

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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Thurs., Jan. 4, 2024

2023 - The year that was ...

This past year, 2023, was busy on the town and county level as well as somewhat turbulent – with weather bombs, drought conditions which initiated a water shortage and burning ban, and a

county commission that appears to have issues of its own. Hopefully, the new Chairman, Commissioner Gary Shields, will run things differently.

Two homes that were part

of Highlands' history were razed – the Crane house and the Cleave-land house.

And there were a few “firsts” this year, too.

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Greenway Trail news

Every year, the volunteers of the Greenway work to create new trails and maintain the trails that connect the Highlands community.

The volunteer workforce completed a total of 640 hours, participating in 23 workdays over the past year. These volunteers are the Greenway Heroes, and are sincerely appreciated for all the work they do.

The many volunteers, donors, and supporting organizations who keep the Greenway trail system an important part of the Highlands community.

More volunteers are welcomed to the team at the monthly workdays.

If interested email highlandsgreenway@gmail.com to

• See GREENWAY page 9



Veterans at Eckerd's receiving quilts from left: Sherman Runions, Air Force; John Carcano, Navy; James McLellan, Army; Louis Guertin, Air Force; and Charles Seymour, Navy.

HC Mountain Quilters honor local Vets

By Chip Snyder
Post 370

The Mountain Valley Quilters organization and Highlands American Legion Post 370 organized a presentation of patriotic quilts to the veteran residents of the Eckerd Living Center. Kate Shaw, a Highlands American Le-

gion Post member organized the Mountain Valley Quilters presentation. In addition to Kate Shaw, three members of the Mountain Valley Quilters also attended the presentation at Eckerd Living Center. They are Jean Markley, Marsha Snyder and Anne Brandt.

The quilt presentation was a

joint effort of the Mountain Valley Quilters, Stephanie McMahon Activities Director at Eckerd's and Chip Snyder and Jim Grantham Post both Post 370 members and “Visit a Vet” program coordinator's.

Honoring veterans is a tradi-

• See QUILTERS page 9



This year The Greenway presented its prestigious Trail Worker of the Year award to two outstanding volunteers: Mike King (for the second year in a row) and our ever-dedicated Trail Boss, Jim Chance.

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Let's talk about taxes

I want to talk about taxes as we go toward the new year, specifically sales tax revenues. The Town of Highlands is projected to take in about 1.6 million dollars in sales tax for this fiscal year. We will also take in about 3 million in property tax that also goes to the town. These revenues, coupled with various fees and state grants, make up our general operating fund revenues.

Sales tax revenues are about 25% of the Highlands general fund. But that isn't the whole picture. The current sales tax rate for Macon County is 6.75 cents per dollar for certain retail sales transactions. Neither Highlands nor Macon County get all that revenue. The state of North Carolina keeps 4.75 cents of the 6.75 cents per dollar collected.

The remaining 2 cents go to individual counties, and they allocate some of the tax to towns within a county. Macon County uses a formula to distribute a portion of sales tax to the municipalities of Franklin and Highlands. The county retains the rest. This budget year, Macon County will real-



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

ize about 12 million dollars in sales tax revenue or 87% if the sales tax is sent from the state.

The county could use a per capita formula to distribute the sales tax revenue. If that were the case, Highlands, with only 1075 permanent residents, would see a significant reduction in sales tax revenue. Thankfully, the county uses ad valorem formula for sales tax distribution, and given the high property tax valuations in Highlands, the town fairs

well when it comes to the 1.6 million dollars in sales tax revenues. Highlands get about 6.53% of the sales tax the state sends to Macon County. Franklin, based on the ad valorem formula, gets 5.7%, although they have a population of 4,216. I might add the visitors center receives a similar amount of room tax revenue from the county to promote tourism here on the plateau.

Over the last decade, the town has seen a steady increase in sales tax revenue. If those increases were graphed on a chart, they would be an ascending straight line. About a decade ago, when I first became mayor, that number was around 1 million dollars. I remember back then, legislators proposed a bill that would have returned more sales tax revenue back to Raleigh, even more than the current 4.75 cents. The proposed legislation would have cost Highlands about \$628,000 in lost sales tax. Almost every mayor in the state, as well as the North Carolina League of Municipalities, was in strong opposition to this sales tax legislation.

The legislature found a way to work around that municipal outcry. They did not change the sales tax on goods already being taxed. Instead, they passed a law taxing additional services such as auto and appliance repairs. All of that new sales tax revenue went directly to the state coffers. So, the state legislature did an end-run around existing sales tax items in order to increase the amount the state retained. Towns, cities, and counties did not benefit from the sales tax on these new areas either.

