

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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Thurs., Oct. 12, 2023



Kay Craig



John Dotson



Brian Stiehler



Jeff Weller



Rachel Wilson

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This is week 3 of the Candidate Q&A

Five candidates are vying for three seats on the Town Board -- two incumbents and three newcomers.

This is the third week of the 6-week Q&A leading up to the Nov. 7 election. Candidates are listed alphabetically.

Question #3:
What are your views concerning tourism and Highlands' inevitable growth?
• See Q&A page 21

At the September Board of Education meeting held at Highlands School, the Highlands School FFA group explained what the group was about and the positions they each hold. Back row, from left, Brooklynn Petrone-Treasurer, Brooke Fogarty- Historian, Olivia Cole-Reporter, Cooper Hall-Vice President, Caitlin Tingen-President, Mrs. Watts-Advisor. Front row from left, Gavin Small-Sentinel, Blaine Dendy-Secretary.
- Photo by Kim Lewicki



HS introduces agriculture course and FFA club led by dedicated instructor

By Brittney Lofthouse
Highlands School has embarked on an exciting venture into agricultural education, offering students an opportunity to explore the world of farming, horticulture, and animal science in a brand-new course. This innovative curriculum was introduced to fill a void left by the retirement of Mr. Cashion two years ago.

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• See COURSE page 8



Senior Volleyball players are recognized

Highlands School celebrated Senior Night on Oct. 5 and recognized senior volleyball athletes (from left) Mac Woods, Caitlin Tingen, Catelynn Couch and Olivia Cole. The Lady Highlanders also hosted Hiwassee Dam and lost 3-0.
- Photo by Brian O'Shea

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Worker shortages even affect the town

Let me share some of the thoughts I am having related to town personnel and the challenges ahead. I don't have the final answers, the new board that will be installed in December will have to tackle these issues.

Like almost all businesses now, the Town of Highlands faces a potential worker shortage in the coming months and maybe years. This past year we have had a number of a veteran, highly experienced workers retire. And, they are not taking early retirement, for the most part they put in about 30 or more years of service to the town.

The town has to compete in the marketplace for skilled workers. For instance, a worker who has a CDL driver's license is now in very high demand. Local contractors and construction companies are willing to pay a high hourly rate for CDL drivers and heavy equipment operators. The town has this demand, too, in that in all public works areas we need personnel who hold at least the CDL-B license. For instance, we need all personnel on our sanitation crews to have a CDL to drive our trucks.

Related to this potential worker shortage is how to compete to recruit and retain quali-



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

fied and experienced workers. Early in the year the town simply had to increase police salaries across the board because we were losing the retention battle to other municipalities. Our police chief has been working hard to address the problem with her and other officers putting in overtime patrol duty hours while at the same time actively recruiting new officers. The problem is that potential new officers have to undergo basic law enforcement training before hitting the road. If

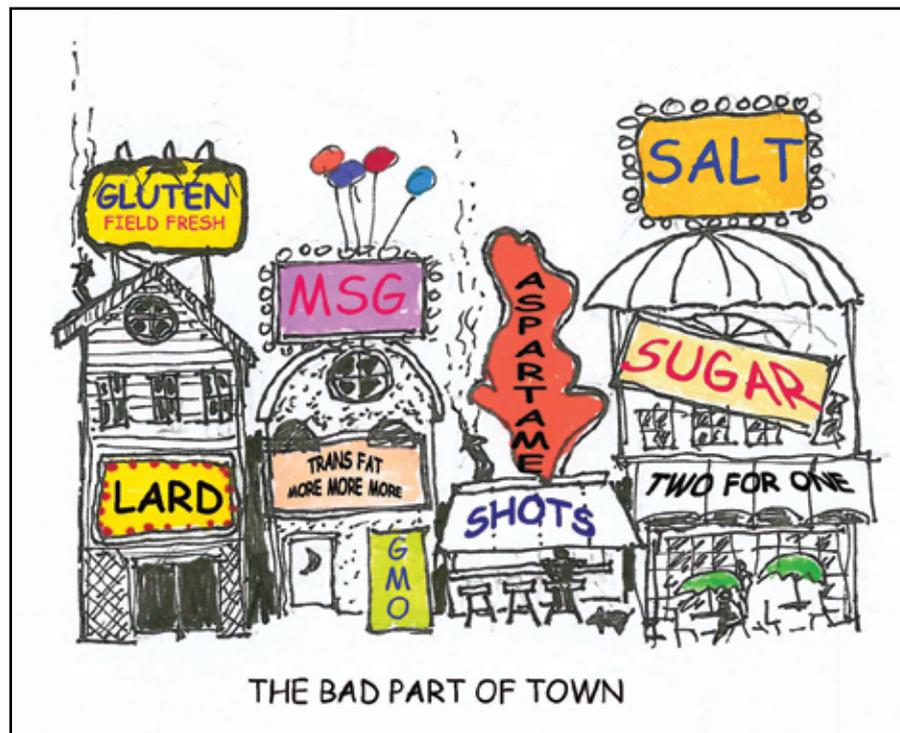
all goes as planned, the police department will be back to full staff by the first of the new year.

Getting back to sanitation, we are in a similar shortage of personnel situation. How do we solve this recurring problem in sanitation? Folks constantly tell me everything would be solved if we went to one day a week residential pick up. I fail to see how that is a solution. Does that translate to cutting the hours of our seven-person sanitation department to 32 hours a week? It's hard enough to recruit sanitation workers for a 40-hour week, much less reducing their time to almost part-time status. Cutting the number of workers would be perilous also, in that sanitation workers across the nation have very high workers' compensation claims and are frequently sidelined due to on-the-job injuries.

