

# Highlands Newspaper

Happy Leap Year Day!

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 21, Number 9

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Thurs., Feb. 29, 2023

## Low voter turnout prompts Election Director to urge residents in Macon County to go vote

By Brittney Lofthouse

As the Macon County primary election approaches, early voting has been underway, providing an initial glimpse into the prefer-

ences of voters in this pivotal election. Early voting, which began on February 15 and will end on Saturday, March 2nd at 3pm, has seen a dismal turnout, resulting in

Macon County Elections Director Melanie Thibault urging voters to head to the polls.

"I don't think that voters are

• See VOTE page 8

## MC Schools seeks input for 'Strategic Plan'

Stakeholders – students, educators, and members of the entire Macon County community are invited and encouraged to take part in the Macon County School System's Strategic Planning process March 4-6 at Nantahala School, Highlands School and Franklin High School.

The input gleaned from the series of facilitated focus groups of students, educators, and community members will begin the process of the school system developing and refining the district's strategic plan.

Though discussions will likely include the district's goals regarding new construction, renovations, and remodeling of district schools the interviews are designed to gather ideas from students, teachers and community members/families about their goals and objectives for the

• See STRATEGIC PLAN page 4



Highlands Charlotte Westendorf fires a pass inside the paint to AE Woods against Hiwassee Dam during the championship of the LSMC Tournament.

## Lady Highlanders lose nailbiter against Hiwassee Dam in LSMC championship

By Brian O'Shea  
Plateau Daily News

The girls Little Smoky Mountain Conference basketball championship between Highlands and Hiwassee Dam on Feb. 22 came down to the final seconds, but the

Lady Highlanders lost ending with a final of 51-49.

"I thought we played really well," said Highlands Coach Brett Lamb. "Foul trouble caused us to go deep into our bench and those

• See HIGHLANDERS page 14

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## Doctors, advocates blast Mission's plan to correct immediate jeopardy, call for hospital to increase staff

*"HCA's response offers only bureaucratic solutions to ... a workforce issue," states letter to NCDHHS*

By Andrew R. Jones

A coalition of prominent physicians and patient advocates has criticized the thoroughness of Mission Hospital's federally approved plan to fix numerous failures documented in a U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services report and are demanding to know why the plan doesn't mandate the hiring of more staff.

Seven doctors and three patient advocates have written a letter to Mark Benton, chief deputy secretary for health at the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), calling the plan to undo Mission's immediate jeopardy status and a host of associated deficiencies "insufficient."

The letter sharply criticizes

the plan because it doesn't require Mission to hire additional and more experienced staff, something nurses have been advocating for in the years since HCA Healthcare purchased the hospital system in 2019. It also raises concerns about Mission's ongoing compliance and its withholding of documents that investigators had sought. It also proposes a third-party monitor for the plan of correction.

"In short, HCA's response offers only bureaucratic solutions to what is fundamentally a workforce issue," the letter states.

"[W]e believe that the (plan of correction) is insufficient to address the shortcomings evidenced by the Immediate Jeopardy findings," the letter also states, con-

• See MISSION page 7

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Let's make the Sky Bridge a reality

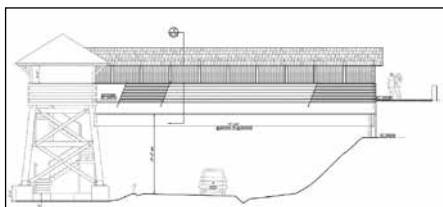
Twenty years ago, Erin Bronk, then a US Forest Ranger, had a great idea of creating a sky bridge over US 64 down to Dry Falls. Visitors would be rerouted to park in a US Forest Service parking lot just off Paul Walden Way, do a short hike down to the falls, and cross the highway by way of the sky bridge. However, the full plan that Erin and her team developed was never realized.

Parts of the plan were completed, such as improving the railing system, parking lot, and walkways at Dry Falls.

An access road was built on the property next to Paul Walden Way, and some limited parking spaces were created. As part of the plan, the old, early pioneer McCall log cabin was relocated to the site. All of this infrastructure is still in place, including the cabin. The landing pad for the sky bridge was even installed near the existing parking lot at



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor



Dry Falls.

