

Highlands Newspaper

See you at the parade!

FREE Every Thursday

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Thurs., Nov. 30, 2023

The county wants more control over the Fontana Library System

By Brittney Lofthouse

During the November session of the Macon County Board of Commissioners, Macon Coun-

ty commissioners approved proposed amendments to the "interlocal agreement" with the Fontana Regional Library Board, which was

up for its mandated 10-year review.

While Macon County has approved the proposed amend-

• See FONTANA page 17

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MTC 2024 lineup is 'Season of Escape'

Mountain Theatre Company has announced its 2024 Mainstage Season. In what will mark the theatre company's 86th season, an exciting lineup of shows has been released which is certain to have something for everyone.

The Mainstage Season will kick off May 31 with **Grease** as the first production of the summer.

One of the most beloved musicals of all time hits the Mountain Theatre Company stage in this high-octane production featuring hit songs, including: "Summer Nights," "Greased Lightnin'," "You're the One That I Want," and "Hopelessly Devoted To You."

Join Rydell High's senior class of 1959 as they take audiences back to a time when drive-in movies, sock-hops, and tough talkin' Pink Ladies defined a gen-

• See MTC page 8

The Annual Christmas Parade is Sat.!



This year the parade begins at 10 and ends at noon, and as always it's on Main Street. Santa will be in K-H Founders Park after the parade.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

B of Ed says no to partisan school board races

By Brittney Lofthouse

During the November meeting of the Macon County Board of Education Monday night, board members addressed the recent discussion among county commissioners to petition the state to change school board elections in Macon County from non-partisan to partisan.

A partisan election includes the political party of candidates on the ballot. More than 50 school boards in the state are partisan or will be by 2024, a drastic increase since 2015 when fewer than 20 were selected by partisan methods.

Macon County Schools Attorney John Henning Jr. explained that while he understands the recent move by members of the Macon County Board of Commissioners was cited as being due to a local issue, based on the increase since 2015, it's more likely due to a

• See PARTISAN page 16

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Mayor wants to know how the town can better support businesses

On election night, I went to a couple of parties for the candidates awaiting election results. Needless to say, these kinds of events can be exuberating for some candidates and very disappointing for others. Regardless of whether their candidates won or lost, everyone was relieved to some degree that the election was over and that they were free to return to normal community life.

I attended these election night parties to support and congratulate all the candidates, regardless of the results. As I have said before, I respect and appreciate folks who are willing to run for public office.

As I was leaving one of the parties, a friend of mine, who is also a local business person, had a very candid message to deliver to me. The gist of his communication was that, as mayor, he thought I did not support or understand the business community. That basically, I had no clue how a business was run and all the hard work and stress that business owners faced daily.

My friend went on to say that the current board also did not support the business



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

community. His position was that commissioners did not have to operate a business as a livelihood and had no concept about meeting payrolls and dealing with employee issues.

I could tell my friend was very frustrated and probably had a list of grievances against me and the board. Given that it was election night, I decided not to defend myself, nor the board, or to enter what would probably be an unproductive defense or argument about supporting business.

I simply acknowledged him and said in passing I hope we could continue addressing his concerns. Over the next few days, I pondered how I should respond. I did share with several commissioners his concerns about the board not supporting businesses. A couple of the commissioners, who are themselves business owners, took issue with his assertion of their not knowing about business.

As mayor, I should be open to other perspectives. Maybe the board and myself are missing something about how the business community feels or how we can provide more support. Perhaps there are things that the town can do to support businesses and the economy better. Sometimes, organizations arrive at a time where review and re-evaluation of a situation is very much in order.

So, rather than just keeping the dialogue between me and my business friend, I invite feedback from the entire business and merchant community. How can the town government do more to improve the business climate in Highlands? If you are a company, business, or merchant in Highlands, please feel free to send me your concerns and ideas at my email address: Mayor@highlandsnc.org.





I look forward to getting the community input and presenting it for your review and comment.

As a follow-up I would like to have a public meeting sometime at the beginning of the year to discuss these ideas and concerns. I know it is a busy time of the year, but I hope folks will make time to respond before January 1. I will do a follow-up with details at a later date.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 30-Nov	Fri, 1-Dec	Sat, 2-Dec	Sun, 3-Dec
			
51°F 28°F	49°F 44°F	62°F 47°F	60°F 38°F
Mostly sunny and milder	Periods of rain	Cloudy with a touch of rain	Morning rain; cloudy, mild
RealFeel® High: 54° Low: 26°	RealFeel® High: 46° Low: 38°	RealFeel® High: 65° Low: 53°	RealFeel® High: 62° Low: 44°

For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Weather

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• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft •

Buying at the speed of life

Let's face it, buying almost anything can be emotional, but a big purchase like a home is stressful and can be very emotional. The economy is an influence, too, but for some people, jumping into the real estate market is a lot like waiting for the perfect moment to jump into a game of jump rope. Timing is everything. Well, almost everything.

In a November 17, 2023 Realtor.com article written by Margaret Heidenry, she wrote that "Mortgage rates fell for the third week in a row according to Freddie Mac," and "This downward trend is one sign that 2024 might be a happy year for home shoppers."

Falling rates may be a misnomer, it's more like a slip than a fall, but at least the rates are going down instead of up, right? She went on to quote "The combination of continued economic strength, lower inflation, and lower mortgage rates should likely bring more potential homebuyers into the market," says Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist.

And, Realtor.com® economic research analyst Hannah Jones stated, "The usual seasonal buildup in inventory that makes this time of year favorable for buyers is under way. But from a longer-term macroeconomic perspective, housing remains undersupplied. The number of for-sale homes registered 41.8% below typical pre-pandemic levels in October."