Others have suggested privatizing the sanitation department. That, too, could be problematic in that Highlands is a very small, isolated market. A company could operate here for a few years and decide to leave. There might not be any replacement providers. Would we then get back into the sanitation market? It would be tremendously expensive, if even possible. The long-term solution is to increase worker compensation which could mean rate increases. Currently, residential service is \$20 a month for eight pickups. Honestly, we spend a whole lot more money on other services and conveniences here on the plateau and think nothing about it. Garbage removal and transporting it to a distant land fill over the mountains is an expensive proposition.

The new Town Board will be presented the results of a salary study that an outside agency has been conducting for the town this fall. Those results will help inform the board how and where to address the problem areas that I have described. The study might reveal other areas to address, too.

• HIC'S VIEW •



THE BAD PART OF TOWN

• WEATHER •

Thu, 12-Oct	Fri, 13-Oct	Sat, 14-Oct	Sun, 15-Oct
 66°F 45°F	 66°F 54°F	 68°F 46°F	 55°F 37°F
Partly sunny	Intervals of clouds and sun	Partly sunny and nice	Partly sunny; breezy, cooler
RealFeel® High: 69° Low: 46°	RealFeel® High: 68° Low: 53°	RealFeel® High: 70° Low: 52°	RealFeel® High: 49° Low: 39°

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Letter Policy:

There is a 500-word limit. We reserve the right to reject or edit letters-to-the-editor. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands Newspaper.

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view details

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'Real' Real Estate

The late great Johnny Isakson, real estate entrepreneur and U.S. Senator from Atlanta, GA once said this:

"In the real estate business, you learn more about people and you learn more about community affairs, you learn more about life, you learn more about the impact of government, probably than other profession that I know of."

His statement could not be truer, and it puts the "real" in real estate. There's nothing in his comments about Zillow, pricing, buyers & sellers, or that famous realtor cliché "location, location, location."

Rather, Johnny mentions real things that really matter, like people, community affairs, life, and government.

People... the lifeblood of our business. If you're not a "people person" you may need to consider another profession. Most real, real estate Brokers admit this is the best job they've ever had, never feel like they're "going to work," are open seven days a week, their cell phones ring non-stop (even when they're silenced), and they drink a lot of coffee. It's because real people love doing business with real people. And, it's fun! In the words of Barbara Streisand "people who need people are the luckiest people." Real Brokers wear a lot of hats; Arbitrator, Counselor, Bartender, Peacemaker, Leaf Blower, Furniture Mover, and Chauffeur all in the interest of relationships with others.

Community Affairs and the Impact of Government ... the knowledge of things the way they are; the pulse of things to come; and the sharing about the beauty of being in Highlands amongst the nicest and most giving people in the world.



Deborah "Bee" Gleeson
404.307.1415
and
Pat Gleeson
828.782.0472
Christie's International
Realty

Real, real estate Brokers are pretty much "know-it-alls" or are very good at saying "I'm not sure but let me find out." We are pros at getting you answers and information. Things like "How much does it cost to build here?" "How long will it take?" "What's with all the gravel roads?" "How do I get a reservation at restaurant?" "Who can winterize my house?" "Where's the best place to watch the Georgia game?" "Do you know a plumber?" "What's going on with short-term rentals?" and the number one asked question by visitors... "Can you tell me what time the Town turns on the waterfalls?" to which

the standard answer is "May I get you directions to Gatlinburg?"

Learning about Life ... when Johnny said "you learn more about life" in the real estate business he wasn't kidding. Real, real estate is about living life to its fullest, loving and caring for others the way you want to be loved. You learn that life is short and none of us are guaranteed tomorrow. So, we all need to fly fish as much as we can, play more golf, take the time to say thank you to those who've helped you along the way, take up pickle ball and get to know a good orthopedic surgeon, and most of all be a friend to all you meet.

In closing, as I always like to say ... get to know a "real" real estate Broker (there's 311 of them between Highlands and Cashiers), tell them your story, and let us help you. It's what we do every day to stay young!

• Pat and Bee Gleeson are proud to be a team of "Helpers" and Real Estate Brokers at Christie's International Real Estate Highlands-Cashiers. You can reach us at 828.782.0472. Please stop by for coffee and conversation at 210 N. 5th Street.

'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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• LETTERS •

'Hate' and 'Love' are both 4-letter words

Dear Editor,

I am deeply saddened by the need to respond to Pastor Mark Ford's Spiritually Speaking column entitled "Is God Guilty of Hate Speech?" on September 14 in Highlands Newspaper. I had hoped that we had moved beyond the hurtful rhetoric against the LGBTQ+ community, and it is disheartening to find that a Baptist minister in Highlands, North Carolina felt compelled to engage in such discourse.

My personal connection to this issue runs deep. When I was 15 years old, I learned by accident that my brother was gay. My father's reaction was to tell him to leave "his house" because he was a homosexual. My mother's heart shattered, and their marriage was never the same. My brother faced physical violence from heterosexual individ-

uals and even lost a job due to his identity. Despite all this adversity, he exhibited a level of kindness and compassion that surpassed anyone I knew. He made it his mission to provide shelter not only to stray animals but also to people in need. Even during the last Thanksgiving of his life, while battling pain and liver disease, he cooked a meal for a homeless man living under a bridge in Macon, Georgia. Despite his intelligence, master's degree, and financial means, what truly mattered to him was helping those in need. After his passing, a woman shared how he had generously provided her and her daughter with free rent when they would otherwise have been homeless in Atlanta. When he passed away, our wonderful Humane Society took in the dogs and cats he had cared for, and I personally funded the painting of three of his dogs on their van in his memory and honor.

