December 7
5:30 p.m.

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park



HOLIDAYS IN
HIGHLANDS

HIGHLANDS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/VISIT HIGHLANDS, NC

All events, other than Ice Skating, are organized and hosted by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC.



**MOUNTAIN
THEATRE COMPANY**
EST. 1938 | HIGHLANDS, NC

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

DECEMBER 8 - 24

**LIVE ON STAGE AT THE
HIGHLANDS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

Fun for all ages, this ALL NEW musical revue promises dazzling costumes, high energy choreography, and is sure to fill audiences with good, old-fashioned holiday cheer!



Presented in part by:
Highlands Chamber of Commerce / Visit Highlands, NC

WWW.MOUNTAINTHEATRE.COM



• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

NEW 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. Adult Swim: 18 years old+, Mon.-Thurs 11a-1:30p; Public Swim Mon. thru Thurs. 3:30-7p; Sat. 11a-6p and Sun. 1-6p. For info, call 828-526-1595.

Mon.-Fri.

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

Mon-Wed, Fri-Sun

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9am at the Rec Park.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class at the Rec Park 8:30-9:30am. The cost for the class is \$25 a month. The class is led by Cathy Hodgson. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• 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 Monday at 8:30 AM, Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. 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

• Indivisible Highlands from 5:15-6:15pm at the Hudson Library Meeting Room.

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 at the Rec Park 8:15-9:15 am. Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone. Learn proper form and range of motion to safely target all muscle groups for a metabolic boost and feel great.

• 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 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@macconncliteracy.org

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 11 AM. 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. The November 1 program is Dementia: A Deeper Understanding. Reservations are required for this free event. To register, stop by the library or call 828-526-3031.

Wed. thru Nov. 22

• The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts Invites You to "Wine Wednesdays" – A New Holiday Tradition. The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts is delighted to introduce "Wine Wednesdays." This festive holiday offering will occur each Wednesday leading up to Thanksgiving, from 3:30 to 5 pm. "Wine Wednesdays" offer a unique opportunity for visitors to explore The Shop and Studio Barn, all while enjoying a glass of wine and browsing the work of local and regional artists.

1st 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 11 AM. 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.

2nd & 4th Wed.

Digital Navigators will be at the Hudson Library at 1PM - 3PM of each month through Thanksgiving to help patrons with their tech needs. Bring a smartphone, laptop, or other digital device to receive free assistance and support. No appointments are required - all are welcome.

Wednesdays

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

• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 AM. 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 at the Rec Pool. 18 years plus 10-11 am. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

- Pickle Ball inside and outside at the Rec Park. 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-6p.

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

Thurs-Sat. thru October

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

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

Thursdays

- Kickboxing 8:15-9:15 am. at the Rec Park. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout. Learn the proper form and technique to execute jabs, hooks, uppercuts, and front and side roundhouse kicks in a non-contact setting. No martial arts background necessary. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

- 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.

2nd Saturdays

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

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

- 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).

Through March 3

- Ice Skating in the Park is opening soon. Thursdays 3:30-8p; Fridays 3:30-10p; Saturdays 1-10p; Sundays 1-5p. \$5 with or without skates.

Thru Nov. 26

- At Acorn's Trunk Shows Pop-Up 10a-5p.

Sat. Nov. 25

- Light up the Park & Main In K-H Founders Park 6-8 p.m.

Thurs., Nov 30

- At The Bascom, ceramic artist talk with Christine Kosiba from 4-5 p.m. Free.

Dec. 2, 9, 16

- Santa in the Park at K-H Founders Park.

Sat., Dec. 2

- Highlands Christmas Parade 10a to noon. on Main Street.

Fri.- Sun., Dec. 1-3

- Half-Mile Farm is thrilled to welcome Rebecca Lang, author of Y'all Come Over and Judge on the Food Network's Chopped Junior for a weekend of Southern Foodie fun. Hosted events are for Half-Mile Farm guests only. To attend this complimentary event at Half-Mile Farm Dec. 1-3 book your stay today.