What happened to the remaining components of the project? Simply put, the Forest Service ran out of money, and other pressing projects became priorities.

Fast forward to 2021 and the pandemic. Dry Falls, like so many of our recreational venues, was inundated with visitors. Dry Falls poses a particularly dangerous problem with serious backups of cars on US 64 waiting to enter the parking area. Several serious accidents have occurred. This access and parking problem continues, and as spring returns, so will many cars and crowds headed to Dry Falls.

The solution to this problem is simple: throw money at it and complete the project!

The US Forest Service should move forward with the plans. Let's build the parking lot across the road from Dry Falls and construct the sky bridge. The existing parking lot would be a drop-off point and provide handicap parking. The solution and plan have been at hand for 20 years. It may require some updating, but it is a solution to this serious problem.

Also, such a design would serve as a great tourist attraction. The McCall cabin could be a welcome center during the heavy tourist season. The Highlands Historical Society might be able to display in the cabin the artifacts from settler living. Volunteers could provide information about the history of the Highlands Plateau. Picnic and camping areas might be possible in addition to ample parking spaces.

Josh Ward and I met with US Forest Service Rangers and representatives from Congressman Chuck Edwards district offices just recently. We visited the site on Paul Walden and Dry Falls. All agreed this proposed project needs to be reinvigorated with funding and support. I am hopeful that with everyone working together, the Dry Falls improvement project will become a reality as soon as possible. A little federal money from Washington will have a great impact on providing a safe and stunning tourist designation for folks coming to Western North Carolina.

I hope folks will let Congressman Edwards know how important it is to fund this Dry Falls improvement project. <https://edwards.house.gov/contact>

## • HIC'S VIEW •



"Good evening Bennett. I suppose you are wondering why a bear is exploring at 2am."

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 29-Feb	Fri, 1-Mar	Sat, 2-Mar	Sun, 3-Mar
50°F 31°F	45°F 41°F	55°F 41°F	58°F 41°F
Mostly cloudy	Periods of rain	Mostly cloudy and not as cool	A couple of afternoon showers
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### Highlands Newspaper

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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.

#### Obituary Policy:

We do not charge for obituaries at this time, but we reserve the right to edit as needed for space.

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## ...STRATEGIC PLAN continued from page 1

school system, with an emphasis on local connections, "why" learning, including North Carolina's "Portrait of a Graduate."

The process will be facilitated by Open Way Learning, a 501(c)3 nonprofit with a singular focus on helping schools develop, sustain, and scale systems of learner-centered innovation that better prepare students for the realities of the 4th Industrial Revolution, especially students historically furthest from opportunity.

The dates and times follow:

### FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**Mon., March 4**

Nantahala School – 5:30-7pm

**Tues., March 5**

Highlands School- 5:30-7pm

**Wed., March 6**

Franklin High School- 5:30-7pm

If interested in participating, go to either Nantahala, Highlands or Franklin High School. Someone will direct to the meeting space.

### FOR NANTAHALA SCHOOL

**Mon., March 4**

• Student Focus Group (Middle School)  
9-10:30am

• Student Focus Group (High School)  
10:45am to 12:15pm (8-12 students total)

• Teacher Focus Group 1-2:30pm  
(12 teachers total)

### FOR HIGHLANDS SCHOOL

**Tues., March 5**

• Student Focus Group (Middle School) 9-10:30am

• Student Focus Group (High School)  
10:45am to 12:15pm (8-12 students total)

• Teacher Focus Group 1-2:30 pm  
(12 teachers total)

### FOR FRANKLIN AREA SCHOOLS

**Wed., March 6**

• Student Focus Group (Middle School students at MMS) 9-10:30 am

• Student Focus Group (High School students at FHS)

10:45am to 12:15pm (8-12 students total)

• Teacher Focus Group (at FHS)  
1-2:30 pm (12 teachers recommended could go up to 15-20 if needed)

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# • LETTERS •

## Let's remember the reason people came to Highlands in the first place

Dear Editor,

Highlands Newspaper dismissed (without naming) those holding dissenting views at last week's Town Board "work session" devoted to the grievances of certain merchants. They were written off as "retired...or independently wealthy and who don't own a business in town." The unspoken sentiment is that anyone not now actively

### ...MISSION from page 1

tending that if the plan were implemented as approved, patients would remain at risk.