I also have a gay son, and I became aware of his sexual orientation when he was just 5 years old. His likes and dislikes of sports and other activities revealed clues. Even though his generation experienced greater acceptance, he struggled with it, ultimately turning to alcohol as a coping mechanism as a teenager. He later gave up drinking, but the societal hatred he faced as a gay individual was a harsh burden. He went on to earn a PHD in philosophy. No one should have to hide their true selves, especially when they have never harmed anyone.

One crucial fact missing from all these discussions, including the hate-filled letters to the Playhouse Board and others in town, as well as the Baptist pastor's comments, is that individuals who identify as gay or lesbian are born this way. Mothers often have an innate understanding, and there appears to be a genetic predisposition within families. It is unfathomable to me that these loving and compassionate individuals wake up one day and choose to be attracted to the same sex, knowing the hatred and discrimination they will face.

Look at the gay individuals you know and ask yourself if you truly believe they made this choice. They are inherently good-hearted and sensitive people who deserve the same opportunities as you and me. They do not choose their sexual orientation, and the high suicide rate among them is a stark reminder of the harm caused by societal prejudice. My gay friends are Christians. It pains me that a pastor would resort to such rhetoric, for God is love, and it seems that this sentiment is not always reflected in our actions. This reaffirms my pride in being a Methodist, who loves all and doesn't judge.

Pat Allen
Highlands

A 'fed' bear is a dead bear

Dear Editor,

I write today as a member of the B.E.A.R. TASK FORCE in Highlands, where, with much help from the Town Board, we were the first city in America to be certified as a "BearWise Community" by BearWise and NC Wildlife.

I think I speak for most who live in Highlands and surrounding areas when I say, we Love our Bears! But lately I have felt a need to remind all people - those living here full time, those with second homes, those here for weekends or

• See LETTERS page 12

2023 Election

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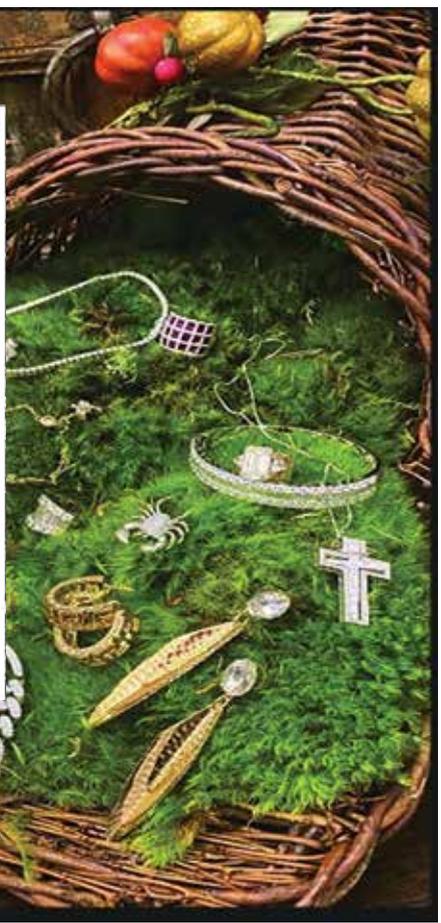
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...COURSE continued from page 1

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who specialized in shop and drafting.
“After months of advertising for a construction/drafting CTE teacher position, we unfortunately didn’t receive any applications or expressions of interest,” said Highlands School Principal Sarah Holbrooks. “It was then that we decided to reassess our approach and explore alternative avenues.”

The idea of an agricultural science elective soon gained traction, especially due to the educational background and aspirations of Adrienne Watts, who was pursuing a related course of study. Watts has worked in the Macon County School System for the last two years and currently lives in Franklin with her husband Ethan and their two children, Caroline and Cooper. Watts enjoys growing flowers and vegetables, raising livestock, and volunteering with the Franklin FFA.

“I am excited to share my passion of agriculture by introducing this new local elective to Highlands School,” said Watts.

Working in collaboration with Macon County Schools CTE director, Colleen Strickland, the plan for an agricultural science course began to take shape. Watts, now a certified vocational teacher, has been instrumental in creating and delivering this

exciting new CTE course for students in grades 9-12.

During the first semester, students will delve into the fascinating realms of Horticulture and Animal Science, gaining invaluable insights into plant cultivation, care, and animal husbandry. In the second semester, the course expands to include Horticulture, Animal Science II, and Landscaping, allowing students to build upon their knowledge and skills.

Watts has been pivotal in developing the program from the ground up, incorporating various valuable resources and fostering strong community partnerships. Her dedication and efforts have made this program increasingly popular among the high school students at Highlands School.

“We are truly fortunate to have Mrs. Watts leading this initiative. She has done an exceptional job in building this program and making it an enriching experience for our students,” said Principal Holbrooks. “This new course not only offers valuable educational opportunities but also aligns with the interests and needs of our students, contributing to their holistic development.”

The introduction of this agricul-

• See COURSE page 12

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In-Person Early Voting is Oct. 19 - Nov. 4

The one-stop early voting period for the Nov. 2023 municipal election begins October 19. The in-person early voting period ends at 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4.

During the early voting period, voters may cast a ballot at any one-stop site in their county. Eligible individuals may register and vote at the same time. Photo ID is necessary. Voters can also get a "No Fee ID Card" from the NCDMV.



