

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., July 10, 2025

Schools' needs are many; funding is short

At Highlands School, free lunch and soccer field are unfunded; Pre-K postponed

By Kristin Fox

The Macon County Board of Education has some tough decisions to make as it prepares for the upcoming 2025-2026 school

year. The needs of the Macon County School District are many, but how far these needs will be met within the county's budget allocation for education still remains

to be determined.

At its May regular session meeting, the Macon County Board of Commissioners approved a

• See SCHOOLS page 14

Part 2:

The immigration quagmire

Helping immigrants navigate the system

By Kim Lewicki

At the Indivisible Highlands June 29 presentation that traced immigration from 1965 to present, it became evident that as the country's economic needs evolved both political parties enacted laws and policies allowing immigrants to stay and work because they were needed.

On hand were representatives from Pisgah Legal, Development Director Leslie Manning and Pisgah Legal immigration Attorney Leonel Gonzalez, Jr, as well as Highlands own Faviola Olvera, director of the Community Care Clinic.

Helene Siegel of Indivisible Highlands, said the purpose of the presentation was to explain – within the law – how to legally

• See IMMIGRATION page 17



Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass.



The Modern Gentlemen.

A two-fer concert weekend is coming up at PAC Friday and Sunday, July 18 and 20

On Friday, July 18 Rodney Marsalis' Philadelphia Big Brass will perform at 7:30p.

Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass is America's premier

large brass ensemble that had its start on the streets of New Orleans. The group that reflects the diverse makeup of men and women in the American culture and is dedicated

to the notion that music is a gift to be enjoyed by everyone.

The ensemble is especially dedicated to reaching out to the

• See PAC page 22

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Filing is on for the Nov. 4, 2025 municipal election

Mayoral and board member seats are open in Highlands

In Highlands there will be three seats on the ballot – the seats currently held by Mayor Pat Taylor, and Commissioners Amy Patterson and Eric Pierson. Each term is for four years. The cost to file is \$10 for the mayor's seat and \$5 for the commissioners' seats.

In Franklin, there are four seats on the ballot – the seats currently held by Council Members Rita Salain, David Culpepper and Stacy Guffey and the mayor's seat currently held by Jack Horton. The cost to file for a Council Member's seat is \$36 and \$72 for the mayor's seat. Each term is for four years.

Filing began July 7 at 8a and ends July 18 at noon.



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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

• SNAPSHOTS •

Town projects to begin and continue

Now that the town has a new budget as of July 1 let me update you on a number of current and planned town projects. Although funds have been appropriated for a project doesn't mean work will begin immediately. Nevertheless, I, along with many of you, am sometimes frustrated by the slow pace of some projects. On the other hand, haste can sometimes cause waste, which we all want to avoid.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

The installation of larger utility poles on US 64 east (Cashiers Road), from around Maple Street to Highlands Falls, to support a third electric circuit for the town is progressing faster than scheduled. Crews have already placed the poles all the way from Highlands Falls to the corner of US 64 and Cullasaja Drive.

Once this circuit is activated in the fall, our public works director, Lamar Nix, wants to keep the momentum going and build a fourth circuit. This next plan would require installing larger poles on US

64 west (Franklin Road) starting at the Duke transfer station near the Hicks Road intersection and extending the installation into downtown.

This fourth and final circuit would complete the electrician grid upgrade, which has been much needed to handle future electrical demand and manage the grid during outages caused by storms. These upgrades will have cost the town several million dollars in essential reserve expenditures.

The Dog Mountain Water Project was recently sent out for bid, and one bid came in slightly under budget. A contingency fund can now be earmarked for any unforeseen problems in construction. Our staff is now waiting for the state to review the low bid and give its approval before the contractor, Stillwell Enterprises, gets the green light to begin work. Hopefully, the state will approve the bid any day now. I get nervous when the state is reviewing construction documents, as delays can occur.

The new budget also funds several paving projects. The town policy has always been to delay these paving projects until after Labor Day and toward the end of leaf season. They will get underway around the middle of October and end sometime in early November.

The first phase of the Mirror Lake Dredging Project is ongoing and is expected to conclude in the fall. It has been a slow and deliberate process, but on the other hand, it has reduced the environmental impact on the lake. McGill Associates, the engineering company hired by the town, continues to perform design work for the next stages of the project, which will involve the use of state funds. Their work will continue into the fall. We project that dredging operations for Phase Two will begin in the first part of 2026 and continue for an extended period. In many ways, the dredging for the subsequent phases is significantly larger and more complex than Phase One.