"I received this memo yesterday, February 20, 2024 — the same day state and federal surveyors returned to HCA-Mission," Benton told The Watchdog. "I shared it with my regulatory team who, like me, appreciated the recommendations from physicians and other concerned stakeholders on Mission's plan of correction."

HCA and Mission spokesperson Nancy Lindell told The Watchdog that Mission began making changes in December based on the investigators' preliminary findings, adding that "these findings are not the standard of care we expect, nor that our patients deserve."

"We are pleased that CMS has accepted our Plan of Correction," Lindell said. "We are pleased to hear from our EMS partners and patients that those actions are yielding positive results, including decreased wait times for care."

The group shared the letter with the media Wednesday. Its members include doctors Clay Ballantine; Brian England; Scott Joslin, a former lead hospitalist at Mission; Bruce Kelly; Robert Kline, a former Mission board member before its sale; former emergency department doctor Allen Lator; and Mike Messino, founder of Messino Cancer Centers.

The doctors and more than 130 others signed a letter in October decrying HCA for "gutting" community healthcare in western North Carolina because of its profit-centered management.

The coalition also includes local pastor and former Mission chaplain Missy Harris, Victoria Hicks of the Health Equity Coalition, RN patient advocate Karen Sanders, and Miriam Schwarz, former executive director of the Western Carolina Medical Society.

The coalition will hold a news conference about its concerns outlined in the letter at 10 a.m. Thursday at the Buncombe County government building.

A 384-page CMS document obtained by Asheville Watchdog last week chronicled an array of failures in Mission leadership and procedures that had contributed to the deaths of four patients and injured others. It detailed why the agency placed Mission in immediate jeopardy, the most serious sanction that can be levied against a hospital.

The long-awaited report also included Mission's plan to correct the conditions that led to those incidents, mostly by improving policies and educating staff. CMS required HCA and the hospital to present the plan by Feb. 6 or face the loss of its Medicare and Medicaid funding, which would threaten the facility's financial viability. CMS requires Mission remove the conditions that caused the immediate jeopardy by Feb. 24.

The plan of correction contains barely a mention of

engaged in trade in Highlands really should just shut up and get their affairs in order.

To regret — and try to stay — the passing of the more evanescent qualities of life here should be honored, not disparaged. Once the calm, the green beauty, the small-town charm and friendly, knowledgeable neighbors are gone, what will be left? We'll find out but let's put it off as long as pos-

sible. increased staffing as a solution for deficiencies. Instead, it notes the use of staff memos, process reviews, reassessments, and audits.

"These solutions are also more focused on individuals being the problem rather than the systemic lack of staff and resources," states the coalition's letter, noting that while these improvements might be warranted, they don't address the larger issue of inadequate staffing.

An internal document obtained by The Watchdog on Tuesday — as NCDHHS investigators returned to Mission to monitor the hospital's compliance with its plan of correction — showed how the plan was being implemented in the emergency department. Mission now has a goal for patients to be seen, triaged, and assigned to a nurse within 10 minutes of arrival, according to the document. Another goal states that lab results should be returned 30 minutes after they are ordered.

Extremely long emergency department waits and lab test delays were contributing factors in the deaths and injuries of patients chronicled in the CMS report.

"The POC does not address what we believe to be the primary driver in each of the Immediate Jeopardy situations (and many of the other cases discussed in the CMS report): the lack of adequate, experienced staffing," the coalition's letter states. "Medical providers, patients, and others have repeatedly decried the lack of staff, and nurses have repeatedly filed Objection to Staffing forms. CMS's findings of Immediate Jeopardy confirm that lack of staffing is key, and that the standard for adequate staffing laid out in 42 CFR 482.23(b) is not being met."

The letter requests Benton consider staffing data; ask if HCA closes emergency room beds when staffing is low; find out if HCA keeps patient-to-nurse ratio data; find out if there is consistency in how many nurses call out in a given shift; and read the many objection forms nurses have filled out when they don't feel they can provide care safely.

"A question for you is, if HCA is deemed to be in compliance with the POC later this month, what is your recourse if the approved plan proves to be inadequate over time?" the letter states. "Can you require a revised plan with more specific requirements for staffing levels and experience?"