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Connecting people, property and community

...COURSE continued from page 8

tural science course at Highlands School reflects the institution's commitment to providing a diverse and comprehensive educational experience for its students, preparing them for future careers and op-

portunities in the ever-evolving agricultural industry.

Taking Highlands' School new "hands-on" learning opportunity a step further, Watts has overseen the creation of the

school's first-ever FFA club. The Highlands FFA Club was chartered last spring and students will be competing in their first competition, the Quiz Bowl, at FFA

• See **COURSE** page 14

...LETTERS continued from page 7

vacation, etc., the importance of following BearWise Guidelines; these guidelines protect people, their pets and our bears.

- **PLEASE** do not Feed Bears or leave any food outside or where you hike; don't leave food in your car, and lock your car doors at night.

- **REMEMBER:** Bears can smell food over a mile away; report anyone feeding bears- there is a stiff fine in Highlands for doing that! Bears don't hang around where there is no food.

- **KEEP** your dogs on a leash always, especially small dogs, to avoid your own loss & heartbreak. It happens!

- **DO NOT** put out Bird Seed; birds have enough food in the summer & fall without us! We love to hear birds singing, but cats love birds eating seed on the ground too! Birds may need food in the winter, so feed them then if you must.

- **OUR** town has declared that all homes in town must have a bear-resistant trash can. These have proven very effective. If you have too much trash so the top doesn't latch, take the excess to the Recycle Center on Buck Creek road....NEVER leave bags outside of the trash bin!!

- **MAMA Bear:** If you see some cute cubs, know that Mama is close by so beware!

If you have a close encounter with a bear, speak gently, stretch up tall and slowly back away. If you have one getting into trouble at home, yell at it and scare it away. See our helpful brochures at Hudson Library for more information.

All of these guidelines help to keep our bears & people safe from what could be aggressive behavior and other dangers.

Encourage bears to go back into the woods to forage for their natural foods...not in your backyard!

Helen Moore
Bear Task Force

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11a to 3p



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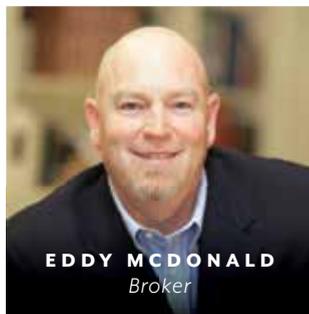
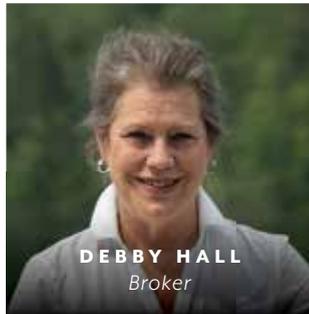
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at Old Edwards

purchase tickets

...COURSE continued from page 12

National Convention in Indianapolis, IN at the end of October.

FFA is a National Organization that is led completely by students. FFA's main goal is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agriculture education.

While Agriculture Science will be a new offering for Highlands, the course

has been offered at Franklin High School previously. The elective expansion for Highlands is part of a district-wide move to provide more career-focused electives for students.

"We know college isn't the path for every student and it shouldn't be the only path," former superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin said when Watts' position was approved earlier this year.

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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 only 4 blocks from Main Street, this 2 bedroom, 1 bath cottage is compact but will be an entry into Highlands. low maintenance and lock and leave. Well maintained. Offered at \$429,000. mls #102202



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



Located about 5 miles from town, this home consists of 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 for a potting room or workshop and storage. All on an acre of land with great winter views and a usable yard. Offered at \$519,000. mls #100826



Offering this charming, classic Highlands log cabin home. Located in one of the most sought-after neighborhoods. Highland Hills is only minutes from downtown Highlands and is adjacent to Old Edwards Half Mile Farm with deeded access to apple lake for boating and fishing. This home has been fully 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 \$1,700,000. mls #102945



Own a truly unique Highlands Cabin! Located less than 3 miles from Main Street and having over 19 acres of usable land, this true log cabin was added to an existing farmhouse, barn, meadow, views off the upper tier. A blank canvas to improve to your personal taste and have a family heirloom for another chapter. 4 bedrooms, stone fireplaces, retro kitchen, fantastic sleeping porch. This property has endless possibilities! Offered at \$3,575,000. mls #98048



3 bedrooms 2 baths easy living Rancher with a wing bedroom plan, 2 car garage, extra lot for additional possibilities! Offered at \$675,000. mls #101997



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 \$1,175,000. 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

It's Leaf-looker time in Highlands!

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MountainHomeMinders.com



Rocky Horror Picture Show is live on stage at PAC through Oct. 28

it's campy, silliness! Not meant to be taken too seriously!

Rocky Horror is commonly referred to as a cult classic. People love the ridiculous and often campy performances of songs they have known for decades thanks to the popularity of the film. The original stage production and subsequent film and TV performances focused heavily on the spook and gore, making it a popular show choice for this time of year. I really wanted people to recognize the characters and the songs, but almost nothing else in this production. We have set the show in a sci-fi comic book. The goal is for the audience to feel like these vibrant characters are popping right off of the page. I tend to tell a lot of stories through color. This production has a dream team of designers that got right on board with this color saturated sci-fi comic book world, and together created a production of The Rocky Horror Show that is unlike any other and quite literally "out of this world."

- Scott Daniel, executive artistic director



HIGHLANDS

ELEV. 4118 | THE HEART OF HAPPINESS

Tidy Our Town
Join us!