CK Dixon Engineering continues to work on the design and bid documents for upgrades to the town water plant. In addition to replacing the pre-clarifier tank, a third filter train will be added to the plant. While state funds cover the pre-clarifier



Who's there?

Do you have a heartfelt, funny, interesting, or beautiful photo you would like to share in our "SnapShot" section? Email it to highlandseditor@aol.com or text it to 828-200-1371, with a brief description and a name. No anonymous photos will be accepted.

Photo by
Marcia Davis

• WEATHER •

Thu, 10-Jul	Fri, 11-Jul	Sat, 12-Jul	Sun, 13-Jul
75°F 61°F	76°F 60°F	75°F 59°F	79°F 60°F
Showers and a heavier t-storm	A shower and thunderstorm	A t-storm around in the p.m.	A t-storm around in the p.m.
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Photo by Stanton Englander.

Highlands Hurricanes win June 26 meet

By Steve Hott
Hurricanes Head Coach

On Thursday, June 26, the Highlands Hurricanes traveled to the new Jackson County Recreation Pool in Cullowhee and swam against JCST (Jackson County Swim Team). The Hurricanes won 572-437.

All of the Hurricanes scored but outstanding performances for the Hurricanes included Jazmine Abranyi breaking her own year-old team record in the 100-yard butterfly and Hayden Bysura qualifying for the 2025 Jr. Olympics (AAU Nationals) in his 3rd event, the 100-butterfly. JO's will be held in Houston, TX this year.

High scorers for the meet were Jr. Olympian Abranyi, Bella Batista, and Jr.

Olympic qualifier Ian Batista with 24 pts each, winning 5 events. Lucas Zabrian, Jr. Olympic qualifier Emma Denisoff, and Jr. Olympians Dodo Zhang and Emilina Hernandez each brought home 22 pts. Zana Maseko, Jaycee Powell and Jr. Olympian Finneaus Garner had 21 pts. Elizabeth Burnette scored 20 pts, while Nikita Denisoff and Jr. Olympian Conner Hughes brought home 19. Asa Garner and Jr. Olympic qualifier Hayden Bysura had 18 pts.

Agatha Jestin scored 16.5, Ellie Bysura and Jr. Olympian Aniah McKim 16. Anna Shchegachova, and Jr. Olympians Jack Summer, Aleks Petric, and Justin Powell all brought home 15 pts. Ivan Shchegachov had 14, Max Basil 13, and Kate Vanderweile, Jay Herman, and Andre Jimenez 12. Melanie Zabrian scored 10.5, Senna Sherrill and Lucas Maseko 10. Stella Kerr brought home 9.5 pts, Jr. Olympian Chase Kenter 9, Max Jestin 8, Katherine Wise 7, and Sadie Bysura 6. Ben Shchegachov had 4 pts, Blakely Hedden 3.5, Cooper Fisher and Zoey Ivey 3.

The Highlands Hurricanes are a Highlands Recreation Park team that practices mostly in the evening at the Highlands Recreation Park Pool. The only requirement to join is that a prospective swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards (the length of the rec park pool) unassisted. For more information, please call 828.421.4121.

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• OBITUARY •

Paul Johnston Head

Paul Johnston Head, 71, passed away peacefully in his sleep on June 21, 2025. He was born February 14, 1954 in Oklahoma City to Mary (Johnston) and Ben Head.

Paul attended Casady School from kindergarten through 12th grade, graduating in 1972. He had a distinguished athletic career during his school years. He was a three-sport letterman, playing football, basketball and baseball. His senior year he was captain of all three teams. Paul was elected to the first team All Southwest Preparatory Conference his senior year in all three sports. Additionally, he was selected first-team All-City in all three sports. He was selected All City Player of the Year in football and baseball. Paul was awarded the Dartmouth Cup, Casady's highest athletic award, his senior year. In 2019 Paul was enshrined in the inaugural class of the Casady Sports Hall of Fame. He remained close to friends he met at Casady his entire life, particularly Burch Fryer and Robby Berry.