Each of the doctors who sent the letter worked at Mission in some capacity — including leadership roles — and told Benton they had first-hand knowledge of why the system was broken.

"We know that the primary problem is inadequate staffing and experience. No level of improved process, education, huddles, or documentation will change that," the letter states. "We again strongly urge you to keep this in mind as you perform your inspections. We further urge you to hold HCA, to the degree you are able as part of the monitoring process, to hiring, placement, and patient ratio standards

• See MISSION page 8

sible.

The lengthy — and attributed — remarks made by the "business community" suggested a lack of discernment and not a little hypocrisy. What do you say about the owner of Highlands Aerial Park (FYI, not located in either the Town or Township of Highlands) who grumbled that:

"People ask what there is to do in Highlands. Well, there's Whiteside Mountain hike, there's Dry Falls...but they don't employ anybody, they don't generate revenue and they don't give back to the community in donations and contributions."

This is so fatuous it needs to be highlighted, as it's one thing to knowingly kill the golden-egg-laying fowl, another to mistake it for an old rooster doomed to Sunday dinner for unwanted guests. I hope it's not too late to appreciate the difference.

Stuart Ferguson  
Highlands

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## ...VOTE continued from page 1

aware of how important this election is to Macon County. This election will decide your next (2) commissioners since there will be no opposition in the November election. I encourage voters to cast their ballot in this election," Thibault said via email on Tuesday when providing early voting totals.

Locally, the primary election will decide who will be elected to two vacant seats on the Macon County Board of Commissioners. There are no Democratic candidates vying for either seat, thus voters will decide between the four Republicans facing off against each other.

For District Two, voters will decide between incumbent Josh Young and challenger Chris Browning while the District Three commissioner seat will be decided between incumbent Paul Higdon and challenger Barry Breedon.

## ...MISSION continued from page 7

that are necessary to correct the Immediate Jeopardy instances on a permanent basis."

Sanders, the coalition member who is an RN patient advocate, said she thought the plan of correction was missing several important elements including improvements to reporting processes and especially lax staffing standards.

"I am disturbed because in HCA's presentation of all of their actions, there's nothing in there about improving the nurse to patient ratio," Sanders, who holds a master's degree in nursing and formerly worked at Mission Hospital for 16 years, told The Watchdog. "But the problem is they don't have enough nurses. So a lot of things fell through the cracks."

She said she's happy to be part of a coalition pushing for more regulation but said there needs to be even broader community support for change. To that end, she is establishing a retired nurse corps to advocate for patients, nurses, and better health care.

The letter also requests:

- That there be frequent, unannounced inspections and detailed monitoring during the time provided in the plan of correction and that the monitoring period be extended, if at all possible.

- That NCDHHS interview Mission staff who were listed as "not available" in the report and that any documents withheld from investigators be turned over to the agency for review and further recommendations.

- That all future investigations require complete transparency in documenting evidence.

- That an unaffiliated, non-conflicted third party well-versed in hospital systems be assigned by CMS to closely monitor HCA's execution of the plan of correction.

The Republican Primary will also decide the new District Court Judge for the 43rd Judicial District as Republicans Virginia Hornsby, an attorney who has recently moved to WNC, is running against Andy Buckner, who has worked within District Attorney Ashley Welch's office.

Local races are not the only on the primary ballot, from the presidential primary to statewide races, North Carolinians will have several different offices on their ballot.

As of Tuesday morning, fewer than 2,000 voters had taken advantage of early voting in Macon County, with 1,478 ballots being cast in the Republican primary election, just 380 ballots being cast in the Democratic primary election and four Libertarian ballots being cast.

• See VOTE page 9

## Nurses have called for more staffing for years

For years, the Mission nurses union has maintained lack of resources and staffing have endangered patients and put employees at risk.

Even new nurses working full time at the hospital feel the pressure of understaffing, which they say is especially obvious as Mission tries to repair deficiencies with more processes and education.

"It's 100 percent a staffing issue," said Tucker Richards, an emergency department registered nurse and union member who said he has been working at Mission for about a year. "This is at its very core a staffing issue, and it always has been, and that's the whole reason why NCDHHS had to show up."

Richards and other nurses who have spoken to The Watchdog agree that the finding of immediate jeopardy was caused by lack of staff.