Saturday, November 4

8:30 a.m.

It is time to tidy up our town!
And we need a little help
from our friends.

We'll begin at
Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park,
Pine Street, Highlands.



To participate, send an email to
events@highlandschamber.org

This event is hosted by the
Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC.
For more information: highlandschamber.org or 828-526-5841
visithighlandscn.com

Community - Responsible Planning - Leadership

VOTE

**JEFF
WELLER**



for Town of Highlands
COMMISSIONER

"I'm asking for your vote this election for the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners. I'd like to bring fresh ideas and some new vision to the Board. I would be honored to be your Commissioner and would appreciate your support." - Jeff Weller

KEY ELECTION DATES



Absentee Mail-in
Voting Begins



Early Voting
Period



Election Day

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Halloween on Main

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 6 – 8 P.M.

Free! TRICK-OR-TREATING
KID ZONE

HOT DOGS, POPCORN
& HOT CHOCOLATE

LIVE MUSIC BY
THE FOXFIRE BOYS,
THE HIGH FIVE
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THE HEIGHT OF HAPPINESS



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— ELEV. 4118 —

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Made possible by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC with special thanks to Highlands School PTO, Highlands School Booster Club, Highlands School Interact Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Plateau, MountainTop Rotary and Highlands Rotary.

...Q&A continued from page 1

Kay Craig

Highlands was founded on tourism, and it has always been important to our economy. Our main industry is tourism/hospitality along with construction for second home owners.

I feel our growth is not inevitable. It has been planned for decades by people that invested their time and energy to create businesses that residents and visitors enjoy. This has resulted in increased revenue for the Town of Highlands with increased sales tax and property tax. This increased revenue should allow the Town to plan and budget for future projects and improvements.

John Dotson

Over the course of its history, Highlands has primarily been a "second-home" market. Only in the past 10-15 years has it been marketed as a "tourist destination."

The extensive promotion of our town has led to bustling sidewalks and traffic standstills. Organizations around town now provide venues and host events virtually every week, year-round to attract more visitors.

Over the past few years Highlands has been featured in: Southern Living, Travel + Leisure, This Is My South, Condé Nast Traveler, US News & World Report, and others...

We will never go back to the getaway Highlands used to be - when the sidewalks rolled up between Labor Day and Memorial

Day - and local folks had to earn enough each summer to carry them through the winter. That is a good thing.

Tourism has the ability to do much good, but burgeoning tourism brings its own set of headaches - not the least of which are the environmental, economic and social impacts on our community.

When it comes to Highlands, the key question becomes: How much tourism is enough?

• See Q&A page 24

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Focusing on the Future
While Respecting Our Past

Highlands' Taxpayers Are Talking About 3 Things:

Fiscal Responsibility
You work hard for your money, and I'll work to ensure each tax dollar provides you a return on your investment, asking for input and creating transparency.

Better Collaboration
Our best path forward is for the Town to work with other entities, helping collaborate for the best to protect and preserve our Town while ensuring a future that will support small businesses and future generations.

Managed Growth
While growth is inevitable, I'll work to proactively find fair solutions to challenges before they become problems.

rachelwilsonforhighlands.com
[@rachelwilsonforhighlands](https://www.instagram.com/rachelwilsonforhighlands)
rachel@rachelwilsonforhighlands.com
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Paid for by Rachel Wilson for Town Commissioner

CANDIDATE FORUM

HIGHLANDS TOWN BOARD CANDIDATE FORUM:

JOIN US FOR A 2-HOUR DISCUSSION

DATE: 10/17/23

TIME: 7-9 PM

LOCATION: HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY BUILDING (BY BALLFIELD)
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HELP SHAPE THE CONVERSATION! PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE. WE'LL BE COVERING 6 KEY SUBJECTS. AS A REMINDER, THERE WON'T BE A LIVE Q&A DURING THE EVENT NIGHT! EMAIL QUESTIONS TO INFO@HIGHLANDERSFORGOODGOVERNMENT.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.

Fri.-Sat., thru October

• At the Nature Center, every Friday and Saturday in October – weather depending - at 4 p.m. come for FREE guided leaf tours open to the public.

Oct. 6-28

• "The Rocky Horror Show" at Mountain Theatre Company now in residence at the Per-

Group Mediumship by Kelly Palmatier - Asheville Psychic Medium -from noon to 3p. \$45. Limited Seats. Reservations required. Call 828-487-5579.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will meet in the Macon County Library, on Siler Road in Franklin at 6 p.m. Norm & Rochelle Morris tell the true story of his (Jingles) AT hike from GA to ME while Rochelle (SherpaShell) provides her support from the backroads in their camper van. **Fri. & Sat., Oct. 13-14**

• At The Bascom, Fall Pottery Show and Sale 10a to 5p. Featuring work by Studio Members.

• At M&CO, 782 Dillard Road, Fine and Estate Jewelry Extravaganza by Mike Booth, former auctioneer at Scudders. Great prices.

Fri., Oct. 13

• At Hudson Library, local author Bruce Katz will appear at Hudson Library on Friday at 2 PM to talk about his new novel The Family Jewels. Books will be available for purchase and signing at this free event.

• The LAST Friday Night Live – Town Square, 343 Main Street, 6 – 8:30 p.m. The Foxfire Boys

Sat., Oct. 14

• At Shakespeare & Co., Paris Sketchbook Calendar signing at 2 p.m.

