

Volume 20, Number 37

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

Thurs., Sept. 14, 2023



Pictured from left:Ashley Oakey, middle school teacher; Kendall Jones, middle school teacher; Katlin Moss, teacher assistant: Madison Billingsley, elementary teacher: Allisha Mason, elementary teacher: laycee Rogers, high school teacher; Madison O'Neal, elementary teacher (long-term sub); Alyssa DeBois, Assistant Principal.

- Photo by Brian O'Shea

Highlands School teachers say 'Hello!'

Students and faculty were greeted with lots of new faces this 2023-'24 school year at Highlands' K-12 school of 335 students. Though not a new

face, Sarah Holbrooks moved up from being Assistant Principal to Principal and Ayssa DeBois was named the

new Assistant Principal. Seven new teachers/teacher assistants were hired for various positions in the elementary, middle and high school.

We have already posted articles about Principal Holbrooks and Asst. Principal De-Bois in previous issues

so in this issue we are focusing on the new teachers.

Though not all of them were able to respond in time for publication, the following submissions show the enthusiasm each has and the joy they are already experiencing at Highlands School.

They were asked the following questions:

1. Please tell us a bit about yourself - your family and education background/ experience

2. What made you seek and accept the position at Highlands School?

3. A couple of weeks in, what is your impression of See TEACHERS page 8

Festival was a dazzling success this past weekend with hundreds of people wandering town to see and vote on 52 dahlia vignettes.

The Bascom kicked things off with a poster party featuring signature dahlia cocktails and the poster artist Me-

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TL&LC hopes permanent Pre-K program to start 2024

The importance of early childhood education is essential for the development of young children because it gives them the foundation they need to succeed in school and life. However, in North Carolina, many children do not have access to high-quality early childhood education due to the high cost and limited availability of programs. In Highlands, The Literacy & Learning Center (TL&LC) is stepping up to fill the gap.

Highlands has two excellent facilities that currently provide pre-K to students ages 4-5 - Highlands Community Child Development Center and The Gordon Center which together are serving 28 children for the 2023-'24 school year. But more spots are needed. The pre-K program at TL&LC will be free and will accommodate another 18-25 children.

• See TL&LC page 22 Last Saturday 'rained' dahlias!

By Kim Daugherty, н́нѕ

The 13th Annual Dazzling Dahlia



The Church of the Incarnation and its "Four Seasons of Learning" designed by Stephanie Reeves won "Best of Show." - Photo by Marty Boone gan Gaillour.

Saturday was a never-ending surprise of color, design, stunning dahlias, history, art, and really great music. • See DAHLIAS page 22



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The Plateau's Position Mayor on Duty Hic's View

Here's to festival fun and more!

e are in the season of wonderful community events. This past weekend, the entire community enjoyed a well-done Dazzling Dahlia Festival. I want to thank the festival's organizing committee and the Highlands Historical Society for all the hard work and volunteer hours that they put in for this community celebration. It is a festival featuring the beauty of nature, and the gardeners of the plateau that combined make this such a beautiful place.

Sallie and I were so amazed at the concert and festival celebration at Founders Park on Saturday night. We saw many of our friends, neighbors, visitors, and fellow residents having such a joyous time, and we were really impressed with the children and older kids wearing those magical, illuminated headbands. As the evening darkness moved in, those lights reminded me of a thousand lighting bugs on a hot summer evening. Sallie and I both realized Highlands is truly the best small mountain town, as was recently featured in Travel and Leisure Magazine. The people here, those engaged citizen volunteers, make this community a great place to visit and to live as a

Highlands Newspaper www.highlandsinfo.com Phone: (828) 200-1371 Email: HighlandsEditor@aol.com Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki **Reporters: Brittney Lofthouse** Brian O'Shea Digital Media/Circulation - Jim Lewicki Locally owned and operated by Kim & Jim Lewicki Adobe PDF version at www,HighlandsInfo.com 265 Oak St. PO Box 2703 Highlands, N,C 28741 All Rights Reserved. No articles, photos, illustrations, advertisements or design elements may be used without permission from the publisher. 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.



Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor

permanent resident.

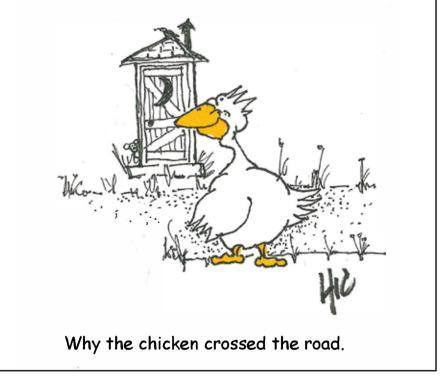
The next big community celebration will be this weekend's PorchFest. Sponsored by CLE, PorchFest will be a great time for folks to meander on Sunday afternoon around downtown and hear great music by musicians of many different genres. Like the Dahlia Festival, this event doesn't require the purchase of tickets or reservations. Just come downtown and hear the great music, shop, dine, and maybe sip some

good wine. Everyone will be welcome, and it will be another time to meet old and new friends and our neighbors.