Mon., Dec. 4

- Red Cross Blood Drive 10a-2p at HUMC. To make an appointment call Kristy at 526-3376, ext. 107, call 800-733-2767, or visit RedCrossBlood.org

Tues., Dec. 5

- Community Dinner at the Community Building for a good time of food and fellowship at 6pm.

Thurs., Dec. 7

- Lighting of the Menorah in K-H Founders Park at 5:30 p.

- Rotary Bingo at the Community Building at 6:30-8:30 p.m. to benefit Shop-with-a-Cop.

Dec. 8-24

- "Home of the Holidays" at Mountain Theatre Company now in residence at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street. Tickets go to www.mountaintheatre.com

Sat. Dec. 16

- Wreaths across America Day is Saturday The ceremony will be at 12 noon at Highlands Rec. Park, 600 North 4th Street. Volunteers are needed to place wreaths. Volunteers will be shuttled to and from Highlands Cemetery afterwards.

Sat.-Sun., May 11-12

- The 4th annual Bear Shadow will be held again at Winfield Farm in Scaly Mountain.

THE BASCOM

A CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



Copper baskets
by Virginia Fisher



Handwoven and dyed
wool scarves by PHLOX

Your gifts should
be as **special** as
the people who
receive them.



Holiday hoops
by Welded Waves



Spalted Sycamore/
African Blackwood vessel
by Lee Area

323 Franklin Road | Highlands, NC
TheBascom.org | 828.526.4949

AARP TAX-AIDE is seeking volunteers for tax preparation assistance

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is seeking volunteers for the upcoming tax season. AARP Tax-Aide volunteers provide tax filing assistance to those who need it most, folks that don't have the resources to file their own returns and can't afford to go to a tax professional.

Last year Tax-Aide volunteers in Macon County assisted 433 families and secured refunds of over \$320,000. To continue to provide this level of service, we need a few more volunteers.

You don't have to be a tax pro to volunteer. Most positions require no tax preparation knowledge. For those that do, we'll provide the training and support required. In all cases, you'll get a great feeling from

helping others.

Needed:

- Greeters welcome taxpayers, assure they've brought the proper documents, and explain the tax prep process. No tax knowledge is required.

- Client Facilitators help organize the taxpayer's paperwork and manage the overall flow of service. No tax knowledge is required.

- Counselors work with taxpayers directly by filling out tax returns. This position requires tax knowledge. If you have no previous experience, you'll get all the training you need and will receive IRS certification. If you can file your own taxes using tax preparation software, you can do this.

- Technology Coordinators

manage computer equipment, ensure taxpayer data is secure, and provide technical assistance to volunteers.

- Leadership and Administrative volunteers make sure program operations run smoothly, manage volunteers, and maintain quality control.

- Communications Coordinators promote the program to prospective volunteers and taxpayers.

Bi-lingual volunteers are especially appreciated in every position.

The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide program has over 25,000 volunteers nationwide. It serves millions of individuals each year. AARP membership is not required, and taxpayers of any age can take advantage of this service. Tax-Aide has helped more than 75 million people since it launched in 1968. It's the na-

tion's largest free volunteer tax program, offered in conjunction with the IRS.

The service is offered at the Macon County Public Library on Mondays and Tuesdays from early February through mid-April. For more information please contact Mary, Local Coordinator, at (828) 634-1043 or 500147066ty23@aarpfoundation.org or go to aarpfoundation.org/TaxaideVolunteer.

• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •



Rotary Club of Highlands provides lunch for Highlands School teachers on October Workday

More than 50 Highlands School teachers and staff enjoyed lunch provided by the Rotary Club of Highlands on their October Work Day. In addition to lunch, teachers were awarded \$100 stipends to purchase need-

ed school supplies.

On behalf of the entire school, Principal Sarah Holbrooks and Assistant Principal Alyssa DeBois expressed their gratitude for lunch. Dessert that included a cake declaring

"Teachers Rock!" was especially popular.