Paul parlayed his achievements in baseball into acceptance to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill if he committed to pitching. He was a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and Gorgon's Head Lodge, where he served as Princeps. He arrived from Oklahoma in striped bell bottoms and hair below his collar and left wearing seer-sucker pants with a love for beach music, shag dancing, and Tarheel basketball. At Chapel Hill, Paul made friends he remained close with throughout his life, especially Risden McElroy and Montgomery Burlingame IV ("Monty").

Shortly after graduating from Chapel Hill, he married Suzn Kerns and they moved to Oklahoma City where Paul began his banking career at Liberty National Bank. Their son, P.X. was born in 1981 and named after Paul's maternal grandfather, Paul X. Johnston, whom he idolized. They relocated to Roanoke, Virginia where Paul worked at Dominion Bank Shares. In 1984, Paul and Suzn welcomed their daughter, Talbott. After Suzn and Paul divorced, Paul moved to Alexandria, Virginia and purchased Dunn & Bradstreet franchises in several states. He loved being close to P.X. who was attending Episcopal School in Alexandria. He also enjoyed being close to the center of the political world of Washington, DC. In 2004 Paul felt compelled to volunteer to go to Florida to hand count votes in the Presidential election. He was always a staunch Republican and an avid Fox News watcher, even though he thought he was smarter than all the commentators, an opinion he happily shared.

In 2005 his love of Oklahoma brought him back to Oklahoma City. Shortly thereafter he met Jean Whiteneck who was planning to move to Highlands, North Carolina. Employing his legendary charm, he convinced her to stay in Oklahoma and they were married in 2006. But after Jean's daughter Eleanor graduated from Casady, Jean and Paul moved to Highlands where Paul made new friends and found cooler weather. He and Jean were so very happy in



• See OBITUARY page 8

Dear Highlands Community...

I am Mirror Lake, and for more than half a century, I've been neglected and ignored. I've survived uncontrolled construction runoff, hurricanes, pollutants from unknown sources, and unregulated water release. As a designated North Carolina Trout Stream, it breaks my heart that I can no longer shelter trout in my waters – my streambed has become too shallow and too warm. I remember when families used to paddle through my bays and channels, but now they lie choked by sediment and deadfall.

I need your help... and now is the time.

This year, there is hope. A dedicated group of my neighbors have begun the crucial work of dredging my waters – a chance to restore me to health. Through the summer months, they will work to remove years of accumulated sediment, giving me back my depth and clarity. I know there will be some disruption – unusual sounds and activity along my shores – but please understand that this temporary disturbance is my chance at renewal.

Remember me as I once was: a haven for trout, a playground for paddlers, a peaceful retreat for all who visited my shores. With your support, I can be that place again.

But I cannot do this alone. The Mirror Lake Improvement Association (MLIA) has established a Dredging Fund to support this vital work. If you value my presence in our community, if you remember the joy I once brought, or if you dream of the beauty I can be again, please consider contributing. Your generous donation will help secure my future for generations to come.

To help restore my waters, please contact Pat Gleeson at 828.782.0472.

During the project, you'll notice changes:

- Dredging equipment along my shores
- Varying water levels as the work progresses
- Construction sounds during working hours
- Some areas' traffic will be temporarily restricted for safety

But imagine what I can become again – clear, deep, healthy waters teeming with life. A restored Mirror Lake, ready to serve as your community treasure once more.

Thank you for hearing my voice. Thank you for caring. Thank you for helping me become whole again.

*With hope and gratitude,
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...OBITUARY continued from page 7

the mountains and loved being year-round residents along with their best friend, Bob (Bobby) Boshell. For the last year of Paul's life they lived in Spartanburg, SC.

Paul was truly one in a million and had an infectious personality that put him in a league of his own. He was the quintessential raconteur whose trademark was holding court, typically outside in front of a fire, where he would entertain his guests with the most incredible and outrageous stories, typically featuring himself as the main character.

Paul was always the life of the party and loved by everyone he met. He returned that love with a fierce commitment and undying loyalty to his family and friends. Throughout his life, Paul maintained a passion for Oklahoma football, the New York Yankees, golf, politics, Hermes ties, the family cabin at Spring Creek, Colorado and the epic jeep trips there, the 21 Club in New York City, backgammon, crossword puzzles, Scrabble and his dogs Walter and Barclay. He was also passionate about the things he disliked which included - rules of any kind, slow waiters, being hot (any temperature above 71 degrees), sand, socks, incoming cell phone calls and Duke University.