At the point of this writing, I am tracking legislative events in Raleigh. The state budget deliberations should be over at the beginning of the week, and hopefully, a budget will be approved by both houses of the legislature. I have scheduled both Representative Gillespie and Senator Corbin to be at the Community Coffee with the Mayor on Friday, September 29, at 11 a.m., at the Hudson Library. I know they both desperately want to make this meeting because if they can't, that means the legislature is in session in Raleigh. I speak for our representatives by saying they are ready to come home.

There are three possibilities once the budget is passed by the legislature. It will go to Governor Cooper's desk. The governor can sign it immediately, which may happen since the governor wants Medicaid expansion benefits to go into effect ASAP. Or the governor could veto the bill only to have the supermajority in the legislature immediately overrule his veto. The third opinion would be for the governor to do nothing, not to sign the budget bill, and if that happens, the final budget will go into effect 10 days after its arrival on the governor's desk. That scenario would translate into the budget being final toward the end of this month.

I hope the budget gets approved as soon as possible. There are too many unknowns and delays, such as teacher and state employees' pay raises and Medicaid expansion financing. Also, I am waiting to see if Highlands is the recipient of any state funding. Stay tuned; the program is almost at a conclusion.





Thu, 14-Sep	Fri, 15-Sep	Sat, 16-Sep	Sun, 17-Sep
			69°F 50°F
Nice with some sun	Nice with partial sunshine	Nice with clouds and sun	A morning t-storm in spots
RealFeel® High 75° Low 58°	RealFeel® High 75° Low. 58°	RealFeel® High 76° Low: 58°	RealFeel® High 72° Low 52°

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heck out this guide for a weekend full of activities that highlights some of the best of what the Highlands Plateau has to offer.

All of these favorites can be easily found with a quick google search or email me for a more detailed printable guide with directions.

Friday

5 pm: Swing by the Highlands Wine Shoppe to un-wined and grab some provisions for a sunset picnic. Their vending machine wine dispensers are super fun and let you try lots of different options. They also have a vast bottle inventory along with some snack pairings for your picnic.

5:30 pm: Head to Sunset Rock for a short half-mile walk to the top. Enjoy a stunning sunset overlooking the town of Highlands on a natural amphitheater of granite slabs.

7 pm: On the way to dinner, stop by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce and grab a Calendar to see if any Events or Festivals are happening over the weekend. Then, dinner at Highland's newest spot, Stubborn Seed, for Tapas and South American Fusion. Or, Highlands mainstays - Wolfgang's, Lakeside Restaurant, Four65 Bistro & Bar, Madison's, on the Verandah, or Highlands Smokehouse.

9 pm: Walk around Main Street Highlands and if you're in the mood for something sweet, stop in to Kilwin's or Anny's Ice Cream for a treat.

Saturday

**Optional for the early riser: Coffee at Calder's and a hike at Glen Falls

10 am: Breakfast at The Blue Bike. Giant pancakes, delicious omelets, and biscuits and gravy that will make you wanna slap yo' momma! Their signature blueberry jam should be slathered on anything and everything.

11 am: The Saturday morning Farmer's Market in Kelsey Hutchinson Park is quaint and cute. The perfect stroll from breakfast to walk off some of that lard. The market usually includes flowers, vegetables, local purveyors, and sometimes some art pieces.

12pm: Choose your adventure!

• Get Your Shopping Fill: Highlands is known for some of the best shopping in Western North Carolina. Main Street is very walkable and makes for a great shopping day. Must Stops: Annawear, Silver Eagle, The Dry Sink, The Highland Hiker, Main Street Gifts, Wit's End, Southern Way, and Mountain Paws. Break for lunch at Wild Thyme or The



Rachel Wavra, Broker, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Meadows Mountain Realty 828-505-6190 rachel@bhhsmmr.com Secret Garden.

• Scaly Mountain Thrills: Check out Highlands Aerial Park for ziplining canopy tours, a giant swing, or a kid's ropes course. Then, head over to Highlands Outpost for the alpine coaster and all-season tubing. If you're looking for some place for lunch – Try the Blue Hound BBQ, Blue Bike's smoky sister. The Blue Hound is located at the Highlands Outpost.