Now, some folks would attribute our sales tax revenue to our robust tourist market. In fact, much of tourist spending does

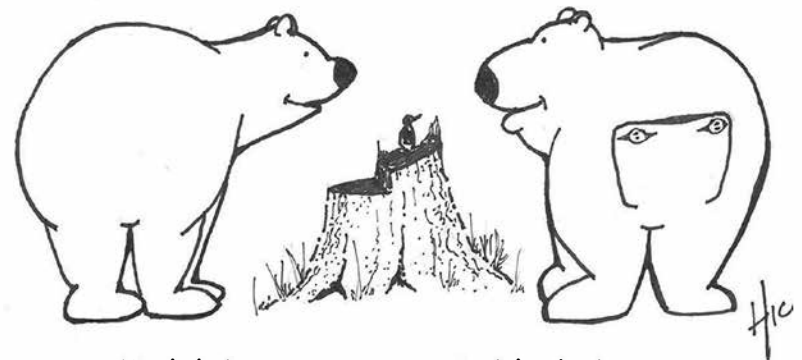
significantly contribute to sales tax revenue. But on the other hand, permanent residents buying local goods also contribute to the sales tax budget. It's problematic to try to separate the two, as both groups make significant contributions.

It is also hard to pinpoint where the lion's share of sales taxes come from in the county. The Highlands Plateau is a strong tourist area for room tax revenue, generating about 70% of the Macon County revenue. I suspect the Franklin area, with a large part of the county's population, generates a sizable amount of Macon County sales tax, while the Highlands Plateau generates almost half of the ad valorem tax for the county.

The good news is that the area economy is strong, and sales tax revenue reflects that strength. During times of recession, spending drops, and so does sales tax revenues.

I would like to see the sales tax in Macon County increase from 6.75 to 7 cents. Surrounding counties have already voted for that option and increased sales tax to 7 cents. Revenues from that quarter-of-a-cent increase would stay in Macon County to help fund important educational initiatives. In 2022, Macon County voters narrowly rejected a referendum to increase the sales tax by that 0.25 cent. That revenue would have generated about two million dollars a year. Maybe it is time to reconsider this option and put it back on the ballot in 2024.

• HIC'S VIEW •



"Ralph Lauren; comes in black, brown gray and white. Let's hit the after Christmas sales!"

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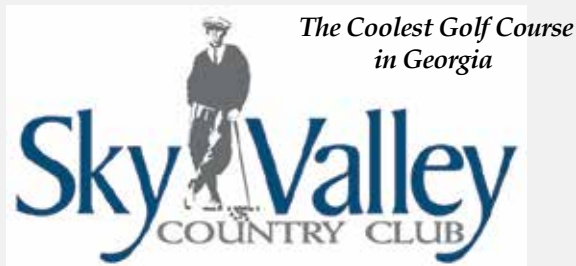
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January through March 2024. Excludes holidays.



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Sub-zero temperatures froze everything in sight.

- Photo by Brian O'Shea

For the first time in Macon County history there is an all-Republican county commission, and for the first time a County Manager was asked to resign by a seated commissioner - that being John Shearl.

For the first time Highlands has five, full-time, paid firefighters (not including the chief and assistant chief) and a new fire house to lodge them in, and there was much more.

January

- Firefighters battle blazes & subzero temps. Highlands and Cashiers fire departments responded to a myriad of calls throughout the Christmas holiday but freezing temperatures at -6 degrees made battling two structure fires especially difficult.

- Freezing temps, busted pipes reduce town's water supply. Highlands water supply took a dip after freezing temperatures over the Christmas holiday burst pipes throughout the area. The reduction to the town's reservoir was enough for Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor to post an emergency message on Dec. 27 asking the community to check on unoccupied homes and report signs of leakage to Town Hall

- Man arrested for attempted robbery at Wells Fargo Bank. On December 13, the Jackson County Sheriff's Office responded to an attempted bank robbery at Wells Fargo Bank on 107 south in Cashiers, N.C. At 11:18 a.m., a masked Hispanic male, who spoke broken English, initiated an attempted bank robbery After he gave the teller a bag he said, "Put the money in the bag." Instead, the bank teller activated the burglar alarm at which point the man fled on foot without any money.

- STRs make 2022 a year of contention. Short-term rentals and election candidates dominated the news in 2022. Thank-

fully, with STR stop gaps put in place to stop the proliferation of STRs, and software identifying owners using Airbnb and VRBO, the rancor that permeated the town has settled down.