He loved the history of our great nation, particularly the West and upon learning that Meriwether Lewis was a distant uncle, went on trips to retrace the steps

of the great Lewis and Clark Expedition. Having worked at Connolly's Menswear in high school he viewed himself as a fashion icon and if he wore it that meant it was "the trend" whether it was or not.

Paul valued his lifetime friendships with both the Oklahoma City boys as well as those from his Chapel Hill days and always stayed in touch with them wherever he was through wagering with them on college football games on College Game Day, an activity he called "investing". He added a new group of friends in Highlands and, as always, they were not replacements but additions to the Paul Head circle of friends.

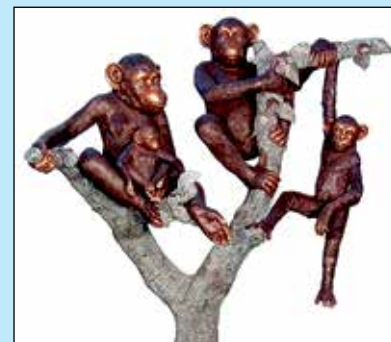
Paul is predeceased by his parents, Mary Johnston Evans and Ben Head. He is survived by his wife, Jean, his children P.X. Head (Elizabeth) of Atlanta, Georgia and Talbott Shaw (Burk) of Houston, Texas, stepdaughter Eleanor Lunenburg (Peter) of Charleston, South Carolina, grandchildren William and George Shaw, Henry Head and Charles ("Charlie") Lunenburg, sister Marcy Head Benson (Bruce) of Denver, Colorado, brother Eric Head (Shelley) of Denver, Colorado and numerous cousins.

A Memorial Service will be held at All Souls Episcopal Church in Oklahoma City at 1 p.m. on July 25th with a reception to follow at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club.

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that memorial contributions be sent in Paul's name to the Potter Alzheimer's Disease Fund, University of Colorado Foundation, Suite 725, 1800 Grant St, Denver, CO 80203 or giving.cu.edu/paulhead

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• LETTERS •

The 'Big Beautiful Bill' is far from beautiful for most

Dear Editor,

The big beautiful bill is neither. Tax cuts take effect this year. While the cuts for the highest earners are permanent, most cuts expire in 2030. Sixty percent of the total tax savings will go to people with incomes greater than \$217,000/yr.

For the next five years, the rest of us will see between \$3,000 (high earners) and \$156 (lowest earners) in annual tax savings.

For many people, any tax savings will be cancelled by the loss of Medicaid support.

And, if you got an email from the Social Security Administration praising Trump for tax cuts to Social Security payments,

understand those cuts don't apply to everyone, and expire in 2028.

Medicaid changes take effect in 2027, after the mid-term elections. In House District 11, 196,000 people depend on Medicaid or Obamacare (kkf.org). Although regulations to implement the cuts don't yet exist, they will include eliminating coverage for some people, providing fewer services, lowering payments to providers, and increasing requirements to prove eligibility. Part of every medical bill covers overhead – salaries and benefits, operations and maintenance. The loss of Medicaid/Obamacare contributions to overhead means people with private insurance and/or

Medicare will have to make up the difference, so everyone's medical costs will rise.

Why did Congress gut Medicaid? In addition to funding tax cuts to the obscenely wealthy, they had to increase the Department of Homeland Security budget. The ICE budget is \$170 BB(illion) over the next five years. Higher than the combined budgets for DEA, FBI, ATF, Secret Service, and Marshal Services! (Newsweek.com) Higher than the defense budgets of all but 15 countries! (Democracynow.org) It includes \$46.5 BB for the border wall, \$45 BB for internment camps, \$30 BB for ICE training, \$5 BB for Customs checkpoints, \$6 BB to train/ retain border pa-

trol agents and border protections' field support, and \$3 BB for immigration courts (Axios.com).

This administration has provided permanent tax cuts to the obscenely wealthy, and will spend billions illegally seizing and deporting, so far only, brown people, most of whom are law-abiding people here legally or even US citizens with jobs and careers. Conversely, this administration won't support people who need basic health care. Our government is beyond cruel. And they call themselves Christians! They are anything but. Poll after poll makes clear that many fewer than half of us agree with these allocations of tax dollars. At this point the bill is

law. We need to quickly develop plans to take care of family and friends about to lose their health care safety net, adjust household budgets to meet rising health care costs, and ensure these clowns are not reelected in 2026.