• Hike the Hills: Beautiful hikes and stunning waterfalls are one of the most attractive parts of our area. I recommend hiking Whiteside & then choosing a waterfall

hike like: Dry Falls, Sliding Rock, Glen Falls, or Secret Falls – Visit the Highland Hiker for a local guidebook and any gear you need! Need a great lunch spot – Don Leon's is the best! Super casual with character. I love the Gyro or the Reuben but there's lots to choose from.

4 pm: Early Happy Hour in downtown Highlands at The Ugly Dog Pub or The Wine Garden. Hang out and make friends or sneak back for a cat nap.

7 pm: Brace yourself for a culinary adventure at Highlands Tavern. Chef Kim Vos cooks up some soul-warming dishes that you will love. They don't accept reservations, so you may have to wait for a table, but I promise it's worth it. The menu changes often but the candied bacon is a mainstay and a very good bet.

9 pm: Highlands doesn't have much of a nightlife, but you have a couple of options for an after-dinner drink. The Hummingbird Lounge at Old Edwards is swanky and sophisticated, or the High Dive Bar is fun for pool, darts, and dancing.

Sunday

11 am: Cap off your weekend with some Bluegrass and Brunch at The Highlander Mountain House's The Ruffed Grouse Tavern. Enjoy their cozy dining room with some great tunes and a strong bloody mary if needed. Chef Rodney Smith's dedication to local farms means that you're always getting the best of what the Plateau has to offer.

 As you travel home, near or far, you may decide that you want more weekends like this and want to make Highlands your full or part-time home. If that's the case, I'd love the opportunity to be your trusted real estate advisor. Let's get together for a cup of coffee or an ice cream cone and discuss your upcoming real estate needs.









HIGHLANDS MLS# 102909 | \$1,595,000

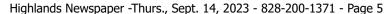
Crafted using the latest in design and construction, this nearly new home embodies both elegance and functionality. Basked in natural light, the living room offers ample space for entertaining guests, spending quality time with family, or simply unwinding. The kitchen features high-end appliances, generous countertop space, and abundant storage. One of the standout features of this home is the splendid screened porch, which will become a favorite hangout. Other features include fiber optic internet, public utilities, a sealed crawl space with a dehumidifier, a two-car garage with builtin cabinets, and a generator. Conveniently located less than five minutes from downtown.

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HIGHLANDS MLS# 102860 | \$499,000

2 BR BA

This two bedroom, two bath home is located outside Highlands' town limits, just two miles from downtown, with easy access to boutiques, restaurants, and cultural attractions. The heart of this home is the stunning updated kitchen that features a gas range and breakfast bar. The open living space is bathed in natural light, creating an inviting atmosphere. The expansive one-acre lot provides ample space for gardening, outdoor activities, and enjoying the pristine mountain air. Whether you want a full-time residence or an investment property, this home offers modern amenities and proximity to Highlands — the best of both worlds. Schedule your showing today!

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Ban the Books

Dear Editor,

When I was a young boy, I was given a book to read on General Armstrong Custer, an American hero and a martyr who fell defending the frontier at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. I read the book, saw the movie – They Died With Their Boots On – an Earl Flynn classic, and I drank the Kool-aid. I was taught that the American Indians were savages who slaughtered American soldiers and who should be despised and shunned. All my early life, I believed Custer was an American Hero, and Indians were savages, just as they were portrayed in every TV and movie of the era.

Now I know the truth, Custer was a two-time courtsmartial renegade officer, sent to the West not as a savior but as an outcaste. His tenure in the West was one of murder and death, leading to attacks on innocent Indian women, children,



and old men.

I was a soldier, and as such, my heart and respect goes out to the men in the 7th Calvary who died on that day; neither the loss in battle nor the killings led by Custer are on their heads. Also, as a soldier, I equally respect those American Indians who fought to save their way of life, who, despite their bravery, eventually lost to overwhelming numbers.

So now, I know the truth, and the truth does not make me feel ashamed of my race, or of being white. It makes me angry that the truth was kept from all children of my age, that we were fed falsehoods about the American Indians for the sole purpose of hiding the truth. Books were written by white men for white children and for the sole purpose of rewriting history. Ignorance is not bliss, and prejudice is not born. It is learned.

There is a serious movement now by members of one political party to ban books that make "Our children uncomfortable about their history." This year, as tracked by Pen America, 1,477 books were banned this year, 30% of which are about racism, and 26% have LGBTQ+ characters or themes. In Utah, the King James version of the Bible was removed from the libraries. In Pennsylvania, the Dolly Pardon song, Rainbowland, a song about living together in harmony, was banned because its lyrics "could be deemed controversial." Also, in Pennsylvania, I Am Martin Luther King, Jr. and I Am Rosa Parks were banned. The Bible and a story about Rosa Parks, banned, really?

So, again, we hide the truth from children to have them believe "We" are better than we are and the errors of the past never happened. All in the name of making kids feel better about their own race or history. In a word, prejudice.