• Highlands Heritage Jamboree will celebrate and honor the town's history with traditional music, dancing and more on Saturday, Residents and visitors will enjoy bluegrass, clogging and bagpipe performances. Events at K-H Founders Park will include: Highlands Bagpipers, 3:30-4 p.m.; Bailey Mountain Cloggers, a championship dance team from Mars Hill University, 4-5 p.m.; The Foxfire Boys, 5-7:30 p.m.

• The LAST Saturdays on Pine – K-H Founders Park, Pine Street. The Foxfire Boys (5 - 7:30 p.m. as part of Highlands Heritage Jamboree)

• A Hike on the Historic Kelsey Trail. The public is invited to join one of three groups of hikers, 25 in each, on the morning of Saturday. Shuttles to Whiteside will leave from Founders Park at 8:30, 9, and 9:30. The walk is mostly downhill from Whiteside, taking 4 hours, at a casual pace. Water and snack bars will be provided along the trail. As a fundraiser for the Highlands Plateau Greenway, a \$75 donation is per hiker to support the Greenway trail system. Register at www.highlandsgreenway.com.

Sun., Oct. 15

• Highlands First Presbyterian Church will host an old fashioned Hymn Sing at 4pm on Sunday. Those attending may choose favorite hymns to sing from the 1938 Cokesbury hymnal. Song leaders will be Stell Huie and John Greene with Angie Jenkins at the piano. Everyone is invited to attend. The church is on the corner of Main and 5th streets. Handicapped accessible entrances are on Church Street and on Fifth Street.

Tues, Oct. 17

• Highlanders for Good Government is sponsoring a Candidate Forum in the Commu-

nity Building at 7 p.m. It will be two hours long will have six subjects to be asked by moderators. Public can send their questions, to info@highlandersforgoodgovernment.com.

• The Justice Forum is Tuesday at 7 pm and is FREE and open to the public. The Franklin Watch Party will be held at Macon County Public Library, located 149 Siler Farm Road, Franklin. Light food and drink will be provided. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Community members will watch the live-stream of the Forum starting at 7 pm. Advance registration is required, sign up at <https://www.pisgahlegal.org/justice-forumwatchparty/>.

Thurs., Oct. 19

• 17th Annual Chili Cook-Off sponsored by Landmark Realty Group in Cashiers, at the Lewis Hall Center at The Village Green 5-7 p.m.

Fri., Oct. 20

• At Hudson Library, a delightful (and refreshing!) talk by local author/photographer Robert Willson at Hudson Library on Friday at 2 PM. He'll be talking about his new book, a photographic documentary, Delicious and Refreshing: Georgia's Vintage Coca-Cola Wall Signs. Books will be available for purchase and signing at this free event.

Sat. & Sun., Oct. 21-22

• Art League Fall Colors Fine Art Show at the Highlands Rec Center 600 N. 4th St. 10a-5p.

Sat., Oct. 28

• Free Fall Concert with the H-C Chamber Music Festival, 5 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church. Sponsored by the Cullasaja Women's Outreach.

Sun., Oct. 29

• Aura Photography Readings at Holistic, 11:30a-4:30p. Reservations required. 828-487-5579.

Fri., Oct. 27

• At Hudson Library, Community Coffee with the Mayor Friday at 11a in the Hudson Library Meeting Room for the final Community Coffee with the Mayor of 2023. The topic will be: "What is Ahead for Highlands: An Idea Discussion with the Mayor."

Tues., Oct. 31

• Halloween on Main (from 2nd to 5th streets) will be open to pedestrians from 6-8 p.m. on Tuesday, Participating merchants will distribute candy. Musical performances include the Foxfire Boys in front of Reeves Hardware, High Five in front of Berkshire Hathaway and DJ Mike Murphy next to Kilwins. The Kid's Zone will be on Fourth Street

Sat., Nov. 4

• Volunteers are needed to help Tidy Our Town on Saturday beginning at 8:30 a.m., weather permitting. Volunteers will begin at K-H Founders Park on Pine Street, to get geographic assignments before collecting trash. Volunteers will get a light breakfast, a safety vest, gloves, pick-up tools and garbage bags. Only areas within the town limits will be covered. To participate please email events@highlandschamber.org or call 828-526-5841.

SATURDAY, OCT. 14

Paris Sketchbook Calendar signing at 2 p.m.

Refreshments from the Secret Garden

Devoted Francophile and Highlands resident Cannon Montague brings her Paris Sketchbook Calendar to Shakespeare and Company Booksellers. She has been sketching and painting in Paris since the late '90s, Her sketchbook became a perfect on-the-go way for her to record her impressions of the dramatic and intimate beauty of Paris in all its seasons.

Please join us for a special artist talk and calendar presentation.



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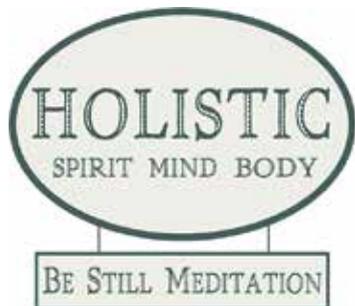
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2023 Outdoor Concert Series

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Join us for our October concerts!

All shows take place from 6 - 8:30 p.m.

Friday Night Live

Town Square | 343 Main St.

Showcasing traditional mountain music and local talent

OCTOBER 6
Ol' Dirty Bathtub

OCTOBER 13
The Foxfire Boys

Saturdays on Pine

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park
Pine St.

Featuring a variety of popular, regional bands and musicians

OCTOBER 7
Outlaw Whiskey

OCTOBER 14
The Foxfire Boys



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...Q&A continued from page 21

The answer to that requires thoughtful discussion and moderation by the people of Highlands.