Additional sources for this letter include articles in national newspapers; responses to Google searches for "big beautiful budget bill" plus key words such as Medicaid, ICE, polls; and columnists Robert Hubbell, retired attorney; Joyce White Vance, retired US attorney; and Heather Cox Richardson, US historian.

Karen Patterson
Highlands

Conscious-raising is the first step to behavior change.

Dear Editor,

Columnist Bud Katz made some good points in his piece entitled, "Coincidence? You Tell Me" in his "Here's the Thing"

column last week in the Highlands Newspaper, about the good that is going on in the world.

The point of a book I have written (Bucking the System) is

that we operate in a deeply flawed system where the rich make the rules. There is a limit to what the rest of us can do within this system. And it leaves behind the

most vulnerable.

Unless we can change the system, we and our descendants will be fighting the same battles our ancestors fought. Conscious-

raising is the first step to behavior change. Power to the people!

David Stearns
Otto

It's not beautiful, it's stupid and a classic bait and switch game

Dear Editor,

If you are a Trump fan, you are probably excited the Big Beautiful Bill was passed by just four votes in a Congress with 435 representatives that represent approximately 360 million Americans.

The Republican deficit hawks led the charge to pass a bill that will increase our national debt by \$3 trillion at the low end and as much as \$5 trillion at the high end over the next 10 years.

If you do not believe it is possible, let me remind you the national debt is currently at \$36,214,482,241,911.14 as of July 1, 2025, and we pay almost \$1 trillion in interest payments every year.

Republicans, please do not ever tell us the national debt is important to you when you traded more debt for the following:

1. Reduction in access to

healthcare for the poorest Americans. Work requirements and other incentives sound like a good idea but implementation of these requirements will be extremely difficult and make it more difficult for many to access healthcare. These measures will likely save money in the short-term but cost more in the long-term due to more emergency room visits and health issues not being addressed before they get worse, requiring more treatment that will ultimately be paid by Medicaid or higher private insurance premiums.

A comprehensive plan is needed for all Americans, and I think we can fix this if we simply take away Federal Employee Health Benefits from our legislators. This measure would require them to navigate the system like hourly workers and small business owners.

2. It is unfair for tipped workers to pay less taxes than

similarly situated hourly workers, plain and simple. This provision will only last until 2028 but it makes no sense.

3. Receiving a break on income taxes is simply a bait and switch when you take into account the additional taxes every American will be paying with the 10% to 40% tariffs that will be passed on to every consumer.

Tariffs are a regressive tax that impact the the lower income demographic significantly more than the upper income.

If you want to solve access to healthcare and reduce our national debt, we need to figure out a system where everyone can pay something and stop wasteful spending on the likes of parades and such, but The Big Beautiful Bill is not the answer.

Jerry Moore
Highlands and Clayton,
GA

• See LETTERS page 10

In
Celebration
of Bob's
75th
birthday,
at The
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...LETTERS continued from page 9

Catlin's recount of Highlands' 'No Kings' rally was WAY off

Dear Editor,

A bit of correction to Mr. Bodie Catlin's July 3 account in his letter-to-the-editor of the June 14 No Kings Rally in Highlands is in order.

- The protesters were, like me, Highlands full- and part-time residents and current and former employees of Highlands and Cashiers businesses and public service, including the organizers of the event. They were not "curiosity seekers."

- The participants labeled "America haters" by Mr. Catlin represented the political spectrum of patriotic voters, including left wingers, moderate Democrats, and even moderate and conservative Republicans who do not support Trump. For example, I am a Brian Kemp supporter who is now an Independent voter after years as a dues-paying member of the Walton County, GA Republican party. The one thing the participants in the Highlands Rally all have in common politically is refusal to support the convicted felon occupying the White House or his policies, such as selling access to the highest bidders and appointing fellow convicted felons to ambassadorships.