- NCDOJ will not charge former Congressman with voter fraud. The North Carolina Department of Justice announced in December that there is not sufficient evidence to bring charges against former District 11 Congressman Mark Meadows or his wife Debra Meadows for alleged voter fraud involving the 2020 election.

- Illegal drugs found during routine traffic checkpoint. On the afternoon of Tuesday, Jan. 10, K9 officers from Highlands were used to sniff multiple vehicles on Chestnut Street. Consequently, the operation yielded the seizure of methamphetamines and drug paraphernalia.

- Appraised property values skyrocket Highlands Township and Highlands City represent half of the county's total taxable property value.

- Highlands Fire & Rescue is in its new home on Main Street across from the post office. HFR Chief Ryan Gearhart said they began operations in the new building on Jan. 6 after the trucks, equipment, and gear were transferred from the old location on Oak Street.

- The proposed ABC Store façade will be reminiscent of the old fire station. ABC Store representatives, Manager Kevin Vinson and President of the board Steve Mehder, returned to the Town Board in January to present a rendition of the proposed ABC Store in the old fire department building.

- EV charging stations move one step closer. With construction specifics in hand,

• See 2023 page 9

• THEN & NOW •

My Year in Review

This year I decided to send my DNA to ancestry.com and found that the Mormons in Salt Lake City concluded that “the Readys” are all “upper Paleolithic hunter gathers.” I wasn’t Ready for that. But not my neighbor Mark. He’s more a big molar Denisovan hors d’oeuvres/cabernet wine gatherer although he does have a bad back from standing up straight most of the time.



Milton Ready

done this year. Kept up with the Kardashians. Or that twit, Elon Musk. Tried to get a ticket to a Taylor Swift concert. Puzzled over Tucker Carlson’s latest hairdo but his documentary on men’s declining sperm count upset me. Or wondered if Congress will ever pass another budget or find Hunter Biden guilty of something. Also, shouldn’t Good Morning America really air after lunch as a soap opera now?

I did go on an itty-bitty cruise around Chesapeake Bay. Billed as “the crab cruise,” it instead had more pork, beef, mashed potatoes, and corn on the cob than a southern Sunday social. No crab whether blue or otherwise, no oysters, no fish, no lobster, nothing as I went along a Bay crawling with crabs and teeming with fish, all the while sputtering from one dying fishing village to another, all filled with local “watermen,” half-sunken fishing boats, and discarded crab traps.

On one excursion I took a rusty WWI picket boat to Tangier Island, an oasis of Trumpism (97% voted for him and 3% for Ron Paul ... yes, really) sinking slowly into the Bay, all convinced that the British or Russians still want to take nearby Ft. McHenry. They didn’t have any crabs either.

Overall, it’s been a very, very good year. Except for breaking news. And that crab cruise. To celebrate its ending and new beginnings, I’m going to a party at Mark the Denovisan’s super-nice cave where we will engage in our annual village rituals, namely stomp dances with drums, howling at the moon, grinding our manly loins into the soft earth, and eating lots of post-Neolithic hors d’oeuvres and Robert Parker approved wines. Life couldn’t be any better. And hopefully for you as well.

Happy New Year everyone.

Let me also tell you what I haven’t

State representatives come through for Highlands



N.C. Senator Kevin Corbin and House Rep. Karl Gillespie presented the Town of Highlands with two \$5M checks on Monday to fund a water improvement project and the dredging of Mirror Lake. Pictured from left are Sen. Kevin Corbin, Commissioner Jeff Weller, Town Manager Josh Ward, Mayor Pat Taylor, Commissioner Amy Patterson, and Rep Karl Gillespie.

Photo by Brian O’Shea, Plateau Daily News

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

Please donate work coats and coats that are new or gently worn.

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• BIZ/ORG NEW •

The Laurel Garden Club opens grant cycle for 2024 - ends Jan. 31

Laurel Garden Club of Highlands is accepting applications from community organizations for 2024 grants. To further the purposes of the Laurel Garden Club, grants are awarded to protect and conserve our natural resources and to enhance the beauty of our town and its native mountain landscapes.

In recent years grants have been awarded to environmental preservation organizations including the Highlands Biological Station, the Coalition for Non-native Invasive Plant Management (CNIPM), the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, and The Mountain.

To promote community beautification through landscaping with native plants, grants have also been awarded to local non-profit organizations including The Bascom, Highlands Historical Society, Hudson Li-

brary, Highlands Performing Arts Center, Peggy Crosby Center and the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau.