Spanish teacher Marlene Fairchild said "I am so appreciative of the Rotary Club of Highlands' annual generosity to teachers. Assistance from and collaboration with the Club assures that we have the supplies necessary to engage our students and make our school such a special place. Thank you for helping us teach and learn."

Art teacher Jessica Moschouris noted that "A lunch like this gives us a chance to mingle with our colleagues, talk about our common goals and plans for the school year. It is gratifying to know that the Highlands community appreciates our work and gives us a time to express our thanks for its support."

Anyone wishing to help fulfill school supply wish lists is encouraged to contact Principal Holbrooks at sarah.holbrooks@macon.k12.nc.us



From left: Alyssa DeBois, Highlands School Assistant Principal; Gina Billingsley, Math Teacher, Dave O'Harra, President, Rotary Club of Highlands, Sarah Holbrooks, Highlands School Principal.

Visit Diva's
during
**WINTER
WONDERLAND**

**SPECIAL
20%
OFF***

*Exclusions Apply

ENTIRE STORE

Nov. 25 & Dec. 2

5-8 p.m.!

DIVA'S ON MAIN

BOUTIQUE • JEWELRY • ACCESSORIES

24 E. MAIN ST. • FRANKLIN, NC
828.369.7300



As we gather around the table, we are filled with gratitude that you have joined our Mission to lift health and well-being across the Plateau.

Warmest wishes for a joyful holiday

Happy Thanksgiving!



**Highlands Cashiers
Health Foundation**

To learn more visit
www.HCHealthFnd.org
or scan here



• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Leaning into hospitality

Rev. Kelley Connelly
Associate Pastor
First Presbyterian Church

Thanksgiving is upon us! For some this means multiple trips to the grocery store, cooking marathons, and hosting at its best. For others it includes football games, turkey trots, and squeezing 12 people around an 8 person table. For some, it looks like another day at work, offering high quality service to each and every person. Or perhaps there is no food to share or company to enjoy. Thus begins this long journey to News Years Day to conclude the holiday season. I've been in Highlands now for 7 weeks and in that brief amount of time I've realized that the connecting thread in this community is hospitality. Not only is hospitality the leading industry in Highlands, North Carolina. But it is so clear that hospitality is the heartbeat of this community. This is not news to many of you, I'm sure. However, I think as this leg of our holiday season begins God is urging us to be intentional in our hospitality.

Typically this time of year we often see ads and hear stories that focus on deepening generosity, giving back, and thinking of those less fortunate. This approach is one that I might file away under the "hands and feet" work. Hospitality on the other hand, is work of the heart and soul. When I think about hospitality throughout scripture I am reminded of the famous words from Matthew 25:42-43, "for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." If we keep reading, we learn that to serve one another is to serve God and honor our commitment to following the ways of Jesus Christ. It is a vivid reminder that we are called to serve and welcome all people.

Though the holidays looks different for all of us, I trust that radical hospitality is what keeps us connected. As the holiday season begins I wonder if we might be able to reimagine hospitality a bit. Maybe this means inviting a new neighbor over for dinner or delivering a plate of cookies. Perhaps this looks like supporting a new restaurant in town, extending a warm smile to your favorite server, or adding a little extra gratuity when buying that cup of coffee. The opportunities for hospitality in this area are deep and wide. And thankfully, it is abundantly clear that Highlands is up for challenge. Over the next few weeks I invite you to pay attention to the spirit of hospitality that flows within our town. And maybe, just maybe, you'll witness something radical.