"There's not a single nurse in this ER who is not coming into work every day and giving 1,001 percent," Richards said. "We all really show up and work our butts off and go home and just try to feel okay about coming back to work and doing it again the next day. There's no amount of additional education ... that they can ask us to do that will improve these metrics or whatever they're talking about."

*Asheville Watchdog is a nonprofit news team producing stories that matter to Asheville and Buncombe County. Andrew R. Jones is a Watchdog investigative reporter. Email [arjones@avlwatchdog.org](mailto:arjones@avlwatchdog.org). The Watchdog's reporting is made possible by donations from the community. To show your support for this vital public service go to [avlwatchdog.org/donate](https://avlwatchdog.org/donate).*



## ...VOTE continued from page 8

According to the North Carolina Board of Elections, there are a total of 28,301 voters in Macon County meaning just 6.5 percent of registered voters have voted as of Tuesday morning. For comparison, around the same time during Early Voting in 2022, twice as many registered voters had cast their ballots.

Early voting offers registered voters the flexibility to cast their ballots at desig-

nated polling places ahead of the official Election Day, which is scheduled for Tuesday, March 5th. On Election Day, polls will be open from 6:30 am to 7:30 pm, providing opportunity for all eligible voters to participate in the democratic process.

For more information on early voting locations and times, please visit the Macon County Board of Elections website or contact the Board of Elections directly.



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## Republican and Unaffiliated voters need to vote NOW for the County Commission race!

The Republican primary will decide who your next commissioners are for Macon County. After the primary the candidates will be running unopposed in the November general election. So if you are unaffiliated or a Republican, vote in the primary now!

Highlanders for Good Government is supporting **Josh Young** and **Barry Breeden** because they have publicly committed to finishing the school projects in Franklin, Highlands, and Nantahala without any new taxes or excuses. Educating our kids is the future of this county! They also support our county employees, firefighters, EMS, police and deputies.

Early voting continues through

**Saturday, March 2, 8a to 3p**

AND

**March 5th is Primary Election Day.**

# Go Vote!

**<https://highlandersforgoodgovernment.com/>**



# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



## The Extra Day

**Pastor Randy Lucas**  
Highlands United  
Methodist Church

**2024 is a leap year they say,  
tell me.**

**What are you going to do  
with your extra day?**

**February 29th  
doesn't often come 'round.  
So let's try to embrace it  
like a treasure we've found.**

**If you ask me  
it's worth some good thinking  
because, like all days,  
it'll be gone 'fore much blinking.**

**Perhaps there's a card  
you've been meaning to send.  
Or maybe some fences  
you really should mend.**

**A word of encouragement  
to someone you know,  
can go a long way  
toward lightening a load.**

**You could say a prayer,  
that's always in order.  
And praying, I've found,  
can make hearts grow fonder.**

**Each day is a gift,  
I know that's not news.  
Still, we sure can forget  
when we're singin' the blues.**

**So chin up, dear pilgrim!  
Laugh, sing and play.  
May God bless you and keep you.  
Have a great extra day!**

## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

## John 3:16

### BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (828) 421-1315  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7  
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore, Pastor  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

### CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel, Pastor 828-743-5298  
Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

### CHAPEL OF THE SKY

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

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

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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.

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

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

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

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

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

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

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

Thursdays 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

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

### EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

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

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

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

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

ing Prayer: Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in Chapel

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

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

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

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Women's 10:30 am

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Emily Wilmarth, pastor

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

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

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

### GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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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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The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily

sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

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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.

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

and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

### MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

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

4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

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

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### CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

Tues. - 9:30am; Thurs. - 9:30am; Sun. - 11am

### SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

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

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

### SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

### SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

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

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

### ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Sun. 9a; Mon. 9:30a (Latin); Wed. 9:30a

### THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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

Sunday Services: 9am & 11am

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schedule of activities.

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### UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

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Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am



## • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from Feb. 9. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.**

### Feb. 9

• Officers received a report from a man who is experiencing cyber stalking after requesting to be left alone.

### Feb. 14

• At 1:41 p.m., officers received a report of a simple assault at a residence and construction site on Wingina Place.