Laurel Garden Club is a non-profit educational organization. In keeping with its purposes, the Club periodically engages in fundraising activities such as a luncheon, cookbook sales, kitchen tours, and other ticketed events. The proceeds from such events are donated as grants to recipient organizations. Since 2002, the Laurel Garden Club has given a grand total of more than \$216,389 through grants to community organizations.

The deadline for grant applications is January 31, 2024. To apply for a grant, visit www.laurelgardenclubhighlands.com and use the search bar to download Guidelines for Grants and the Laurel Garden Club Grant Request.

Annual Christmas Bird Count hits 1,291

The Highlands Plateau Audubon Society held its annual Christmas Bird Count on December 15. This was the 25th year of the count and part of the 124th anniversary of the count nationwide.

There were 26 participants divided into five teams who searched for birds beginning a 7:30 a.m. and ending around noon.

The areas covered were within a 7.5-mile radius around Highlands.

Everyone gathered at the Hudson Library for a warm chili lunch to report and

share stories about their experience.

Birds counted totaled 1,291 with 54 different species identified.

Several unusual birds, not commonly seen around Highlands in winter, were a Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, Northern Mockingbird, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler and a Rusty Blackbird.

More information about the count may be found on their web site <http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org> or by contacting Brock Hutchins at brockhutchins@bellsouth.net.

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Photos by Peter Hall on the day of the count of a male Belted Kingfisher and a female Hooded Merganser.

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

NEW POOL SCHEDULE

• Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri., 6-9:45a, and Sat., 10a-11p - 6 lanes. Water Aerobics: 18 yrs plus, Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers. Adult Swim: 18 years old+, Mon.-Thurs 11a-1:30p; Public Swim Mon. thru Thurs. 3:30-7p; Sat. 11a-6p and Sun. 1-6p. For info, call 828-526-1595.

ICE RINK SCHEDULE

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

Mon.-Fri.

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

Mon-Wed, Fri-Sun

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

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

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands Mountain View Group holds open meetings in Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Monday at 8:30 AM, Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. For more information, please visit www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-4357

Second Mondays

• The local chapter of PEO, an off-campus sorority founded in the 1800s that provides grants and loans to women with financial need who want to return to school or further their education meets at 10 a.m. More meeting places call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004

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

2nd Tuesdays

• Highlands Writers Group meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 3pm. Writers still uncomfortable with in-person gatherings may participate via Zoom meetings For more information contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at budandlynn@me.com

Tuesdays

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

• At Hudson Library, Nature Kids on selected Tuesday mornings, For more info call the Hudson Library at 828-526-3031

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers – Tuesdays from 5-6:30 PM. Facilitated by Sam Renken, this group has a simple mission: to foster and provide consistent community for local writers thereby giving writers of all ages and genres the opportunity to write, read, revise, and present their work to the group.

• ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 5:30-6:30pm. No registration required – just show up and participate. Questions? call 828-526 – 0863 or email info@macconcliteracy.org

Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, held on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 AM. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health topics of particular interest to them, but all ages are welcome to attend. The November 1 program is Dementia: A Deeper Understanding. Reservations are required for this free event. To register, stop by the library or call 828-526-3031.

Wed. thru Nov. 22

• The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts Invites You to "Wine Wednesdays" – A New Holiday Tradition. The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts is delighted to introduce "Wine Wednesdays," This festive holiday offering will

occur each Wednesday leading up to Thanksgiving, from 3:30 to 5 pm. "Wine Wednesdays" offer a unique opportunity for visitors to explore The Shop and Studio Barn, all while enjoying a glass of wine and browsing the work of local and regional artists.

1st Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, held on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 AM. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health topics of particular interest to them, but all ages are welcome to attend.

2nd & 4th Wed.

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

Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, held on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 AM. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health topics of particular interest to them, but all ages are welcome to attend.

Mon-Fri

• Water Aerobics at the Rec Pool. 18 years plus 10-11am. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Pickle Ball inside and outside at the Rec Park. 10am-1pm, everyone is welcome so come out and enjoy a game of Pickle Ball.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

• The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a-6p.

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

Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15 am. at the

Rec Park. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout. Learn the proper form and technique to execute jabs, hooks, up-percuts, and front and side round-house kicks in a non-contact setting. No martial arts background necessary. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

• At Hudson Library, Family Storytime continues throughout the year on Thursday mornings at 10:40 AM.