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

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

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

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rev'd Dr. Michael Matlock, Rector

464 Hwy 64E. Cashiers, NC 28717

CAC@christanglicancashiers.org & 828-743-1701

Sundays: 9:30 am Adult Christian Formation;

10:30 am Holy Eucharist Worship

Wednesdays: 6 pm Bible Study, Prayer, Potluck

Thursdays: 10 am Healing Eucharist

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. VV. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

Sunday: Rite I, spoken, 8 am in Chapel, Rite II with Choir 10:30

am in Sanctuary, Wed: Healing Eucharist 12 pm in Chapel, Morn-

ing Prayer: Mon-Thurs 8:30 am 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; Women's 10:30 am

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

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS

Non-Denominational-Contemporary Worship

242 Hwy 107N. 1/4 miles from Crossroads in Cashiers

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

Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

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

In-Person and live-streamed Worship Services

909a Bluegrass and 11a Traditional

www.highlandsmethodist.org

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Rev. Ken Langsdorf

Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.

Visit our website: Holy Family Lutheran Highlands NC

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Zane Talley

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

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

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

Franklin • 828-634-1312 • mountainsynagoguewnc.com.

Services: 1st /Fri. and 3rd Sat.

and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church.

4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone - 526-2418

Tues. - 9:30am; Thurs. - 9:30am; Sat. 4pm; Sun. - 11am

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

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

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

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Tues. noon (Latin) Thurs. 9a.; Fri. noon;

Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 S.. Office: • 743-2359 • Rev. Rob Wood

Sunday Services: 8a. 9:30 & 11a

Visit our website www.goodshepherdofcashiers.com for

schedules of activities.

Our Bazaar Barn supports outreach in the community.

Open Thurs., Fri. Sat. 10a -2p.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • uufranklin.org

Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Oct. 30. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Oct. 30

• At 11:50 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on Main Street.

Nov. 18

• At 11:40 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 east (Cashiers Road).

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Nov. 13.

Nov. 13

• At 8:23 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on the Walhalla Road (NC 28 south).

Nov. 14

• At 2:25 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Big Bear Pen.

Nov. 15

• At 8:18 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of an illegal burn at a residence on Hicks Road.

• At 9:42 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Hospital Drive.

• At 11:04 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on the Cashiers Road (US 64 east.).

Nov. 16

• At 2:14 p.m., the dept. was first-

responders to a location on South Street.

• At 5:53 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Buck Creek Road.

• At 6 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of an illegal burn at a residence on Clear Creek Road.

• At 6:47 p.m. the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Horse Cove Road.

Nov. 17

• At 5:49 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on the Walhalla Road (NC 28 south).

• At 6 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on the Dillard Road (NC 106).

Nov. 18

• At 9:29 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Big View Drive.

• At 11:30 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

Nov. 19

• At 11:07 a.m., the dept. investigated the source of smoke at a residence on Flat Mountain Road.

• At 4:26 p.m., the dept. investigated the source of smoke at a residence on Horse Cove Road.

• At 6:56 p.m., the dept. investigated the source smoke at a residence on Ashwood Circle.

• OBITUARY •

Roberta DeCora Talley Barnes

Mrs. Roberta DeCora Talley Barnes, 74, passed away Thursday, November 16, 2023. Roberta was born June 6, 1949, in Rabun Co. Ga to the late Lyman Elmer Talley and Minnie Carver Talley. Roberta lived and worked for many years in Florida and Wisconsin as a Beekeeper, she also worked for the Figis Candy Company in Wisconsin. She was a graduate of the Tamassee DAR School. She loved to read, hike, and watch birds. Roberta loved her family, caring and doing for others. She was also of the Baptist faith.

Survivors include her four daughters, DeCora Ann Jakobi (Scott), Chili WI., Deborah Alaine Drinka (Austin Bradt) of Loyal, WI., Deloris Arlene Barnes of Highlands, NC., and Doris Amelia Barnes of Marshville, WI; 21 grandchildren; three sisters, Reba Webb, Rena Carver, and Ro-



dean Wilson; and two brothers, Relton Talley and Rabun Talley.

In addition to her parents Roberta was preceded in death by her husband, Allen Bennett Barnes, Jr.; and five siblings, Reveloyne Carver, Romonia Picklesimer, Ronald Talley, Russell Talley, and Randolph Talley.