If you want the children of today to feel unashamed about

their history, then let them learn from it. Let them know the truth, learn from all our mistakes and all our victories, not just the ones that make them feel good.

It is to me strangely ironic that those who say they love America clearly do not love Americans.

If you want our children to feel good about being who they are and who they came from, then teach them the truth, and let them make their own informed judgments. Teach them about the successes and victories of all Americans. Teach all the facts.

Thus ends the lesson.

Matthew Eberz Highlands

Suburbia

Dear Editor,

While walking around my rapidly vanishing so-called neighborhood this morning on one of the last short stretches of gravel road (soon to be paved), I realized that Highlands has become a suburban version of its former self. Observing more and more native Rhododendron end Laurel being cleared away, more old shade trees being cut down and replaced by those ubiquitous non-native pointy trees you now see all over the place, and more and more anemic little store bought annuals planted around the endless number of new, over-built and over-big houses, well, as Yogi Berra would have said, hed he been walking with me, "it's suburbia all over again." You can't mistake it.

While strolling through this new and raw wonderland, a • See LETTERS page 22



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Highlands School?

4. What are your expectations? Kendall Jones - MS Science Teacher

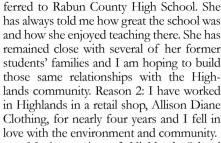
I am from Rabun County, GA. I am the eldest daughter of Scott and April Jones. I am a recent graduate from the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega, I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Middle School Science. This is my first year teaching.

There are two reasons why I chose to seek a job at Highlands School. Reason 1: My mother was a teacher at Highlands School in the late 1990s before she trans-

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Highlands



My impression of Highlands School having taught here for a couple weeks is that this school is well connected with the community, supports parent/family involve-• See TEACHERS page 10





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... TEACHERS continued from page 8

ment, supports teachers in their endeavor to educate the young minds of the next generation.

My expectations are to continue to grow with my students as well as become more involved in my school community and the community of Highlands.

Katlin Moss -- Kindergarten TA

I started going to Highlands School in Kindergarten and graduated there in 2017. I work in the same room that my Kindergarten class was in, which is super special to me. I got my Associate in Arts in 2019 and I am currently working toward getting an Early Childhood Education, ASS (Associate in Applied Science) at Southwestern Community College. Hopefully, I will be able to continue at Western Carolina University to get a bachelors degree through the Birth-Kindergarten Program. I worked at the Gordon Center for Children for almost two years before working at Highlands School. I thought it was a better opportunity for me to learn more about the degree I am seeking and to give me an idea of what having my own classroom will look like.

Since I grew up in Highlands School, I already knew what a great community I was walking into. Everyone is incredibly nice and encouraging. Even though I know a lot of faces already, it's comforting to know that everyone else is just as amazing. I just hope that I can make a difference to these kids like some of my teachers did for me. Madison Billingslev – 1st Grade

My family means the absolute world to me, I grew up around Western North Carolina just over the mountain in Sylva with my little brother. Education is in my blood. My grandfather Lonnie Crawford was superintendent for Macon County Schools for 22 years and my grandma Karen Crawford taught first grade in Macon County as well. I am following in their footsteps. Prior to Highlands I have taught First Grade for six years for Macon County Schools, as well as teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) for one of those years. I speak both Spanish and English, I love speaking two languages. I now reside in Scaly Mountain with my husband!

First Grade Teacher for Highlands School since I live in Scaly Mountain the commute and drive time to work just made sense. Plus, First Grade is my niche.

My impression of Highlands school is that it is a tight knit family community as well as a wonderful place to be. I love being greeted by smiling faces daily.

My expectation for myself is to make an everlasting impact on the students that are in my classroom. I want them to love school and learning. My hope is that they see my excitement for learning dai-

• See TEACHERS page 14



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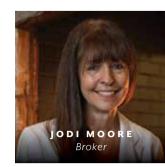
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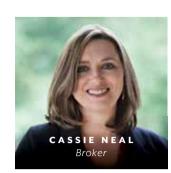














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Fall Home Improvement

How to Enhance Your Home's Outdoor Living Spaces

(StatePoint) With warm weather here, it's time to make the most of your home's outdoor living spaces.

"Whether you want to beautify your landscaping or add elements to your patio that will help you entertain, using manufactured stone veneer is a smart, on-trend choice," says James Alpeter, stone marketing manager at ProVia. "A versatile and charming alternative to brick, high-quality manufactured stone looks natural, but



can be installed much more quickly and affordably than the real thing."