Brian Stiehler

There is no question that more people are learning about Highlands and coming to the area. Overall, I think that is a good thing. Healthy, desirable towns will grow, and I think it is great for vibrant downtown area. However, the growth needs to be controlled and monitored to protect the real reason we all love this area - the natural environment.

One advantage we have is that we are landlocked to a degree. This 14-sq.-mile watershed is largely surrounded by National Forest with very few options for expansion. Because of that, I feel like we've seen more people buying existing homes and remodeling them to suit their needs. In my opinion, that is great for Highlands and great for our neighborhoods. However, I'm amazed at how much this town has changed in the 23 years I've been here, and I can't imagine what that perspective might be like from the eyes of a generational Highlander!

To that point, I am very concerned that we are losing a huge piece of what makes Highlands so special and that is the quality experience our residents and visitors have when they come to town. I think we need to focus on quality over quantity when it comes to marketing the Highlands area. The goal shouldn't be to fit as many people as possible in the town, and honestly, it's easy to feel like that's the case at times. We want to be sure that our businesses succeed and at the same time, maintain the quality experience we all want. We also need to be cautious that we don't outgrow our infrastructure.

As the town grows, more stress is put on these resources, leading to the increased need for maintenance and the need for expanded infrastructure. As one of your commissioners, I want to continue to be part of the conversation and solution to determine

• See Q&A page 30



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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



From left: The C.W.O. Administrative Team, Jo Hill, Jane Adams, Margaret Eichman, Lindy Colson Harrison, and Nancy Harrison.

Cullasaja Women's Outreach, an independent collective of 99 women who join together pooling their funds each summer to support Highlands-Cashiers area not-for-profit organizations. This year our Outreach was able to fund 29 local 501(c)-3 organizations, for an investment totaling \$335,000 for 2023. Since its inception in 2006, Cullasaja Women's Outreach has invested over \$2,800,000 into the local community through our grant process.

Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival presents

Free Fall Concert

1st Presbyterian Church-Highlands
Saturday, October 28 - 5 PM
Sponsored by the Cullasaja Women's Outreach



Lieto Quartet - 2023 Fall Residency Program

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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16



On hand to accept the checks were (l-r) Marie Johnson, HEC vice president; T.J. Smith, International Friendship Center (Food Pantry) executive director; Berney Kirkland, OLM Pastoral Council president; and Bonnie Potts, HLC executive director. Not present was Jenny Golding, SMPCC executive director.

Our Lady of the Mountains parishioners tithe their support for the Highlands community

Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church embraces the call to tithe and give thanks for the blessings the church has received by giving back to the local community.

Each year Parochial Administrator Father Jason K. Barone and the Pastoral Council identify four organizations that support worthy causes in Highlands and the surrounding area.

Special collections are taken at all weekend Masses in July and the funds are distributed to the designated entities to support their charitable work.

This year, donations totaling \$5,662 were received to support the following agencies: Highlands Emergency Council (HEC) to help provide fuel for heating homes; Highlands Food Pantry for its Thanksgiving turkey dinner program; Highlands Literacy Council (HLC) to help fund the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, and Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Center (SMPCC) in support of its annual fundraising banquet.

BLUEVALLEY 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

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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

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HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

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

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

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sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

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HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376

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www.highlandsmethodist.org

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Rev. Ken Langsdorf

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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

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

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and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

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

4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

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

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

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SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

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

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

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

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

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

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

Oct. 3

• At 2:20 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on the parking lot on Blue Bike Café.

Oct. 5

• At 11:30 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at Main and 2nd streets.

• At 2:15 p.m., officers responded to a call of damage to property when a driver left the gas nozzle in the gas tank at Spinx and drove forward.

Oct. 6

• At 10:25 a.m., officers responded to a 1-vehicle accident on NC 28 and S. 4th Street.

• At 5:28 p.m., officers responded to a 1-vehicle accident on NC 28 and Stacey Russell Road.

Oct. 7

• At 10:30 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident

in Wright Square.

Oct. 8

• At 12:52 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on Oak and 1st streets.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Oct. 3.

Oct. 3

• At 8:41 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Cobb Road.

• At 10:08 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Apple Mountain Lane.

Oct. 4

• At 2:14 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Pine Street.

• At 4:55 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Spring Street.

Oct. 5

• At 12:46 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on VZ Top Road.

• At 2:17 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a fuel spill on N. 4th Street.

• At 11:16 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on the Franklin Road.

Oct. 6

• At 7:167 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Horse Cove Road.

• At 7:22 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible vehicle fire at a location on the Dillard Road.

• At 3:03 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Margarets Lane.

• At 10:57 p.m., the dept. responded to motor vehicle accident on the Dillard Road.

Oct. 7

• At 8:29 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Flat Mountain Road.

• At 12:49 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a motor vehicle accident on the Walhalla Road but nothing was found.

• At 6:36 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Smallwood Avenue.

Oct. 8

• A little past midnight, the dept. was called to investigate the source of smoke at a residence on Sassafras Lane.

• At 3:46 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Klein Road.

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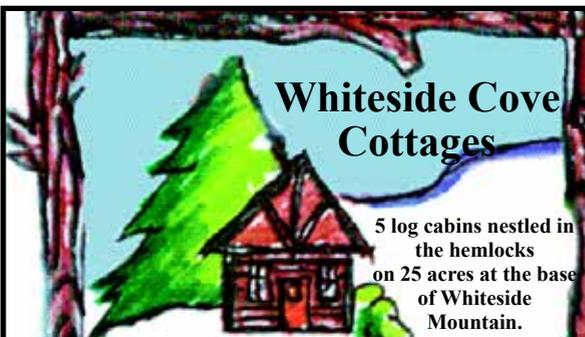
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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 30



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...Q&A continued from page 24

how we maintain and improve the quality of life that we all have come to appreciate in Highlands.