• At Hudson Library, Kids Zone at 3:30 pm with a wide variety of STEAM, nature, and craft activities. For more information about any of these summer activities, contact Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

2nd Saturdays

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

3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main St. in their community room/909 chapel. We serve breakfast at 9 AM and hold our monthly meeting at 10 AM. We invite ALL veterans to attend - email ncpost370@gmail.com for more information or just join us at 9 AM on the 3rd Saturday of the month.

Sundays

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Sunday Service: 10 AM Sunday Morning. Stick around for visitation and coffee hour immediately after service. (Coffee hour is replaced by potluck dinner the 1st Sunday of each month).

Through March 3

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

Fri., Jan. 19

• Senior Lunch at noon in the Meeting Room in the Highlands Civic Center at the Rec Park.

Sat.-Sun., May 11-12

• The 4th annual Bear Shadow will be held again at Winfield Farm in Scaly Mountain. Visit <https://bearshadownc.com/> for information about how to purchase tickets.

• HIGHLANDS DINING •



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The Ruffed Grouse Tavern & Highlander Mountain House



Wine Wednesday
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Sundays
 Bluegrass Brunch the Ruffed Grouse Tavern. Music from 10:30a - 1p.

Thursdays
 Blues & Brews Special – \$20 burger and select beer special, paired with live blues music.
 Locals receive 20% off all menu items

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 highlandermountainhouse.com

...2023 continued from page 4



The new full-time firefighters were pinned at the October Town Board meeting.

moving forward with EV charging stations in town is now in the Chamber of Commerce's court.

February

- Scaly bridge construction to take 2 years No detours necessary for replacing bridge on N.C. 106. An 84-year-old bridge on N.C. 106 in Macon County is the process of being replaced with a modern structure that will facilitate travel for North Carolina residents and visitors.

- Highlands Attorney resigns. James Kent Coward, Jr. of the law firm of Coward, Hicks and Siler who has served as the Highlands Town Attorney for the past nine years submitted his resignation as of Thursday, January 26, 2023.

- Annual Awards HF&R ceremony celebrates a year of service. 40-year veteran of the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. Gary Ammons was named Fireman of the Year.

- Area firefighters pull together to battle house fire in Sage Woods. Eight area fire departments responded to a house fire on Saturday afternoon on the 200 block of Sage Woods Drive that took days to fully extinguish.

- Chinese spy balloon causes stir near and far Public shares frustration over book displays at library Congressman Edwards (11th), Senator Corbin (50th), and Representative Gillespie (120th) weigh in.

- Public shares frustration over book displays at library. It was standing room only for the Macon County Public Library February meeting as residents signed up to speak during public comment period to express their frustration with LGTBQ book displays that they claim promote the sexualization of children.

- "Pennies for Preservation" campaign in St. Simon's, GA - which was relayed by Mayor Pat Taylor in his Feb. 2 "Mayor on Duty" column - is replicated in some form here in Highlands, it will be on the heels of two organizations who have been running with this grassroots idea for a long time.

- Town and Huff et al enter into 'Stay.' Following the Special Called Closed Session meeting last Thursday afternoon, Mayor Pat Taylor announced that the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners authorized its attorney Robert E. Hagemann to proceed with entering into a Stay Order for six months concerning the Huff et al v. Town of Highlands lawsuit.

- Deteriorated sewer pipes cause break along US 64w. On the afternoon of Wednesday, Feb. 8, a breach of a main sewer line occurred on the Franklin Road (US 64 west) near Mirror Lake Road.

- Calls for county to withdraw from Fontana Regional Library System are put to rest. What started as grievances over the library's

books display in June 2021 for Pride Month featuring LGTBQ books and resources, has morphed into a broader discontent with library operations and book selections.

- Controlled burn takes down Crane house. The old Crane family home across from The Bascom at 65 Oak Street has been a part of Highlands history since the early 1900s, but on Saturday that remnant of the past was burned to make room for a new residential development.

March

- MC Commission nixed contract for Highlands Pre-K project.

- Community connector trail plan is unveiled. The public had a chance to view the proposed plans for the Blue Ridge Community Connector (BRCC) on Tuesday during a presentation at the Highlands Rec Center by the project's planning firm, Destination by Design.

- HS students learn while jamming out on drums. Elementary and Middle School students at Highlands School learned about West African culture when they were paid a visit by Music Educator Fonziba Koster, a teacher and performer of jembe hand drums.

- 9 1/2 hour power outage affects Highlands and Cashiers. With the impending storm ap-

• See 2023 page 10

...GREENWAY continued from page 1

be included in its monthly workday email notices.