Project Ideas

As you mull over your plans, consider these three manufactured stone project ideas, all of which will boost the beauty and functionality of your outdoor living spaces:

1. Outdoor kitchens. Manufactured stone allows you to think well beyond a simple grill by building a complete outdoor kitchen. Depending on your budget and goals you may include a prep space, a sink, refrigeration and storage, and go for more niche features like a pizza oven. No matter how you choose to build this space out one thing is certain, you will be creating an instant room-like area to gather for conversation and laughter, or to relax after a long day of work.



Fall Home Improvement

2. Outdoor hearths. Enjoy the warmth and ambiance of flames on cool summer nights with an outdoor hearth, which can provide a stunning, one-of-a-kind focal point, whether it's connected to the home or part of your backvard patio. Imagine having friends over for hot mulled cider and s'mores or snuggling up in front of the fire under a star-lit sky. For maximum comfort, treat this space as you would your familv room, adding outdoorgrade couches, cushions and rugs.

3. Landscaping. Have you ever dreamed of having a water feature in your backvard that would provide a habitat for koi fish or local wildlife? Is it time to take your garden to the next level? Manufactured stone is ideal for a range of elegant landscaping applications, from surrounds for a small backvard fish pond to raised planting beds to retaining walls.

Selecting Materials

Manufactured stone is as versatile and authentic-looking as natural stone, offering endless options to tailor your project to your unique aesthetic. Stone profiles range from the classic shape and texture of limestone to the irregular and imperfect look of ledgestone to the layered and precise fit of dry stack stone. They also come in various hues, so you can go for a warm cozy feel or a sleek and striking look.

For the true depth and character of natural stone just be sure to select materials inspired by nature itself. The process at ProVia, for example, starts with trained stone masons who select stones from nature to create the casts used to build their molds, and who pay careful attention to the contours and varving hues of natural stone. With ProVia, you'll also have the opportunity to select the grout color, which is a factor that should not be overlooked.

"Contrasting grout colors can be used to intensify the overall look while complementary grout colors can soften it. Selecting a grout color that mimics the dominant color of your stone can help blend materials into a nearseamless palette," says Alpeter.

Look before you leap with the brand's Stone and Grout Visualizer tool, found at www.provia.com/stone/ prout-visualizer/. This season. consider outdoor projects that will not only extend your home's outdoor living spaces, but add elegance and charm while you're at it.





to outdoor wood surfaces while letting a hint of the natural wood grain to still show through. The waterborne stain offers maximum protection against the elements while creating a striking aesthetic.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS.

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...TEACHERS continued from page 10

ly. Teaching is truly a passion that I have and I love to let my light shine for others to see.

Allisah Mason - 2nd Grade

I reside in Sky Valley, GA, with my husband, Steve, and our two furry companions, Gypsy and Remy. This marks my ninth year of dedication to the field of education. Previously, I had the privilege of instructing kindergarteners for four years and first-graders for one year. During my leisure moments, I find immense joy in exploring new destinations, embarking on hikes, and cherishing moments with my loved ones.

I was in search of a job near my residence and had come across glowing recommendations about Highlands School. I am thrilled at the prospect of contributing to the Highlands community.

Just two weeks into the school year, I already sense a warm welcome from both the students and the staff. I am confident that this academic year will be fantastic.

In terms of my expectations at Highlands School, I have high hopes of establishing a long-term teaching career here and making Highlands my permanent teaching home.

Jaycee Rogers – HS English Teacher I'm originally from Robbinsville, NC where I've spent the last two years teaching middle school ELA. I went to high school there before going on to receive my undergraduate education at UNC Chapel Hill. I'm currently in grad school earning my master degree from WCU.

I was looking to move into a high school position and knew I wanted to be in Macon County, so when I saw the listing for a high school ELA position open up last Spring I was very excited to come interview with Mrs. Holbrooks. When I came up here to interview I felt like this is a community where I could really grow as a young teacher, so when I was offered the job I very quickly accepted it.

I love the sense of community here. It's a special thing to know all of your classmates this well and for teachers it feels like you get to know the students even before you have them since it's a K12 school. The kids are wonderful and everyone in the community has been so welcoming to all of us starting the new school year.

I'm expecting to have a great year and I'm looking forward to getting to know the community, staff and students.

- Kim Lewicki

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> SEPTEMBER 23 The Holiday Band

> > SEPTEMBER 30 Clay Page



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Through October

 Mountain Findings, Highlands, 10-. Every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Thurs., Sept. 14

• Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser for the Gordon Center for Children in the Faith and Fellowship Center at Highlands United Methodist Church. Tickets are only \$10 per person and include pasta, bread, meat, salad and a drink. Bake sale items will be available for purchase. There will also be silent auction items to bid on Contact the Center for tickets or more information at (828) 526-3376.