Heidenry ends with this, "The reason homes are selling faster is simple: Limited inventory doesn't just drive up prices, it also compels buyers to move quickly when they see a property that fits the bill. And the pace of sales might accelerate further if mortgage rates keep falling through 2023."

The law of scarcity. Supply and demand. Emotional buying. Very sound advice from Victoria Araj of Rocket Mortgage says, "Negotiating your home's price is often the single most stressful part of buying a home. It can be tempting to fall into a bidding war with other buyers and continue to up your offer. This can leave you with a mortgage you can't afford. Resist the urge to spend more than you can afford on a home, no matter your budget. Your real estate agent can help you know when to walk away – and can show you new properties you might love even more."

Some of you follow my writing on Medium.com, where I write light-hearted stories and publish some poetry, and essays, but the Medium platform is much more than that. It's like having a digest-style mini library of anything and everything. I recently discov-



Jeannie Chambers
Chambers Realty
& Vacation Rentals

ered stories by Jeffrey Goodman, who according to his bio, "Navigating facts and numbers to help people. Strong opinions on climate change and health-care. Objective, not neutral. MIT engineer, Wharton MBA" His bio doesn't mention his opinions about the smart way, and I might add, the very unemotional approach of paying off a mortgage. He's written several articles on the subject, but the one that first piqued my non-economist mind was titled, 30 Years in 30 Days •

Year 3: Early Extra Payments Are Magical by Jeffrey Goodman. I tend to think his points may be the best advice I never took. To get the real scope, you should read at least one whole article, or maybe his whole 30 Years in 30 days collection. You can start with the one I read and subscribe to his other stories from there: <https://medium.com/@bright52/30-years-in-30-days-year-3-early-extra-payments-are-magical-ad067fcc4251> (If you are reading this in print form of Highlands Newspaper, it may be easier to go to Medium.com, search for Jeffrey Goodman) It's no secret that with any mortgage, extra payments allow you to pay off the mortgage earlier, but I hadn't thought of the importance of when to make those extra payments. In Goodman's article, he illustrated with facts and figures the impact of making extra payments of 10% for the first 12-24-or 36 months.

I questioned ten percent additional payments. I thought that was the craziest idea ever. Why? Because I believe most people are emotional buyers, and therein lies the problem of one of the pitfalls of buying a home with a mortgage. Go back and read the Rocket Mortgage quote. More good advice that many buyers who buy with their emotions won't take. As a Realtor, it's my duty to help buyers make good decisions, but we can only do so much, and we don't know their bottom line; we only know what they tell us. Emotional buyers can make all kinds of justifications when deciding which home to buy. The Truth in Lending Act has been around since 1968, but how often do you read the small print in your credit card statements? In a real estate closing, by the time you see the figures from the mortgage company, you're so emotionally and financially invested in the purchase, you flip that page as quickly as possible.

We all need to think before we speak, but we also need to think before we spend. They say it's never too late and I sure hope they are right.

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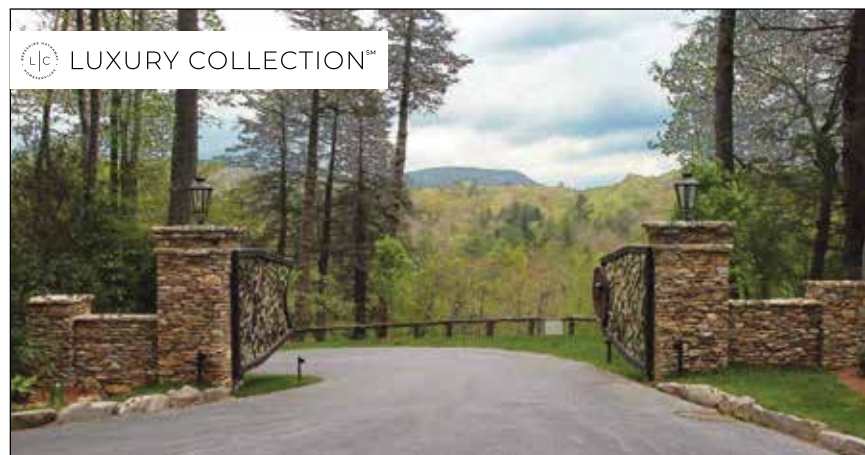
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• LETTERS •

Let's stop catering to the out-of-town party throwers

Dear Editor,

Why are we turning our town over to the event people from Greenville, SC to have their festival? Do we really want to close a portion of Main Street for this? What are the benefits to our town during the Highlands Food and Wine weekend?

I read about the Claudia Osteen Scholarship to the Culinary Institute of America and would like to hear how this benefits the plateau. I also read that this "nonprofit" organization has given to the K-H Founders Park, which just might possibly pay for the wear and tear on the park. Maybe it helps pay for the water (bathroom use) electricity used and the clean-up after.

What about the businesses on Main Street where it's closed for the festival? Is this a benefit to those shops and restaurants?

Most people I have talked to feel like this is a weekend for Highlands' people to endure ... no parking anywhere, loud music and drums, people smoking and throwing down their cigarette butts.

We have many nonprofits in Highlands which could benefit from this very profitable weekend, but we are not aware of these "out-of-towners" really caring about our nonprofits.

We need more transparency about who really benefited from this weekend and how so.

Maybe we should stop catering to the out-of-town party throwers and be more interested in the people who reside in Highlands and pay taxes. As for creating tax revenue for the town ... is it worth it?