In addition to the new signage, a new more user-friendly map has been developed. This map is displayed at the new hub at K-H Park and is available as a paper copy at the Highlands Visitors Center and the Rec Park. Or use the QR code on each of the new signs to pull up the map on a phone.

Exciting plans for the fu-



ture, include an ambitious project to connect the communities of Highlands, Cashiers and Clayton by way of a long-range trekking trail. Stay tuned for more updates soon!

The Highlands Plateau Greenway is a 501 (c)(3) organization. Please Donate Today! Donations can be sent to PO Box 2608, Highlands, NC 28741

...QUILTERS continued from page 1

tion that dates back to the Civil War era. It's a unique way of expressing gratitude to those who have served. The women on both sides of the conflict worked to provide comfort and support to soldiers. They would sew quilts and present them to soldiers as a symbol of gratitude with the additional benefit of keeping the soldiers warm during the harsh winters.

In the years that followed, the practice of giving quilts to veterans gained popularity. Quilts became a way to acknowledge the bravery of those who served their country. Quilting groups and organizations dedicated themselves to creating intricate and patriotic quilts for veterans.

One organization that emerged in the 21st century is the Quilts of Valor Foundation. Founded by Catherine Roberts in 2003, this non-profit organization aims to cover veterans and service members with comforting quilts. The Highlands Mountain Valley Quilters is a local group dedicated to the same goals of honoring veterans and they have presented many quilts to veterans express-

ing gratitude for their service and sacrifice. Shaw says it is a labor of love for her group to craft these beautiful quilts to present to the veterans at the Eckerd living center and Chestnut Hill.

The quilts themselves are meticulously crafted with great care and attention to detail. They feature patriotic designs, symbols, and colors, reflecting the pride and honor associated with military service. Each quilt is a unique piece of art, stitched together with love and respect.

The act of gifting a quilt to a veteran not only provides physical comfort but also serves as a powerful reminder that their service is appreciated and valued. It is a tangible expression of gratitude, acknowledging the sacrifices made by veterans and their families. The history of honoring veterans with quilts is a testament to the enduring gratitude and respect for those who have served their country. These beautiful and meaningful quilts serve as a symbol of appreciation, providing warmth, comfort, and a reminder that their service will never be forgotten.

...2023 continued from page 9



Community rallies to find Anna the runaway Corgi.

proaching from the west, Macon County Schools were dismissed early – 12:30p for Franklin schools and 1p for Highlands.

- Ultimately, the fate of HS soccer field is up to the MC Board of Commissioners.
- New STR act - SB290 shores up NC's Vacation Rental Act.
- MC Commissioners again consider ending agreement with Fontana Library System.

• MC residents urge commissioners to reconsider canceling HS Pre-K Expansion project. When the Macon County Board of Commissioners voted to cancel an active contract for the design concepts for renovations at Highlands School that had already been fully budgeted for and funding allocated, they did not just halt plans for two new pre-K classrooms. Their vote also cancelled the designs for the needed expansion.

- H-C Hospital celebrates 30th anniversary.
- Citizens rail about tax appraisals. Citizens of Macon County stacked the public comment period of the Macon County Board of Commissioners last week to voice their anger surrounding the recent reappraisal process.

• MC joins school districts across NC in opposition of House Bill 219. In a resolution unanimously approved Monday night, the Macon County Board of Education joined public school districts from across North Carolina in opposing legislation that would very likely result in a negative financial impact to Macon County, leading to staffing shortfalls and barriers for academic options for students.

- Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation funds full-time nurse for Highlands School.

• NC becomes 40th state to expand Medicaid under ACANC becomes 40th state to expand Medicaid under ACA.

April

- Drainage issue could soon be resolved for Highlands soccer field. Macon County Schools facility Director Todd Gibbs said that a local geologist inspected the Highlands soccer field and believes that addressing "muck" build up in the drainage system beneath the field would return the field to a playable.

• MC BOC ratifies motion to approve purchase of \$1.3 million Higdon property in Franklin.

- MC BOC says they will stay in Fontana Library System, with conditions.

• See 2023 page 11

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315

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

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7

Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore. Pastor

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

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

CHAPEL OF THE SKY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

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

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rev'd Dr. Michael Matlock, Rector

464 Hwy 64E. Cashiers. NC 28717

CAC@christanglicancashiers.org & 828-743-1701

Sundays: 9:30 am Adult Christian Formation;

10:30 am Holy Eucharist Worship

Wednesdays: 6 pm Bible Study, Prayer, Potluck

Thursdays: 10 am Healing Eucharist

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

www.cashiers.church

Sun. 10:45am. S.S 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.

Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

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

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

Wednesdays – Supper at 6 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

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

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

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

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

Thursdays 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706. 746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

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

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

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

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

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

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

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

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

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

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

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Emily Wilmarth, pastor

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

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

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

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

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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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Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor & Rev. Christine Murphy

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www.highlandsmethodist.org

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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

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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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SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

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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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Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

...2023 continued from page 10

- Nearly 70% of property revaluation appeals result in changes for Highlands.

- MC Commissioner Shearl defends county's stance on cancelling HS project at Town Board meeting.

- Citizens urge BOE and BOC to get Highlands Project done.

- Hotwire foothold is established and secure. Sharper, faster, smarter fiber optics was the theme at Thursday's Town Board meeting where representatives from Hotwire outlined and updated commissioners about its progress in Highlands.

May

- Citizens drill Shearl over HS Project. The meeting with John Shearl, Macon County Commissioner for the Highlands district, at the Rec Park last Thursday evening did what no one in the country has thus far been able to do – unite citizens under one banner – “The children come first.”

- HS Salutatorian and HS Valedictorian announced. Val Riley Conner plans to attend UNC Chapel Hill. Salutatorian Luke Hartman plans on attending Virginia Tech.

- Nathan Keener and Bella Wilson, were named King and Queen of the HS 2023 Prom which was held at OEI's The Farm, Friday, April 28.

- MC Commissioner Shearl disappoints citizens concerning stance on HS Pre-K and expansion but asks for patience.

- Town tax to decrease, school scholarships increase.

- Mental Health begins with Kindness: 'Bee Kind' campaign begins.

- The facts, not misinformation, about Highlands Renovation/Pre-K Project.

- Lynch to follow in Baldwin's footsteps Dr. Chris Baldwin Superintendent of MC Schools to retire Sept. 1.

- Proposed MC budget earmarks \$800,000 for HS soccer field; nothing for HS Project. Taxes to drop to 27 cents per \$100 valuation.

June

- On Thurs., May 25, High-



Area firefighters pull together to battle house fire in Sagee Woods.

- Photo by Brian O'Shea

lands Police officers searched a residence in town on Main Street and found approximately 70 grams of methamphetamine, along with equipment, cash, firearms and supplies to package the drugs for sale.

- The Literacy & Learning Center to offer Pre-K program.

- Dogwood Health Trust helps fund Jackson County Public Schools pre-school program.

- Highlands FY '23-'24 budget decreases. Last year the decrease was about a million dollars between the May and June figure, and this year it was closer to \$3.3 million.

- Highlands School Principal Brian Jetter and kindergarten Teacher Assistant say good-bye to Highlands School.

- The amazing recovery of Barrett McKim. Coming up on our one-year anniversary of Barrett's horrific science experiment accident, we have numerous things to be grateful for.

- The county's first all Republican BOC adopts largest budget increase in history.

July

- HF&R joins the ranks of other area depts. with full-time firefighters. Highlands Fire & Rescue began staffing two of six, full-time, firefighters on 24/7 at the new station on June 29.

- Gas explosion closes 3 businesses. A gas explosion that allegedly started in the kitchen of Midpoint Restaurant sent shockwaves

through neighboring buildings Friday, June 30 at 11 a.m., has caused three businesses to close until further notice.

- Sheriff presents deputies with life-saving award for “calm and quick” response. Highlands native Daniel Long was one of two Macon County Sheriff deputies credited with saving a man's life on June 23 when he was the first on scene to an emergency call due to an explosion.

- Short-term rental bill NC Senate Bill 667 is pending.

- Local UPS workers prepare to strike.

- Sarah Holbrooks named principal of Highlands School.

- Where are you Anna? She had recently given birth to her third litter and was headed for a life of “retirement” when she took off from her new home in Horse Cove.

- 6 sign up for Town Board. Signed up to run are incumbents Dotson and Stiehler and newcomers, Tucker Chambers, Kay Craig, Jeff Weller and Rachel Wilson.

August

- Highlands Fire & Rescue celebrates 70 years of service with fire truck rides.

- MC BOE says no to Highlands Middle School repairs due to only getting one bid.

- Tate Wilson, left, and Aniah McKim, are rising sophomores at Highlands School who

• See 2023 page 14



Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church

Christmas Eve Mass

St. Jude's Catholic Church (Sapphire Valley) • 3 pm

Christmas Day Mass

Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church • 11 am

New Year's Day Masses

St. Jude's Catholic Church • 9:30 am

Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church • 11 a.m.