Jeff Weller

Tourism in Highlands has transformed over the time that I have lived in Highlands full-time. During those 30 years, Highlands has transformed from a 7-8 month tourist town to a year-round tourist town. When I first arrived here, after the end of October, town essentially shut down. Second-home owners left and didn't return until the season started back the next year. Most all restaurants closed. Several inns closed. Most retail businesses closed. That seasonal aspect to the town made it difficult for some businesses to survive. During the past 15-20 years, even second-home owners started spending some holidays here and using their homes throughout the year. I'm guessing that continues more so today since businesses have been able to remain open during more or all of the year. In fact, most businesses are now able to stay open and even thrive the full year. As far as the business community is concerned, the growth has been a very good evolution to Highlands tourism. As with all growth, there are also downsides and challenges that come along as well. We are all aware of some of

those challenges. From staffing shortages to access to restaurants, we have all experienced the growth in both positive and negative ways. As tourism continues, I would like to focus less on purely a numbers game on visitors and more on the quality of the experience while visiting Highlands. Whether it is for an event, golf, great dining/hotel or a simple hike through our beautiful natural surroundings, the quality of Highlands needs to be a strong part of the focus of our planning.

As we all know, Highlands is a very special place. It only makes sense, as more people experience Highlands, more people want to come back more often. Many times, to buy a home and become a part of our community. In many cases, more people want to come and simply visit frequently. Regardless of their plans, we all can understand why they want to come. I've said this before and this subject is one of the very areas that needs to have better community involvement. There is no question that Highlands is growing. If we can get the year-round residents, the second-home owners and the business owners to be part of the discussion, we can responsibly and positively guide and plan that growth as we move forward. Our community is the greatest resource for this process. As we move forward, we need to all consider what we want Highlands to be while at the same time understanding where we started, where we have been, where we are and where we want to be in the future. I don't believe any one person has the answer as to what the final solution is moving forward. However, there is no doubt in my mind that the Collective Community holds the answers. I think the Town Board, the community leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, business leaders and individuals within the community can all collaborate to assure positive planning for the future. If in the end, if all of the stakeholders work together, the future of

Highlands remains bright. I am focused on responsible planning and look forward to the future.

Rachel Wilson

The secret is out about Highlands and I think town leadership should embrace this success and proactively work to mitigate issues that arise rather than resent or try to hide from it. People may naturally assume that I have a "tourist first" mindset when in fact I believe that the quality of life for residents should not be sacrificed for the desires of our transient visitors. Full-time or part-time residents who are invested in our community make Highlands great and unique. When making decisions, what is good for Highlanders should be the priority over what is good for the guest. However, I think that the two can live together harmoniously.

New restaurants, shops and other businesses are great for our community. They bring invested people as full-time residents, new experiences for locals, and ensure the continuous thriving economy that provides a livelihood employees and business owners can rely on. Activities throughout the year keep Highlands exciting for locals and encourage families to put down roots. These are also what attract people to choose Highlands as their vacation destination over and over. A place with fulfilled, thriving locals will naturally draw attention from more people and land us atop "Best of..." lists of publications such as Travel + Leisure. We should be proud of this recognition.

There is no denying that the increase in residents and tourists alike brings new issues to the forefront. Increased traffic, garbage, and strain on natural resources are just a few that come to mind. Leadership isn't just about avoiding problems for a smooth ride; it is mostly about navigating through the bumps in the road and problems that arise. Thankfully, with growth comes increased revenue. From FY 2015-'16 to FY 2021-'22, sales tax revenue for the town has increased 53% exceeding \$1.5 million. The increased tax revenue alone is money that

can be used to pay for additional police and sanitation force, increased wages for town workers, and improved infrastructure. As a member of the Town Board I would also seek to work with other agencies in town to come up with solutions to these problems. One example is 4th of July celebration in Founders Park. While this is a fun-filled celebration it can present garbage, safety and sanitation issues. Rather than discourage people from coming to Founders Park to enjoy the festivities I would work with Visit Highlands to provide added security, waste receptacles and portable bathrooms. I am eager to have conversations surrounding traffic on Main Street during peak hours and seek out potential diversions for this traffic without discouraging shoppers from patronizing Main Street businesses. Also, increased informational signage for parking throughout town might relieve frustrations of those who think Highlands has grown too much. Finally, I would like to see a joint effort between the Town and Visit Highlands/Chamber of Commerce to craft messaging and specifically targeting the type of visitor we want in our town. If visitors are looking for the comforts and known factors of chains and franchises, this is not your place. If visitors are expecting fast-paced experiences, try somewhere else. If you are looking for a relaxed getaway, connecting with kind people who appreciate our natural resources and live with a sense of gratitude, then we are your place.

Too many people move here and then want to lock the gate behind them. Highlands does not belong to us. We are merely stewards of the gift that is our town, community, and natural surroundings. I would strive to protect what it is for generations to come by keeping big business and development out, welcoming new small business owners and families, and encouraging continued marketing to attract new people helping our town continue to flourish instead of withering away.

Oct. 19 question #4:

How would you improve the infrastructure of Highlands – roads, sewer, water, recreational facilities?

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