Jane Tracy
Highlands

'Wreaths Across America Day' is Sat. Dec. 16

Wreaths across America Day is on Saturday, Dec. 16 beginning at noon from the Rec Park from where volunteers will be shuttled to and from before and after placing wreaths.

Wreaths can be sponsored for \$17 and order forms can be printed from the Facebook page at <https://bit.ly/donatehighlandswaa2023>. Forms are also available at Highlands United Methodist Church, Highlands Rec Park or Highlands Decorating Center. You can also sponsor online at <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/.../167634/Overview/...>

This is Highlands' 7th year honoring veterans on national Wreaths across America Day. The 2023 theme is "Serve and Succeed." The goal is to have 575 wreaths to be placed at cemeteries in Highlands, Scaly Methodist, Scaly Mountain, Baptist, Horse Cove, Macedonia (Satolah), Clear Creek, Buck Creek, Mt. Moriah (Goldmine) and Miller. Wreaths will also be available for some family cemeteries in the area.

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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.

...MTC continued from page 1

eration. **Grease** will run May 31 – June 22, 2024.

Next up is **Catch Me If You Can**, running July 19 - August 10, 2024.

Based on the hit film and the incredible true story, **Catch Me If You Can** is a high-flying musical comedy which was nominated for four Tony awards, including Best Musical.

It was created by a Tony Award-winning “dream team,” with a book by Terrence McNally (The Full Monty, Ragtime) and a swinging score by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman (Hairspray).

The plot follows Frank Abagnale, Jr., a precocious teenager seeking fame and fortune, who runs away from home to begin an unforgettable adventure. With nothing more than his boyish charm, a big imagination, and millions of dollars in forged checks, Frank successfully poses as a pilot, a doctor and a lawyer over several years – living the high life and winning the girl of his dreams. When Frank’s lies catch the attention of FBI agent, Carl Hanratty, however, Frank is pursued across the globe in an unbelievable true story. **Catch Me If You Can** is a big and bright spectacle with high-energy dance numbers and a riveting story.

In the fall, Mountain Theatre Company will bring a new musical to their stage. **The Burnt Part Boys** will run from October 11 – 26, 2024.

In this touching story follows a touching journey as siblings from a mining town learn the power of self-reliance. The story is centered in the Appalachian Mountains. Locally known as “The Burnt Part,” the Pickaway Coal Company’s South Mountain closed down after an accident in 1952 that

resulted in the death of four miners. Ten years later, Jake Twitchell is an employee of that same company, doing the same job that took his own father’s life. Much to the dismay of his movie-buff younger brother, Pete, the Pickaway Coal Company is going to begin re-mining The Burnt Part and send down the next generation of young men.

Inspired by his silver screen heroes, Pete sets out for The Burnt Part with his best friend, a pack full of dynamite, and plans to blow up the mine in hopes of protecting his older brother. This new musical is a dangerous and heartwarming adventure following the journey to discover the importance of the choices we make to protect our family.

December will bring the return of a Highlands tradition, **Home for the Holidays**, running December 6 – 21, 2024. Celebrate the most wonderful time of the year with Mountain Theatre Company at their annual holiday spectacular! Fun for all ages, this festive musical revue always promises dazzling costumes, high energy choreography, and is sure to fill audiences with plenty of good, old-fashioned holiday cheer!

The 2024 Season will be Mountain Theatre Company’s second season as the resident professional theatre company at the Highlands Performing Arts Center.

“The record-breaking audience attendance in our 2023 season has allowed us to prepare for our most ambitious lineup of shows to date in the coming year,” said Executive Artistic Director Scott Daniel, who will be entering his fourth season with Mountain Theatre Company. “We are thrilled to continue to expand our audience as more and more people discover the Broadway caliber entertainment that Mountain Theatre Company delivers show after show. I feel certain 2024 will be another year of historic milestones as we launch our largest season yet. Highlands often feels like an oasis and escape from the outside world. This season speaks directly to that theme as we follow characters who are escaping from their past or towards their futures. Escape with us next season into a refuge of pure entertainment!”

Ticket sales open for Mountain Theatre Company’s Mainstage Season in January. For a complete lineup of productions, show descriptions, and to purchase tickets, visit www.mountaintheatre.com.

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Trumley announces retirement plans

Mary Adair Trumbly, the Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center (PAC) for the past 13 years, has announced plans to retire at the end of 2024. The PAC board of directors has begun the process of finding a highly qualified successor.

Over her 13 years of distinguished PAC leadership, Mary Adair has brought to the plateau leading artists who have entertained audiences across the country and beyond. During the first 12 years as Executive Director, Mary Adair utilized the excellent acoustics of the Martin Lipscomb Theater to deliver PAC performances. After seven years of diligent planning, fundraising and construction, the state-of-the-art new theater held its opening performance on September 22, 2022. In its first full year of operation, the new PAC theater showcased a concert series of top caliber talent and multiple sold-out performances.

Jane Webb, a long-time board member and major benefactor of the PAC, has known Mary Adair since her early days as executive director. Jane has had a front row seat in watching Mary Adair "create a vibrant home for the performing arts in Highlands through unbelievably hard work." Jane adds that "it's up to the community to move forward with her creation."

Another long-standing PAC board member, Rick Trevathan, thinks back on



Mary Adair Trumbly
- photo by Marty Boone

Mary Adair's tenure and firmly believes "the PAC would not have flourished the way it has without her leadership. She has been the cornerstone of its success."

A life-long passion for the performing arts started in college for Mary Adair when she studied ballet at the University of Oklahoma. Her arts journey eventually led to Highlands 23 years ago, where she found a community with enough arts to "feed her soul." After founding and managing Summit One Art Gallery for nearly ten years, Mary Adair was approached by PAC board chairman Stewart Manning in July 2010 to become the new Executive Director of the Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center.