• At OEI's The Farm from 6 - 8 pm, Olivia DaPonte, an emerging songwriter in the country music scene.. Tickets are \$40. Book Online: https://www.simpletix.com/e/olivia-daponteorchard-sessions-at-the-far-tickets-127463

Sept. 16

• At Acorns, Southern Botanics Trunk Show 10a to 5p. Southern Botanics specializes in collecting, pressing, mounting, and framing flowers, leaves, and other plant materials in the style of botanical engravings, all items are original hand-crafted artworks.

• At PAC, on Chestnut Stree, Live on Screen, Orthello at I p.m.

Sun., Sept. 17

• Porchfest I-6 p.m., 45 musicians will be performing all over town for FREE! To view all artist and venue information, visit highlandsporchfest.com, call (828) 526-8811, or email info@highlandsporchfest.com.

Mon., Sept. 18

• Would you like to be a mentor? Mission's Parent Mentor Orientation Training is for parents who understand the unique experience of raising a child with a disability, mental health challenge, or special healthcare need. Since 1985, Mission Children's Hospital Family Support Network (FSN) has connected parents to volunteer parents who are uniquely qualified to help because of shared experiences. At our upcoming Parent Mentor Orientation Training, parents are trained to offer support in meaningful ways for families undergoing a new diagnosis, transition, or crisis. This training offers volunteer parents the tools they need to support others and become an official FSN Parent Mentor. Training is being offered from noon-2:30pm; sessions will be at Mission Children's at 11 Vanderbilt Park Dr., Asheville, To register, call 828-213-0047 or email mhav. familysupportnetwork@hcahealthcare.com

Fri. Sept. 22

• At PAC, "Artrageous" at 7:30 p.m. For tickets go to Highlands PerformingArts.com.

School performance is at 10 a.m. Sat.. Sept. 23

• The annual Mountain Monarch Festival will be at Gorges State Park, Sapphire, NC, Saturday from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. As the park lies along the monarch's migratory route, butterflies can be seen in late September annually flying over the park's visitor center on their way south to the high-elevation fir forests of Mexico's Neovolcanic Mountains, where they overwinter until early spring.

Sun., Sept. 24

• The 12th annual Empty Bowls fundraiser - a collaboration between the International Friendship Center and the First Presbyterian Church of Highlands to raise money for the Highlands Food Pantry. Tickets can be purchased online at https://https://www.internationalfriendshipcenter.org/empty-bowls-2023 or at the Highlands Food Pantry, on the bottom floor of the HUMC, accessible via Spring street, on Mon., Tues., and Thurs. 10a to 5p.

• PAC Educational Theater is starting a 7 month educational workshop. In person sign up is Sunday, at 2 PM. The program will start with workshops and then transition into rehearsals for full production of Oliver at the end of April. This is not just for children, but for adults.

Thurs., Sept. 28

• The annual Alpha Delta Pi "Alumni on the Mountain" luncheon at Wildcat Cliffs CC at 11:30 a.m. Gate Code is #3030. Mail your check for \$42 which is your reservation to Vesta Jones, 1420 Whiteside Mountain Road, Highlands, NC 28741. Please RSVP by sending check by Sept. 23. For more information, contact Emily Buskirk at 828-787-1015 or ebbuskirk@gmail.com.

Fri., Sept. 29

• Community Coffee with the Mayor at Hudson Library at 11 a.m., State legislators Representative Karl Gillespie and Senator Kevin Corbin will be there to discuss issues.





Is God guilty of hate speech?

Proverbs 3:5

Pastor Mark Ford First Baptist Church Highlands

By Dr. Mark Ford and the Membership of First Baptist Church efore I answer, let me raise an issue that might well get the God of the Bible canceled and stigmatized as Ja "hater."

Of course, He is already getting "canceled" on a regular basis by our secular, "woke," progressive culture. But nonetheless, recent developments and an event that will soon encroach upon our own town is at hand, and God will not likely escape the indictment of "hate speech."

For this October our town, with the blessings of the Chamber of Commerce and others, will celebrate "LGBT History Month" at the Performing Arts Center with the presentation of the "Rocky Horror Show." Simply, this October there will be a celebration of the LGBTOIA+ communities though the 50th anniversary presentation of the "Rocky Horror Show" which is a musical about fluid sexualities and liberated identities.

This musical has been a favorite of the LGBT community as it utilizes glam rock and kitsch portravals of Horror B movie themes from the '40s to the '70s. "Pride Month" in June is about the ongoing fight for rights and protest.

But "LGBT History Month" (recognized by the NEA in 1995) promotes the belief that "queer history is to be shared, taught, and celebrated" as a significant movement that has contributed to the welfare of our nation.

Simply, there is a concerted effort through our local arts community, the Mountain Theatre Company, and leaders in our town to normalize what God opposes - and this is where the Lord's "hate speech" is engaged.