- Rather than "filthy language," the signage focused on demanding that Congress do its job of checking the executive branch's overreach; support for those who have been abducted from workplaces, public streets, and community and school events by masked individuals presenting neither badges nor judicial warrants; and appreciation for the labor of the immigrant workforce in America. Many placards quoted Jesus Christ's sentiments regarding treatment of immigrants and the poor. My poster included well wishes to the U. S. Army for its 250th

anniversary, as did some others. To be fair, there was a number of posters referencing the carnival barker in Washington's penchant for wearing orange bronzer and having memecoins, Bibles, and gold-colored sneakers. There were as well as a substantial percentage of placards using the TACO acronym (Trump Always Chickens Out). As for the upside-down flags, which have long been employed by election deniers, the U. S. Flag Code allows for displaying the flag upside down as a sign of distress.

- The participants did not yell obscenities at anyone. They waved and called out, "Have a nice day" in unison at those who disagreed as they drove by. The vast majority who passed the rally gave "thumbs up" signs. There is plenty of video evidence on social media, so the truthfulness of my account versus Mr. Catlin's can easily be substantiated.

I cannot confirm Mr. Catlin's claim to have been present at the rally because I am not acquainted with him. I have heard that he enjoys sporting pro-Trump gear and the ubiquitous Chinese-manufactured red cap, so I expect he would have been easy to identify had he in fact been there.

Where I grew up, in Hayesville, NC, the kind of claims that Mr. Catlin makes are called "whoppers," "talking out of one's [rear end]," and "bald-faced lies." I will leave it to the reader to pass judgment on the truthfulness of Mr. Catlin, but in my estimation, his account of the Highlands rally is a metaphorical wheelbarrow piled high with horse...feathers.

**Dr. Monica Henson
Monroe, GA and Highlands**

• See LETTERS page 11

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...LETTERS continued from page 10

A joyful 4th of July

Dear Editor,

I saw "sparkling eyes" on THE 4TH OF JULY!

As Post 370 American Legionnaires handed out flags to children at the Highlands ball field during the town games, we Legionnaires gained great joy!

The smiles, the hearty "Thank You's" the immediate waving-the-flags, the kids bouncing with excitement, and the parents' appreciation were all rewards the flag distributors received.

When I told one 8- or 9-year-old lad, "Here is a flag from Highlands' American Legion!" His beaming response was: "Thank you for your service!" That young boy had been coached and knows some of the meanings behind Independence Day.

We distributed 288 flags in about 15 minutes. Next year we need more flags and more joy.

**Paul Schowalter,
Post 370 Commander, Highlands**

Catlin's vitriol doesn't belong in Highlands

Dear Editor,

I was struck by Bodie Catlin's July 3 letter-to-the-editor regarding Highlands "No Kings" rally July 14 and, though there was a pallet's worth of assertions that I found questionable, there is one aspect that I think is of vital importance to all of us lucky enough to call Highlands home, regardless of our beliefs in this angry, embittered country.

This was the level of vitriol directed at our neighbors, the people who attended the June 14 "No Kings" rally.

I'm aware of how corrosive those remarks can be to those who live in this little town.

Let me offer a bit of historical perspective.

In 1993, two other Highlanders and I formulated Highlands' Downtown Trick-or-Treat event.

Though most local churches gave their full-throated support to the family-friendly event that allowed children a safe way to trick-or-treat, a couple condemned the three of us and said that our event was a subtle seduction of local children into Satanism.

This had an immediate effect on my family's business (my wife and I owned a bookstore on Main Street) with individuals swearing that they would never visit us again; and my elementary school-age son was the subject of a whisper campaign about how the three of us were going to spend Eternity in Hell.

Secondly, in the 38 years that I've been a resident of Highlands, I've witnessed all sorts of events that threatened the unity and camaraderie of the community – The Specter of Highlands as New Gatlinburg; Main Street Trick-or-Treat; The Rise of Gated Communities; Jane Woodruff's ill-fated performing arts center; and The

Burger King War of 1995.

Somehow, we've always managed to come together once the dust had settled. We'd share at table at Sarah Lee's Mountaineer Restaurant or a cup of coffee at Buck's/Calder's and talk about the kids and the grandkids or share a laugh with Walter Taylor about anything or everything.

And every year at Main Street Trick-or-Treat, I see happy families strolling across downtown, and I know that some of them are committed congregants of those same churches that railed against the event (and my family) all those years ago.

But we're in unprecedented territory at this time, as demonstrated by Mr. Catlin and friends' sudden overthrow of the Macon County Republican Party, or the sub-rosa movement to disenfranchise Hudson Library from the generous support of Fontana Regional Library System, or the angry preaching against Mountain Theatre Company for its performances of "Rocky Horror Show."