When asked what she plans to do in retirement, Mary Adair quickly mentions spending more time with her seven grandchildren. She also will help guide the performing arts talent of her granddaughter Clara who, at age 13, has already appeared in several TV series and starred in the full-length movie, "The Naughty Nine" now airing on The Disney+ Channel.

One of Mary Adair's core beliefs is that "a community is only as good as you make it." For 23 years Mary Adair has worked passionately to make the Highlands-Cashiers community an extraordinary place to enjoy the performing arts.

'Community Coat Drive' is underway

There are 12 locations to drop off coats, gloves and warm winter wear: 1st Presbyterian Church, the United Methodist Church, 1st Baptist Church, Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, First Bank, the Highlands Civic Center, the Performing Arts Center, Don Leon's

restaurant, Community Bible Church, and Dauntless Printers.

Winter wear can be dropped off Monday-Friday, 8a to 2p and Saturdays 9a to 1p.

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Highlands**



Last Saturday, the town officially lit up for the holidays!

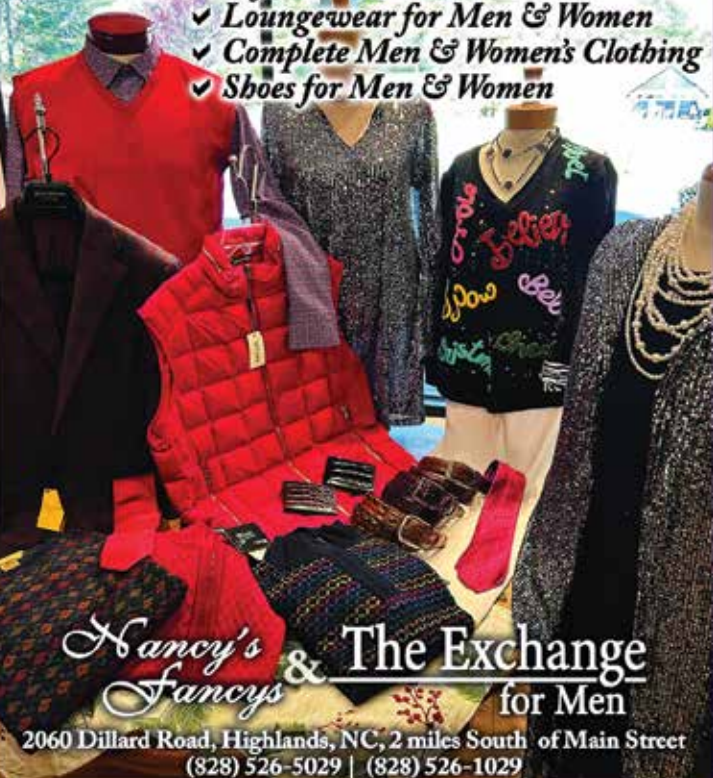
Annual 'Town Lighting' in K-H Founders Park was full of lights, music, family fun and lots of Santa wishes!



Holiday Shopping Officially Begins!

WE HAVE YOUR HOLIDAYS COVERED

- ✓ Gifts
- ✓ Loungewear for Men & Women
- ✓ Complete Men & Women's Clothing
- ✓ Shoes for Men & Women



Family Classes at Scaly Mountain Crafters

Pen Turning Class

Learn how to make your own wooden pen!
Choose from 5 different pen styles. Cost: \$40-50 per person and includes laser engraving.
Bird House/Bird Feeder & Bat House Classes

Learn how to make a Bird House, Bird Feeder or Bat House!
Choose from 5 different Bird House styles, 2 different Bird Feeder styles or a Bat House.
Cost: \$20-\$45 per person
Call 828-526-8800 or email scalymtncrafters@gmail.com to schedule a class!

Each class lasts approximately 90 minutes and provides 25 meals locally for each item made.



MIZZEN+MAIN



338 Main St.
526-4777

End of Season Thanksgiving SALE!



S. 4th Street
526-4473

Come visit Peak Experience for Fine American Handcrafts including Pottery, Jewelry, Fun Gifts and More!



Unique, affordable gifts for everyone on your list!

PEAK EXPERIENCE

828-526-0229
2820 Dillard Road
Highlands, NC



Come dress yourself and your home for the holidays
The Molly Grace!

(Across from Town Hall)
(828) 526-8390
207 N 4th St., Highlands



8106 Dillard Road • Scaly Mtn, NC • 828-526-8800
pens.dstm@gmail.com



Featuring more than 90 local artists offering hand-crafted items for sale with a percentage of every item sold goes to provide non-perishable food boxes to distribution sites in Highlands and Scaly Mountain, NC as well as in Rabun County, GA.

Holiday Shopping Officially Begins!

Highlands Mercantile is OPEN!



WESTMAN ATELIER



BELLA CUCINA
Artisan Food



Augustinus Bader

Fine goods for your family and home.