"Hate Speech" is defined as "any form of expression through which speakers intend to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against a group or persons on the basis of race, religion, skin color, sexual identity, ethnicity, disability, or national origin." This has been the working definition from our universities all the way to the Supreme Court, but nonetheless protected by the First Amendment.

Based on that definition, God is guilty of hate speech but with one caveat. First, God vilifies those of the LGBT community. In His Holy Word He speaks ill of and slanders such sexual practices and lifestyles. He calls them defiled, unholy, abominations, shameful, reprobates that have no place in His kingdom (Gen. 19; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:24-32; I Cor. 6:9-11, 17-20, 7:1-2; I Tim. 1:8-11; Jude 1:5-8). Now that's hate speech!

Second, God humiliates them in demanding they humble themselves, acknowledge their sins and seek His forgiveness. No words of tolerance or inclusiveness or acceptance. They - and all sinners including myself - must bow and seek forgiveness (Matt. 4:17; Acts 17:30; Rom. 2:4; 3:23-26; 6:23; II Tim. 2:22-26; I Peter 1:13-21; 4:1-6; II Peter 2 & 3). Simply, we

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

John 3:16

Police & Fire Reports •

Highlands Police entries from Sept. 2. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Sept. 2

• At 9:50 p.m., Marina Kaitlyn Barnes, 24, of Franklin, was arrested for DUI. Driving without a license and giving an officer fictitious information. She was issued an \$800 secured bond. Her trial date is Nov. 8.

Sept. 3

• At 2:24 a.m., officers responded to a report of a simple assault of a man at a lodging facility on N. 4th. Street.

• At 4 a.m., Reagan Elisabeth Rammachaer, 27, of Huntersville, NC, was arrested for simple assault. She was taken to the MC Detention Facility but she wasn't issued a bond nor was a trial date scheduled.

• At 3:41 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident near Mirrormont and Billy Cabin roads.

Sept. 8

At 4:40 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on NC 28 near Spring Street.

Sept. 10

At 11:45 a.m., officers responded to a report of a painting taken from the Highlands Emergency Council without permission.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Sept. 5. Sept. 5

• At 7:11 p.m., the dept. was called to Cherrywood Drive to investigate the source of smoke.

• At 11:04 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Satulah Road.

Sept. 6

• At 7:23 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 1:47 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Mirror Lake

• At 4:20 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence at VZ Top.

• At 5:02 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on NC 106.

Sept. 7

• At 4:07 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Spring Street.

• At 7:06 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

• At 7:31 p.m., the dept. investigated the source of smoke at a residence on Upper Lake Road.

Sept. 8

• At 7:14 a.m., the dept. conducted traffic control on NC 106.

• At 7:36 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Gold Mine Church Road.

• At 8:45 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on NC 106.

Sept. 9

• At 1:46 p.m., the dept. re-

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from 19

have no righteousness or goodness in ourselves (Rom. 3:21-26) and we need God and not the god of self. But the third phrase is the caveat - "incite hatred." Throughout His Word God speaks of His lovingkindness, His love for the lost, and His desire that none should perish in eternal judgment. God doesn't incite hatred, but rather warns and pleads for people to turn to Him before time expires and receive His love in Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 3).

It is this love that inspires and invigorates me to preach the Word - to declare, "Thus saith the Lord." God doesn't incite me to hatred, but a hatred of the sin and sinful lifestyles that are destroying people's lives. Nonetheless, based on the overall definition of "hate speech," God is guilty! He vilifies

in His descriptions and humiliates sinners in calling on them to humble themselves and repent, but for the good of their eternal souls! I too, am guilty of "hate speech" as delineated above.

I blend my voice with God's through His Word in vilifying and calling people to repentance instead of celebrating their reprobation and abominations.

I cry out to the LGBT community and our community leaders who promote these aberrations of God's Word and nature itself, and to turn from their sins and turn to the Lord! He doesn't hate YOU and nor do I, but He does hate your sin and your celebration of these lascivious behaviors - and He says so.

God is guilty of "hate speech," but God is also guilty of caring for all people's souls! (II Peter 3:9)

sponded to a fire alarm at a location on Half Mile Drive.

• At 3:28 p.m., the dept, responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

• At 9:45 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

Sept. 10

• At 2:48 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.