I'd ask Mr. Catlin to tamp down the vitriol and look for the humanity and the decency and the genuine friendliness within his community.

Name-calling and attributing all sorts of dark motives to his neighbors may have been SOP in Jacksonville, FL, but I have to believe that the unique kindness embedded in Highlands is one of the reasons you moved here.

May I recommend a way to better understand the generosity that's built into the community? Perhaps you could volunteer for one of the remarkable enterprises that animate Highlands – Fibber's; the Food Pantry; The Literacy Council of Highlands; The Emergency Council; Big Brothers Big Sisters; the Fidelia Eckerd Center, etc., etc.

**Luke Osteen
Highlands**

Week Two Concerts July 12-15



Saturday, July 12th, Highlands, 5 PM

Sunday, July 13th, Cashiers, 5 PM

"Kathy & Mark Whitehead Young Pianist Concert"

Zitong Wang, piano; Susie Park, violin; James Kim, cello

Monday, July 14th, Highlands, 5 PM

Tuesday, July 15th, Cashiers, 5 PM

"Strings Attached"

Sharon Isbin, guitar; the Pacifica String Quartet



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Photos by Jim and Kim Lewicki, and Debi Bock

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JULY 12 & 13



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...SCHOOLS continued from page 1

\$64,817,964 county budget for the current 2025-2026 fiscal year. In the approved budget, commissioners allocated \$11,641,774 for the school district, a 2.65 percent increase over last year.

How the money will be used won't be known until the school board holds a budget work session planned in August and prioritizes the district's needs. Commissioners have agreed to provide the lump sum; the school board will decide how it will be used.

"It was presented to us from the commissioners that they were going to give us x amount of dollars, and it is not going to cover everything that we asked for," said Macon County Schools Superintendent Josh Lynch. "It will be up to the school board to determine the priorities from that list and the initiatives that we feel are the most important moving forward."

Several needs at Highlands School were discussed at the school board meeting including free lunches for students, the Pre-K program and the school's soccer field.

Free Lunches

Once again Highlands School and Franklin High School are the only two schools out of the 11 schools in the district that do not qualify to provide free lunches for all students under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year. CEP is a school meal funding option of the National School Lunch Act that enables schools to provide free nutritious breakfast and lunch to all students in high poverty areas.

Commissioners agreed to provide additional funding in the budget for the

school district that could be used to cover the expense of providing free lunches at these two schools; however, they did not specify that the extra funding be used for that purpose – that is to be decided by the school board.

According to David Lightner, Macon County Schools Nutrition Director, the school district needs an additional \$250,000 to provide free lunches to all Highlands School and Franklin High School students. This figure would cover the rate of \$4 per meal per student with a slight buffer if needed. This is the same amount commissioners allocated from the fund balance last year to provide free lunches at both schools.

While it is uncertain if free lunch will be provided at Highlands School and Franklin High School, all Macon County students will continue to receive free breakfast.

According to Lightner, in the near future providing free school lunches to all Macon County schools will no longer be a reality.

"We can't make any promises for the 2026-2027 school year," said Lightner. "In a couple of years if the data continues to trend the way it is going right now, there are several other schools that are likely to not qualify as CEP Schools. We will be looking more like we did pre-COVID at that point. Prior to COVID, only East Franklin and Bartram Academy qualified for the program."

Lightner said it's important that Franklin High School and Highlands School complete the free and reduced

• See **SCHOOLS** page 19



Looking to Hire Office Manager

Due to retirement, Highlands United Methodist Church is looking to hire its next Office Manager. Basic responsibilities include, but are not limited to, general office oversight, preparation of weekly bulletins and newsletter, maintaining website, record-keeping, administrative support for clergy, staff and church membership. The ideal candidate will possess strong people skills and be committed to the ministry of the church. Office hours are 9am - 4pm, Monday - Thursday.

Contact Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas - randyhumc@icloud.com



Croquet is the fundraising rage in Macon and Jackson counties

Country Club of Sapphire Valley hosts Cashiers Cares tournament

The Country Club of Sapphire Valley recently hosted Cashiers Cares for its first Croquet Tournament.

Kathie Gamble chaired the event and put the event together making it a smashing success. All positions were filled by croquet-loving players from around the plateau — from Highlands to Sapphire and Trillium were all well represented. Players had several games playing with different opponents each time.