Books • Chocolates • Coffee • Guy Gifts • Home • Skincare

322 Main Street, Highlands • 828-482-0818



Gourmet Kitchenware

- Cookware
- Bakeware
- Cutlery
- Gadgets
- Tabletop
- Stemware
- Small Appliances

(828) 526-5226

**450 Main St.
Highlands**

**Holiday
SALE is on
NOW!**

**Save up to
50% on
Fall clothing.
Get your holiday
shopping done
and save
\$\$\$**

Wit's End

A Highlands tradition since 1940
Our 83rd season on Main Street

Mon.-Sat. 10a-5p • Sunday 12-5p
828-526-3160

NATURAL SELECTION

**It's time to
buy for
others!**



(828)421-3546

361 Main St

Highlands

(Next to Annawear)

C. ORRICO

PALM BEACH • NAPLES • JUPITER
DELRAY BEACH • HIGHLANDS

*Christmas
Sale
up to 70% off*

**343A Main St.
828-526-9122**

www.corrigo.com
**M-S 10-6
Sunday 12-5**

**Come dress for
the holidays**

ANNAWEAR

- Free People • THML
- Z Supply
- Michael Stars
- Vintage Havana
- Jeans by:**
- Joes • AG
- Citizens
- Hudson
- Mother
- Shoes by:**
- ShuSh
- Diba
- Blowfish
- Matisse

**Don't miss our
upstairs SALE room!**

355 Main Street
(in The Galax Theatre
526-4660



*Stylish hats at affordable
prices!*

**Visit The Highlands Hatter
To get your
Hattitude adjusted!**



**Open 10am Daily
828-482-1920**

221 N. 4th St.

(Across from Town Hall)

Highlands School Winter Sports Teams



JV Boys Basketball

Aiden Crook Jenkins, Pierre Damian, Chase Kenter, Kris Magliocca, Jim Rex, Gavin Small, Jack Sumner, Wyatt Wilson. Head Coach Brett Lamb.



Varsity Boys Basketball

Carson Forrester, Harrison Gates, Landon Green, Cooper Hall, JD Head, Bryan Jarquin, Paolo McRae, Kasen Mitchell, Isaiah Vilardo. Head Coach Kaitlin Bishop.



Varsity Girls Basketball

Jordon Borino, Hunter Conner, Sadie Green, Lillian Rutter, Hendy Ruiz-Rios, Mallory Shriver, Charlotte Westendorf, AE Woods, Mackenzie Woods, Aislynn Wyatt-Luck. Head Coach Brett Lamb; Asst. Coaches: Emily Bowers, Adrienne Watts.



Varsity Cheer Team

Olivia Cole, Shirley Diaz, Katie Earp, Trinity Faust, Brooke Fogarty, Juleta Juarez Rios, Soraya Lopez, Rea Miller, Delainey Owens, Anna Maria Silverthorn, Evangelia Silverthorn, Madi Smith, Bria Taylor, Darby Templeton, Hannah Valerio. Head Coach Madison Klimas.

Highlands School Winter Sports Teams



Middle School Boys Basketball

Jayven Alvarado, Jensen Bowers, Rowen Carnes, Jonathan Carpenter, Sam Conner, Ian Kittrell, Walker Kittrell, Charlie Sherwood, Todd Vilardo, Camden Westendorf, Charlie Wilkes, Tucker Wilson. Head Coach Todd Sherwood, Asst. Coach Joey Wilson.



Middle School Cheer Team

Hayden Andrews, Arabel Aulisio, Cristina Craig, Mia Craig, Libby Hall, Bella (Isabella) Lopez, Cassie McDowell, Penelope McRae, Kate Somov, Emmie Wedge, Miley Zagal Damian. Head Coach Hayley Lassister.



Middle School Girls Basketball

Rebekah Birchfield, Keely Bosdell, Aubree Brooks, Corena Dearth, Alejandra Figueroa, Ava Geiger, Annabelle Hays, Cassie McDowell, Penelope McRae, Peyton Norman, Ava Penland, Miley Zagal. Head Coach Tim Dearth, Asst. Coach Bryan Dearth.



Varsity Swimming and Diving Team

Trinity Faust, Freshman; Finneaus Garner, Junior; Conner Hughes, Sophomore; Chase Kenter, Freshman; Aniah McKim, Sophomore; Paolo McRae, Sophomore; Jesus Mendoza, Sophomore; Jim Rex, Sophomore; Jack Sumner, Freshman; Tate Wilson, Sophomore. Coach Steve Hott.

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.



• 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.

ICE RINK SCHEDULE THRU March 3

• Thursdays 3:30-8p; Fridays 3:30-10p and Saturday's 1-10p; Sundays 1-5p. Also, Sun., Dec. 24, 1-5p; Tues. Dec. 26, Wed., Dec. 27, Mon. Jan. 1, Wed., Jan 3 -- 1-8p..

Thurs., Nov 30

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

Through Dec. 31

The Artistic Work of John Robert Mack at the Macon County Library in Franklin on Siler Road..

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.

• Readings from novels by John Robert mak. Snacks, music and dancing by the Friends of Contra Dance at the MC Library on Siler Road.

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.

...PARTISAN continued from page 1

statewide change following Republicans taking control of the General Assembly.

Members of the MC Board of Education have been elected on a non-partisan basis since as far back as 1958 without any issues. The proposed change was suggested earlier this month by MC Commissioner John Shearl, and according to members of the Board of Education, they weren't aware any changes were being considered until the county's agenda was published.

According to Shearl, during the last election, Republicans were unable to follow the instructions listed on the ballot when voting for candidates for school board.

"We had two Republicans seek the school board seat. When the Republican Party sent out sample ballots — as you're walking through the door, 'Would you like a Democratic ballot or would you like a Republican ballot?' 'Oh, I would like a Republican ballot.' They marked every person on that ballot, including the school board. So, when the people went in they took a Republican ballot, voting for every Republican that Macon GOP had placed on that sample ballot," Shearl explained. "When those people put the ballot in the machine, it kicked it out. It was an unapproved ballot. The people had a choice, get a new ballot and start all

over or have your vote not count for the school board race."

Shearl then claimed that the majority of people who had their ballots flagged for voting incorrectly didn't fill out a new ballot, resulting in an unfair election outcome.