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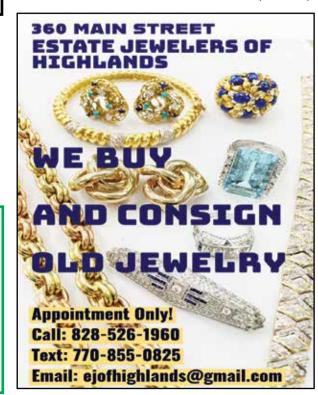
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...LETTERS continued from page 7

vision of the upcoming election for three seats on the Town Board of Commissioners popped into my head as a school of fish swimming before my eyes. I hesitate to liken it, the vision, to the Book of Revelations but I couldn't shake the similarity, nor the sense of foreboding, because it was a school of barracuda chasing, gaining and gobbling up the smaller fish, the neighborhood fish, the local fish. I hope I don't get anymore of these disconcerting election related visions. Two years ago, before the last election, I saw several Marie Antoinettes and one Dr. Seuss vying for the same positions on the Town Board. I suppose this morning's apparition was merely a metaphor because as I walked around my vanishing neighborhood I was confronted by the fruits of the development

and building craze that is taking place all over Highlands, and the subsequent loss of natural habitat being replaced by artificial habitat, ie. suburbia,

Some people like suburbia. I guess. And some people like barracuda. I guess. Then again, some people don't.

by some of the most popular contenders for a spot on the ballot for

our highest office. Cultural crises are manufactured with promises that

only they can save us from these

will it end? Will the villagers get

angry at being deceived and ma-

nipulated and stop responding even

when truth is told? Will apathy in-

crease and prevail? That is a danger-

ous but possible eventuality.

What have we come to? How

disasters

Alice Nelson Highlands

Carole Light

Highlands

Will the villagers realize they have been deceived?

Dear Editor,

These days the fairy tale "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" keeps echoing in my head. In this story a shepherd boy who is bored and lonely and wants attention repeatedly cries out that a wolf is attacking his sheep. The people of his village twice rush to his aid, only to discover he lied.

When a short time later a wolf actually appears, they ignore his cries for help as they were angry about being lied to. His sheep are all attacked and killed by the wolf.

I wonder when and IF the peo-

..TL&LC continued from page 1

Like at the other facilities in town, through a play-based and child-centered approach, children will engage in activities that enhance their language and literacy skills, develop mathematical and scientific thinking, nurture socialemotional well-being, and promote physical growth.

Carolyn Middlebrooks has is the Pre-K Director. Middlebrooks previous teaching experience has focused on the Kindergarten and

... DAHLIAS continued from page 1

Creative and colorful vignettes included a dahlia salamander, a dahlia sandwich, dahlia dresses, dahlia waterfalls, mountains, and vineyards. It rained dahlias!

The judges struggled to make their choices, but in the end the Best of Show judges award and \$500 went to The Church of the Incarnation and their "Four Seasons of Learning" designed by Stephanie Reeves. Second place went to Anna Wear by Anna Herz, 3rd place to Secret Garden by Christy Curcuru, and two Honorable Mentions went to Full House Gallery by Susan Nastasic, Vevie ple of our country will get tired and angry about being incessantly lied to. Will the people of this country recognize that though things are not perfect, they are much improved, and our economy is doing relatively well. I wonder how and why my fellow Americans are so forgiving and accepting of lies and seem so unable or uninterested in discerning truth from lies.

The basic principles of propaganda honed in the pre-World War Two era by Joseph Goebbles are proudly and boldly being employed

pre-K levels in both public and private schools. She was on the team that opened the Lower School at Rabun Gap Nacoochee School in 2017, said TL&LC marketing director, Anna Norton. Two assistant teachers will also be hired.

The enrollment date is pending completion of licensing with a planned start by the start of 2024 Funding is still needed.

"We have received approximately \$143,650 to date and we have some grants pending" said Norton. "Our total budget for the startup and first year is \$350,000."

Norton said Pre-K will be a permanent program at TL&LC but they will need funding for each year going forward.

For more information about TL&LC's pre-K program, visit www.theliteracyandlearningcenter.org or contact Caroline Cox at ccox@theliteracyandlearningcenter.org or 828-526-0863.

Dimmitt and Maggie Douglas, and one to Oakleaf by Kirk Moore.

The People's Choice awards were decided by about 1,000 online votes which overloaded the town's internet system.

Best of Show People's Choice: Fern of Highlands by Justyne Reese of R & R Farms, 2nd place Secret Garden by Christy Curcuru, 3rd place The Vineyard at High Holly, by Sharon Duke; and two Honorable Mentions – one to Lulu BLEU by Sally Zangger, and one to the Incarnation by Stephanie Reeves.

There were 43 growers who

entered the Single Bloom contest at The Bascom displaying 403 mesmerizing, dahlias of every color, (except blue), as small as golf balls and as big as dinner plates.

Best of Show in amateur Single Bloom went to Mary Dotson for her perfect Formal Decorative Salamander!

The historical museum was bustling with music, storytellers and food.

The day wrapped up with the fabulous dance band "Steel Toe Stiletto" Saturday night at the park.

The festival is set for Sept. 7 next year.





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