### Feb. 21

• At 2:51 p.m., Henry F. Marcus, 49, of Highlands, was arrested for Failure to Appear in court and Failure to Comply.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Feb. 21.**

### Feb. 21

• At 9:45 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Pine Street.

• At 2:23 p.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a residence on Shortoff Road.

### Feb. 22

• At 4:12 p.m., the dept. in-

vestigated the cause of smoke at a residence on Shelby Court.

• At 9:23 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on N. 3rd Street.

### Feb. 24

• At 8:38 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Summit Trail.

### Feb. 25

• At 3:28 p.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a residence on the Dillard Road.

• At 4:04 p.m., the dept., responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Strawberry Lane.

## • BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

### Good Shepherd Church calls for grant applications from local nonprofits: Due April 1

The Church of the Good Shepherd is once again inviting local 501(C)(3) charitable organizations to submit applications for its annual grant program. Long known for their track record of generosity, last year saw the church donating over \$300,000 in grants to 35 local agencies.

Among the organizations who received grants in 2023 were:

AWAKE, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cashiers and Highlands, Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic, Blue Ridge School Educational Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau, Cashiers Valley Preschool, Center for Domestic Peace, Community Care Clinic of Highlands-Cashiers, Community Table, Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry, The Hampton School, The Haven of Transylvania County, HERE in Jackson County, HIGHTS, Jackson Neighbors In Need, Junior Appalachian Musicians Blue Ridge, Life Challenge of Western North Carolina, Literacy Council of Cashiers, Four Seasons Compassion for Life, Ministry of Hope, SAFE, Summit Charter School, United Christian Ministries, Pisgah Legal Services, Vecinos, Hospice House Foundation of WNC, Muddy Sneakers, Blue

Ridge Health (Good Samaritan Clinic), Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad, International Friendship Center, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, Friends of the Library, Cashiers Historical Society, Friends of Panthertown, The Village Green.

The grants are a part of the Church's total outreach program which is, in large part, funded by proceeds from the Bazaar Barn sales. The Bazaar Barn, a Cashiers institution staffed primarily by Good Shepherd volunteers, was recently relocated to a much larger facility on Highway 107N across from Blue Ridge School.

Grant recipients should be qualified 501(c)(3) organizations who serve the needs of people who live in proximity of the Church parish, although others are considered based on available funds and the organization's ability to meaningfully impact outcomes.

They give priority to organizations serving basic human needs as exemplified in Matthew 25:31-42 which directs their focus primarily towards food, shelter, water, healthcare, education, and environmental organizations that contribute to fulfilling these essential requirements. "These are our fundamental guidelines," said Bob Anderson, chairman of the

Outreach Grants committee who selects recipients. "But we rely heavily on a compelling application that identifies a real need and a workable solution!"

He added that each of his committee members acts as a liaison with an existing grant recipient to maintain a connection with them for the duration of their grant. "We like to build partnerships," he said.

With the deadline for applying April 1, 2024, local charities are encouraged to act promptly and take advantage of this opportunity to partner with Good Shepherd and make a positive impact with people in their communities. Prospective applicants are required to complete a grant application, which can be accessed online at the Church of the Good Shepherd's website ([www.good-shepherdofcashiers.com](http://www.good-shepherdofcashiers.com)).

The Outreach Grants Committee looks forward to reviewing applications and continuing its tradition of supporting impactful initiatives that contribute to the well-being of the region in the name of God, from whom all blessing flow.

For more information, please visit: Church of the Good Shepherd Grant Application for 2023 or email Ellen Albright [goodshepadmin@frontier.com](mailto:goodshepadmin@frontier.com)

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### ESTATE SALE

**SAT. & SUN., MARCH 2 & 3.** 10a-4p. Antiques, furniture, lots of this and that's. 176 Shelby Circle in Shelby Place, Highlands, 28741. 770-686-9593.