However, according to Melanie Thibault, Director of the Board of Elections, though there was some confusion for voters who didn't read the directions on the ballot, which resulted in the tabulator giving the voter a warning, after poll workers explained the issue, most chose to get a new ballot.

Macon County's current Board of Education is comprised of five members and includes two Republicans, two unaffiliated voters, and one Democrat. While the official ballots given out on Election Day do not identify specific parties for each candidate, the candidate's party affiliation is public record. The Democrat currently on the board, Stephanie Laseter, was elected during the 2022 election which Shearl claims is his reason for seeking the change in making the board partisan.

Laseter appeared on the ballot for the District 2 seat on the board and faced off against three Republican challengers, how-

...FONTANA continued from page 1

ments, the other two counties in the agreement, Swain and Jackson County, would also have to approve the changes before they would be made final.

Through the amendments, Macon County Commissioners are proposing a shift in authority, recommending changes such as having commissioners assume the responsibility of appointing members to the regional board, a power currently vested in local library boards.

As recently as the Spring of this year, the Macon County Board of Commissioners has held discussions on withdrawing from the Fontana Regional Library System entirely, with multiple commissioners publicly expressing their support of such action.

According to the agreement's requirements, the regional contract has to be renewed every 10 years. The last time the contract was renewed was in 2013. Because it was time to renew the contract, the County Managers of Macon, Jackson, and Swain counties joined together this summer to sign a letter expressing their support of the library and their desire as county managers to see one structural change to the agreement — which would have the library's regional board of trustees be directly chosen by each county's board of commissioners.

The managers agreed in the letter that the Fontana Regional Library System has "positively affected all counties within its membership through providing citizens with convenient access to informational and educational resources for over 75 years."

Following the signed letter from Macon, Jackson, and Swain counties, the Macon County Board of Commissioners held a vote to approve the recommended changes and at the time, County Manager Derek Roland informed the board that the other counties would be taking up the change at their respective board meetings. However, when the item came up in Jackson County, commissioners tabled the issue and it has not since been discussed again.

Now, Macon County has gone further and instead of only recommending one structural change, the county proposed a hoard of changes that essentially removes the controlling authority of the library from the board of trustees and puts it in the hands of county commissioners.

On Tuesday night, Commissioner Danny Antoine, who has been vocal in his support of seeing changes made at the local library stated that while the review of the interlock agreement was standard operating procedure, it did align with a controversy from the past summer involving the placement of books labeled as "sexually explicit" within the local library.

Commissioner Antoine emphasized

that he wholeheartedly supports the library, however, his concerns remain in ensuring inappropriate books are appropriately placed in sections aligned with the readers' age groups in order to protect children.

The proposed amendments approved by Macon County and now being forwarded for consideration by the Jackson County and Swain County Boards of Commissioners address key aspects of the library system's operations and governance such as:

Purpose Statement Modification:

The commissioners added verbiage to the library system's purpose statement explicitly stating its commitment to operate in a "socially and politically neutral manner."

Trustee Requirements and Appointments:

The amendments include updates to the requirements for Fontana Regional Library Board trustees. Notably, all trustees would now be required to be full-time residents of the county they represent. Additionally, the process for appointing board members, the structural change originally recommended by county managers, was changed from local library advisory boards to the County Commissioners of each county.

Vacancy Filling: Changes to how vacancies are filled involve appointments by County Commissioners for the remaining term of the member who created the vacancy, eliminating the involvement of local library advisory boards.

County Control over Board Actions:

The proposed amendment grants County Commissioners the authority to remove a Library Trustee from their County if a majority determines a failure to abide by the library's by-laws and policies.

Public Comment Period: Macon County proposes adding a mandatory public comment period to library board meetings, allowing for questions and comments from the public, and would mandate that the public comment period before each library board meeting with no less than three minutes allowed per speaker. The comment period will be limited to 45 minutes.

Dispute Resolution: A significant change involves handling disagreements in the operating agreement. As it stands, Disagreements related to this operating Agreement is resolved first by committee from each county and then by their legal counsel however, Macon County is proposing removing the library board of trustees from discussions regarding the library's operating agreement and instead have disagreements resolved by representatives of two commissioners from each county and their legal counsels, and only involve the library board of trustees as a last resort if the commissioners are unable to resolve it.

• See FONTANA page 22



Don't miss the *Highlands Christmas Parade!*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2

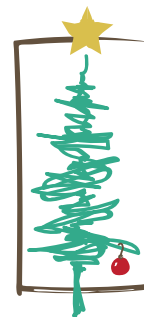
MAIN STREET — 5TH ST. TO 2ND ST.

10 a.m. — 12 p.m.

Special appearance by the
Pride of the Mountains marching band from
Western Carolina University and

— of course —

Santa & Mrs. Claus!



HOLIDAYS IN
HIGHLANDS

HIGHLANDS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/VISIT HIGHLANDS, NC

This event is organized and hosted by the
Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC.

visithighlandsncc.com
828-526-2112

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



Facing rebellion

Pastor Sam Forrester
Whiteside Presbyterian Church,
Cashiers

Our nation is under attack. We face a rebellion. A rebellion against God. A rebellion against democracy. A rebellion against the foundation of our lives, the family. The very essence of rebellion is doing things your own way. Having no respect for authority. We all, as men, are guilty of this rebellion. We do not like to be told what to do. In America, we have made this into a kind of religious cult. We call it personal freedom, we claim it came from our forefathers but in truth it is a perversion of what our founding fathers established. We claim to have the right to do whatever we want regardless of the consequences. We believe we are free to do what we see as right in our own eyes.