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 14



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...CLASSIFIEDS from page 13

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...2023 continued from page 11

are on the Highlands School Varsity Swim Team, are members of the Highlands Hurricanes travel team and also Junior Olympians, were recently named Academic All American Swimmers.

• Alyssa DuBois is tapped at new Assistant Principal at Highlands School.

• The Highlands Neighborhood Coalition, the group in Highlands who is against short-term (STRs) rentals in residential districts, is having a meeting Sunday, Aug. 20 at the Community Building to organize and ascertain who is with them prior to the upcoming November election.

• Challenge reduces Highlands Town Board candidates to five; residency questions oust Tucker Chambers.

• Annual 5K brings hundreds to town. The Twilight 5K, brainchild of Derek Taylor, raises money annually for different causes benefitting the children of Highlands, and this year about \$25,000 will go to support The Literacy and Learning Center's Pre-K program.

September

• Post 370's 'Visit a Vet' program brings tears of joy to ELC vets.

• Highlands School teachers say 'Hello!' Seven new teachers/teacher assistants were hired for various positions in the elementary, middle and high school.

• The Literacy & Learning Center hopes permanent Pre-K program to start 2024.

• Bridge at The Bascom closed for repairs. The Will Henry Stevens Bridge that makes up the main entrance at The Bascom has been closed since August to undergo repairs hopefully will open in 2024.

• PAC's introduces new Educational Theater program to teach everything 'theater.'

• Highlands Newspaper 6-week candidate Q&A begins.

October

• Expanded playground planned for Rec Park.

• Historian Ran Shaffner offers a eulogy for the Cleveland family home which was recently demolished.

• Highlands School introduc-



The Crane home was razed to make way for development,

- Photo by Brian O'Shea

es agriculture course and FFA club led by dedicated instructor.

• Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church seeks variance for parking spaces in preparation for new building.

• HF&R new full-time, paid firefighters are pinned at Town Board meeting.

• Multiple agencies respond to recent wreck on Wilson and Satulah Ridge Road where three were injured.

• Town Board OK's NC 106 sidewalk on the right side of the road.

November

• The truth about STRs and Highlands School enrollment statistics. HNC considers what they call the "proliferation" of Short-term Rentals (STRs) as the culprit to the decrease in Highlands School enrollment. However, as always, facts tell the real story.

• Highlands and WNC under state of emergency due to drought conditions.

• Voters pick round of commissioners. Incumbents John Dotson and Brian Stiehler retain seats with newcomer Jeff Weller.

• Summit Charter School receives unanimous approval for \$2.5 million loan for expansion.

• MC Commissioner Shearl calls for county manager's resignation; admits to colluding prior to taking oath of office.

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

• Hotwire service is expanding Residents and businesses are encouraged to give them a call.

• Board of Education says no to MC Commission's call for partisan school board races.

December

• MC Commissioners Shearl, Higdon and Antoine want to change election method for the county commission.

• Highlands School's annual Homecoming Dance was held Saturday, Dec. 2 at First Presbyterian Fellowship Hall. The King was Cooper Hall and the Queen was Brooke Fogarty.

• Then, MC Commissioners vote to terminate Commissioner Shearl's resolution seeking partisan school board races.

• Since being accused of not caring about the business community, Mayor encourages feedback to continue.

• New Town Board members - Dotson, Stiehler and Weller - were seated Dec. 14

• Citizens demand apology from Commissioner Shearl for calling for County Manager Derek Roland's resignation.

• A real estate snapshot of Highlands, Highlands Township and the Flats Township.

• Shop with a Hero serves 34 children from Highlands.

• MC Commissioner Gary Shields was unanimously elected to be Chairman for 2024. He replaced Commissioner Higdon who served in that capacity for one year.

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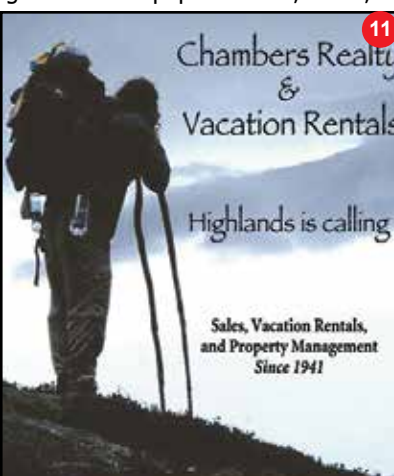
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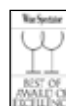


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