A funeral service will be held 2 p.m. Monday, November 20, 2023, at Buck Creek Baptist Church with the Rev. Jamie Passmore and Rev. Zane Talley officiating. Burial will follow in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends from 1-2 p.m. prior to the service at the church. Pallbearers will be Austin Bradt, Darrell Talley, Stacy Talley, Brian Talley, Richard Todd, and Brad Hambrick.

Online condolences can be left at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com

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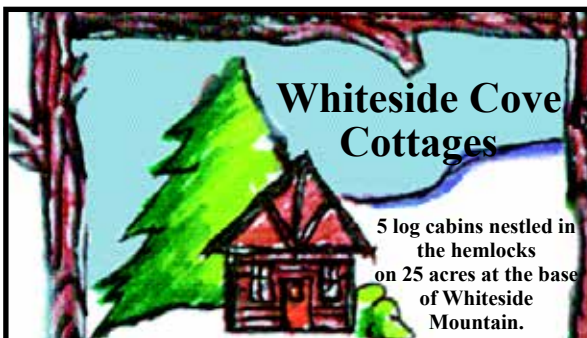
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Upstairs and Across the
Walkway at Falls on Main
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From left: Shawn Cribbs, Macon County Recycling Coordinator; Chris Stahl, Director of Macon County Solid Waste Management and Past President Chris Wilkes.



President Dave O'Harra, Sarah Holbrooks, Alyssa DeBois, Todd Holder.

Halloween celebrated at Rotary

Recent guest speakers on Halloween Day at the Rotary Club of Highlands were two very important people in Highlands community, Sarah Holbrooks and Alyssa DeBois.

Sarah is the Principal at the Highlands School, and Alyssa is the new Assistant Principal.

Sarah has been at Highlands School for the past five years as Assistant Principal before becoming the principal this year. These two leaders at our school shared

how the students interact across all grades and how the children are exposed to many different programs within the school to add to their growth.

The school and these educators also have challenges to face with hiring and retaining teachers, limited school space, and the new needs for heightened security for the school.

They invited all who are interested to visit the school and become acquainted with volunteer opportunities at the school.

Rotarians learn about Macon County's recycling program

At the meeting held on November 14, the Rotary Club of Highlands welcomed guest speaker Chris Stahl, Director of Macon County Solid Waste Management. Macon County Recycling Coordinator Shawn Cribbs joined.

Rotary Host was Slocum Howland. Chris spoke on Macon Counties current waste management initiatives and presented an interesting perspective on what goes into recycling and what products are actually being recycled.

...INVESTING continued from page 4

and network of forest trails are your legacy. And last but not least we salute our Government Officials and entities who's overriding mission is "The 3 P's". PRESERVE Highlands and Cashiers, PROTECT our natural resources, and PLAN growth responsibly. We are all grateful for our Mayor, the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners, Chambers of Commerce, and our respective Macon and Jackson County Leadership. It's long been said "gratitude begins at home". The champions we just mentioned make this our home. We are eternally grateful for all of them.

And finally we all express our unending gratitude for this publication, The Highlands Newspaper. Kim and Jim Lewicki work tirelessly to distribute and deliver news and information free to the reader. Every week, residents, visitors, and a nationwide audience online (www.highlandsinfo.com) benefits from the Lewicki's hard work. We appreciate their service and dedication.

To one and all, we leave you with these words from Henry Van Dyke: "Gratefulness is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling. Thanksgiving is the sharing of that impulse with others".

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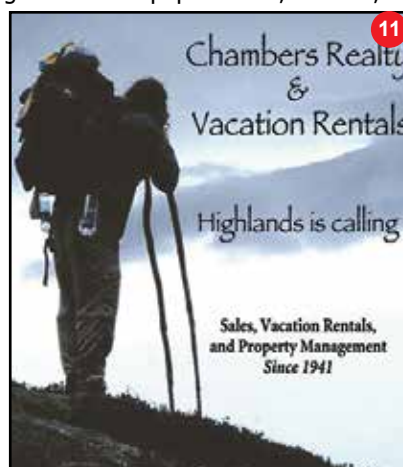
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