What this strikes at is the idea of an authoritative code of conduct. Our founding fathers established such a code for this nation, we call it the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. These two documents were to guide how our lives were to be lived and to keep the government from running over us. The Constitution establishes the guidelines for our conduct with one another and restrictions on the governing entity. The cult of personal freedom wants to destroy those guidelines. So, unscrupulous judges are finding all kinds of new freedoms in the Constitution which have never before been recognized. What they are doing is destroying the Constitution by an exaggerated interpretation of its message. They add by their imagination, chains that bind the hearts of men.

The Bible is very clear on its message about freedom. It declares man was created in perfect freedom. But because of his sin, which was rebellion, deciding to go out and do things his own way, instead of following the authoritative guidelines set down by God, man lost his freedom. He was plunged into a state of utter chaos which led to absolute bondage. Bondage to sin, Satan, and death.

Paul declares in Ephesians 2:1 that we were all lost in our trespasses and sins. We were hopelessly caught in this slavery to sin. We were without any authoritative guideline to help us find our way. What an absolutely hopeless situation, with no one we can turn to for help. When the Constitution is totally destroyed in our nation, we as a national people will find ourselves in this same type of situation. What will happen is that some man, who is very charismatic and strong, will rise up and offer to save us from the chaos. The payment we will have to give him for this help is to make him our absolute ruler. Then, instead of rule by law, we will have rule by might. Right and wrong will become the sole dictate of his whims.

Now, this would not be so bad, if this one was perfect in his character and a law unto himself without any unrighteousness. If he was holy and loved without condition and had no preference toward one over another. If we could find such a one, then he could become our peace and we

• See SPIRITUALLY page 19

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. W. 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 • ufranklin.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 Nov. 21. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Nov. 21

• At 12:15 p.m., officers received a report of destruction and vandalism of property at a residence on Horse Cove Road where pillars in a driveway were rammed with force.

Nov. 22

• At 1:35 a.m., Yony Sidean Soto Yanes, 22, of Franklin was arrested for DUI, driving without a license and having a fictitious tag. He was issued a written promise. His trial date is Dec. 20.

• At 2:30 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on US 64 east.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Nov. 21.

Nov. 21

• At 1:33 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 3:54 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Larkspur Lane.

Nov. 22

• At 4:04 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Horse Cove Road.

• At 7:44 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Morewood Circle.

• At 8:24 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Worley Road.

Nov. 23

• At 10:31 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Garnet Rock Trail.

Nov. 24

• At 4:04 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence in Highlands Mountain Club.

• At 1:42 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

Nov. 27

• At 4:27 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Country Club Drive.

At 10:28 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Horse Cove Road.

10,000 SQ FT OF SHOPPING!



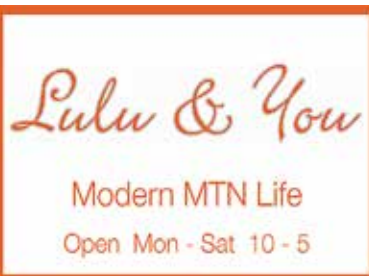
ALL PROCEEDS GO TO COMMUNITY OUTREACH



1846 HWY 107N IN CASHIERS
(ACROSS FROM BLUE RIDGE SCHOOL)

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
10AM-2PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO DONATE, CONTACT SKIP RYAN AT (828) 226-2588



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Life is better connected.

Join us this Sunday
(new series)

8:40am - Coffee/Nibbles

9am - Live Stream

w/Andy Stanley

For directions call Bee at 404-307-1415.