### FOR SALE

**SEASONED FIREWOOD** - Any size load. call 828-342-6806. (st. 1/25)

**LAND FOR SALE** - 3 tracts, 7.5 miles south of Highlands, 8.64 acres with spring, by far the best view in the area at \$200,000; 6.12 acres with spring (already subdivided into 2, 3-acre lots) \$140,000; 3.99 acres with southern exposure, \$70,000. 828-974-1137. (2/22)

**TINY HOME LOTS FOR SALE.** \$30k-\$45k/ea. Each lot comes with water, power, and sewer run to each lot. www.TinyMountainEstates.com for more info. (st. 11/22)

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### FOR RENT

**FURNISHED ONE BEDROOM APT. IN HIGHLANDS.** Private entrance, full kitchen, bath, small deck, W/D access. Internet and TV, All utilities included No pets, \$1,400 a month, 828-482-2613. (st. 2/29)

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from center of town. Water and sewer included. 1200 per month. Available early June for one year lease. Call or text 828-342-4819. (st. 2/29)

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**TLC OPEN AIR STORAGE** - Located in Highlands, NC. Spaces available for pontoon boats, ATV vehicles, equipment trailers, RV's, and campers. Minimum 1 month rental. \$75 small to medium vehicles; \$100 large vehicles. Contact Greg 828-526-5280. (st. 12/21)

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### WANTED

**SENIOR COUPLE FROM HIGHLANDS SEEKING A YEAR ROUND RENTAL.** Will consider neighboring towns in our Western NC area. Please call Lynn Kimball at 828-421-8193. (st. 2/15)

**PARTNER/INVESTOR FOR A DOG KENNEL BUSINESS** on my property south of Highlands. If interested and to learn more, please email Brian Grace at gracebrian907@gmail.com. (st. 1/18)

### HELP WANTED

**HIGHLANDS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/ VISIT HIGHLANDS, NC** -- Business and Member Services -- Full Time, Salary. Performs a variety of membership and administrative tasks including, but not limited to, member recruiting, programs, and events, communications, data entry, tracking, and reporting. View full job description visit: <https://www.highlandschamber.org/live->

• See CLASSIFIEDS page 14

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## ...HIGHLANDERS continued from page 1

players stepped up. We had some unfortunate turnovers late that caused us to have empty possessions and HD was able to capitalize on those and pull out the win."

It was neck and neck throughout the game with the lead changing multiple times. Those watching

were on the edge of their seats and the winner was anyone's guess.

"Our ball pressure created some turnovers that led to easy fastbreak layups," said Lamb. "Also, we rebounded well and got the pass fast how we wanted

it. The team was very unselfish and that helped get many open shots."

Highlands Aislynn Wyatt-Luck

had 13 points, Hunter Conner scored 8, and Mac Woods snagged 8 rebounds.

Highlands defeated Blue Ridge Early College in the first round of the LSMC tournament on Feb. 20, ending with a final of 64-22.

Shortly following the tournament, Highlands faced off against Cherokee in the state playoffs on Feb. 27 and lost 93-25.

Lamb said he knew they would be going up against a tough team before heading to the playoffs.

"Cherokee brings a great amount of defensive pressure that has helped them create easy shots," he said. "Their depth off their bench is a key for them as well."

Photos by Brian O'Shea  
Plateau Daily News

## ...CLASSIFIED continued from page 13

work/job-board/. To apply: Email [director@highlandschamber.org](mailto:director@highlandschamber.org) (3/1)

### **HIGHLANDS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/VISIT HIGHLANDS, NC**

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Above: Highlands Sadie Green moves into position to snag a rebound.



Right: Highlands Jordyn Borino scores a layup against Hiwassee Dam.



Left: Highlands Hunter Conner drives to the basket during the LSMC Championship hosted by Blue Ridge Early College on Feb. 22.



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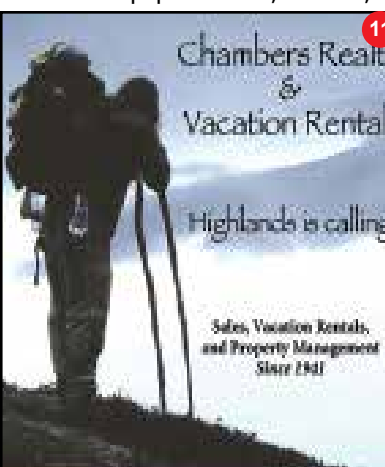
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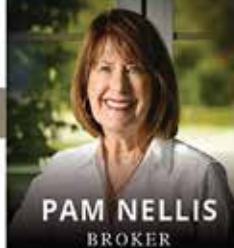
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