8/31



Highlands | Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

GARY GARREN

Founding Member

Cell: (828) 482-2370
gsgarren@gmail.com

Downtown Office

114 N. 4th Street, Highlands, NC
Highlandssothebysrealty.com

Paul Corbin
Owner



A&O LANDSCAPING SERVICES, LLC

828-371-2240

pcorbin1631@aol.com



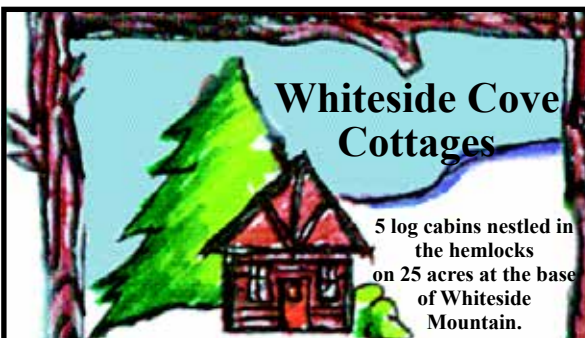
▶ 828-526-9325 ◀

Generators aren't just a "thing" we do,
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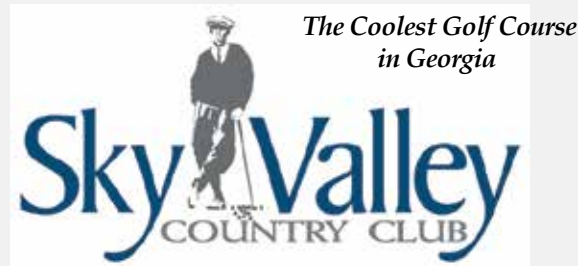
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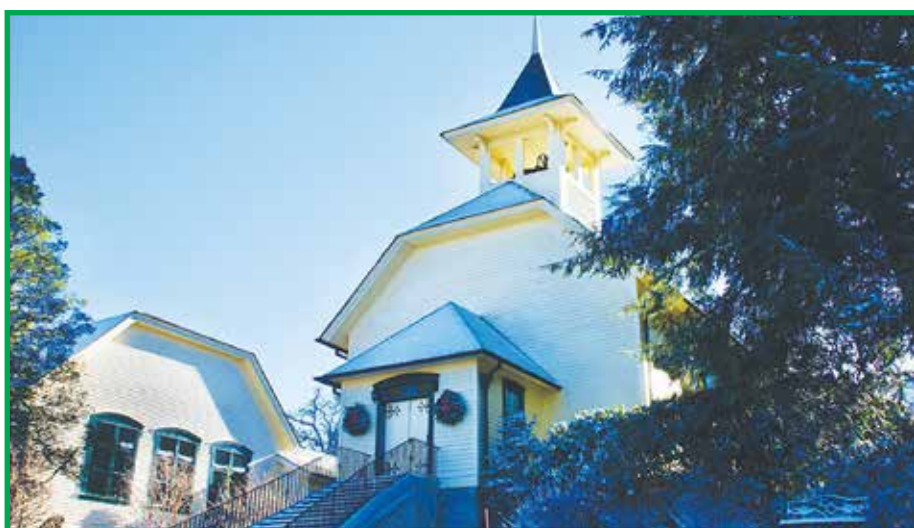
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Thursday, December 21	12:00pm	Service of Light: <i>We Remember</i>
Sunday, December 24	11:00am 4:30pm 5:00pm	Sunday Celebration: <i>We Hope</i> Harp Prelude by Jillionna Plemmons Christmas Eve Service with Candlelight: <i>We Rejoice</i>

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...FONTANA continued from page 17

Withdrawal Process: In addition to altering who has controlling authority involving the operating agreement, the proposed amendments suggest significant changes to the process in which one of the three counties can withdraw from the agreement.

As it stands, should that participating local governmental unit fully withdraw, assets located in the local library facility will remain the assets of the withdrawing library. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, in the event there are assets located in the local library facility that were purchased by Fontana Regional Library regional support services, those assets will remain the assets of Fontana Regional Library.

Macon leaders want to see that changed to state "Should that participating local governmental unit fully withdraw, assets located in the local library facility will remain the assets of the withdrawing library and the withdrawing unit may keep all assets/materials within their respective library(ies). Those items that are not kept in the local libraries of the withdrawing unit, such as vehicles and finances held by Fontana Regional Library shall remain the property of Fontana Regional Library."

Superseding By-Laws: An amendment specifies that the operating agreement between the three counties supersedes the library's by-laws, and any conflicts will be governed by the operating agreement.

Transparency Measures: Proposed changes emphasize transparency, including posting the Director's job description, proposed budgets, and audits on Fontana Regional Library's website for public access.

Tuesday night's meeting included close to an hour of public comment, with the majority of speakers expressing support or opposition to the proposed changes. Those in opposition said that the agreement has been in place for decades and there haven't been any issues, therefore it doesn't need to be

changed. Speakers also expressed concern regarding changes to material ownership in the event a county withdraws from the regional system.

Right now, while each county provides funding to the regional system for operating expenses, the libraries operate independently and have additional means of generating revenues, many of which are unique to individual libraries. When someone donates books or money to the library currently, they are doing it under the guise that they are donating it to the Fontana Regional Library system and those funds are used to buy books that then in turn belong to the regional system. County funding is used for operating expenses such as electricity and the building, not to purchase materials for the library.

Those speaking in support of the amendment suggested it was needed to provide better oversight of library operations and although the Fontana Regional Library System is not a member of the American Library Association, speakers suggested the changes were needed to "stop" the American Library Association from pushing their political agendas on the community.

Commissioner Josh Young said that he agreed with one of the speakers who said if the county was considering the proposed amendments in good faith — to improve the library — then they supported it. According to Young, his support of the proposed amendments was to improve services at the library and enhance county oversight as Macon County contributes over a million each year for operations.

Commissioners voted to approve the proposed amendments and directed County Manager Derek Roland to send the changes to Macon and Swain Counties for a vote from their respective boards. The proposed changes will only be implemented if all three counties vote to adopt them.

...PARTISAN continued from page 16

ever, one of the names on the ballot, Tommy Cabe, the incumbent in the race, passed away prior to the election. Laseter was elected by a margin of just 187 votes. The two Republican candidates were separated by 649 votes and despite being deceased, Cabe received 1,860 votes. The position also secured 55 write-in votes.

Commissioners Danny Antoine and Josh Young requested the discussion be tabled due to the fact that the majority of the county's board of education members who would be affected by any change, couldn't attend the November MC Commission meeting due to a mandatory conference they were attending. Ultimately, Shearl's at-

tempt failed, however the board left the issue open for future discussion.

Members of the Macon County Board of Education expressed their unanimous support for keeping school board elections non-partisan, and shared their frustration that commissioners would attempt to change how board members are elected while completely excluding those who would be impacted entirely.

Henning agreed to work on drafting the resolution and will send it to board members via a poll to ensure the resolution is complete and ready to present to commissioners in time for their December board meeting.

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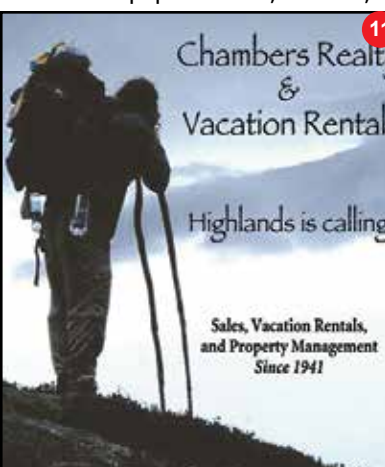
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