The winners with the best scores were given prizes donated by local restaurants. A lunch followed at the Country Club where prizes were awarded to those winners. This first time event is significant in helping Cashiers Cares continue its mission to help fund smaller local non-profits serving this area. The speaker at lunch was Crystal Jones, the Executive Director of AWAKE. Crystal gave a poignant description of child abuse vic-

tims in our area and the many needs and services that it entails. Southern Jackson County has its share of children using those services, including mental health, legal representation to bring abusers to justice, and ongoing medical issues.

Cashiers Cares is an all-volunteer 501©3 organization which fundraises for 10 of our local charities. Monies raised stays in Southern Jackson County to serve our residents in a broad manner, from young to old. For 2024 over \$110,000 was distributed to these charities from fundraising. Full info on each of the charities is on the website, cashierscares.org. Pam Kerr is the Board Chair and can be contacted at pbk354@gmail.com.

Coming up in September is the 4th Annual Golf Tournament hosted by Trillium Golf Club. That information can be found on the website also. The format is a scramble and open to 96 players.

Highlands Falls Country Club hosts golf-croquet tournament

The Highlands plateau and Cashiers Valley area has a very active group of croquet players and the area has the largest concentration of croquet players in the US. Although many people think of croquet as a sport for seniors, it is far from that and it is played by all age groups.

Recently, Highland Falls Country Club hosted a 16-player Golf Croquet Tournament and players in the event included the top two players in the United States who respectively are also the #2 and #4 players in the world.

Both of these young men (in their 20s) work as Croquet Professionals at clubs in North

Carolina and both have won US National tournaments as well as International tournaments.

In addition, the #1 player in New Zealand and #11 in the world who also won the 2017 Under 21 World Champion was on the court.

The youngest competitor was an 11-year-old who recently competed in the World Under 21 tournament and the oldest competitor was 85ish who has competed at the National level.

Matthew Essick won (The croquet pro

at The Country Club Sapphire Valley). He beat Darin Guffey (The croquet pro at Highland Falls CC) in the final (best of 3) 7-5, 7-3

Matthew is the 2025 USCA Golf Croquet National Champion in both singles and doubles. In 2022 - he was the WCF Golf Croquet World Champion

With the exception of Wade Hampton, All of the country clubs on the plateau offer croquet to their members. The United States Croquet Association (USCA) can assist people in locating a club in other areas of the country

Local players:

The North Carolina clubs who participated in the 16-player Golf Croquet Tournament NC clubs will be represented in the tournament:

• Country Club of Sapphire Valley - Matthew Essick (Croquet Pro)

• Highland Falls CC: Darin Guffey (Croquet Pro)

• Highlands CC: Edmund Fordyce (Croquet Pro) & Hammond Raders (Member)

• Cullasaja CC: Brian Lozano (Croquet Pro)

• Wildcat Cliffs: Sherif Abdelwahab (Croquet Pro)

• Cedar Creek: Jack Rush (Croquet Pro)

• High Hampton: Crayton Morrow (Croquet Pro)

• Cedar Creek Club: Jack Rush (Croquet Pro) & Jim Teel (Member)

• Lake Toxaway: Simon Dentshev (Member - his father is the Croquet Pro)

• Trillium Links & Lakes - Jim Jamison & Scott Spoerl (Members)

• Grandfather Mountain - Tom Balding (Croquet Pro)



The team at the Highlands Falls Country Club tournament.



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JULY 12
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JULY 26
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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



On Saturday, July 5, The Bascom donors, members of the Campbell and Mahaffey families were on hand to cut the ribbon officially opening the new Salt Kiln Pavilion and patio. Heather and Horst Winkler were noted for providing the funds to build the pavilion and patio.

Bascom's Salt Kiln pavilion officially opens

By Kim Lewicki

Prior to officially opening The Bascom's new Soda Kiln on Saturday, Frank Vickery director of ceramics explained how The Bascom came to get the kiln and why it's special.

"Getting to this point had a lot of moving parts," he said.

After potter Justin Allman of Cashiers passed away due to COVID his salt kiln was offered to The Bascom and in November of 2023, a dozen volunteers set to work taking it down brick by brick. A forklift was used to load the 10,000 bricks on to a flatbed trailer and trucked them to The Bascom. The bricks were stored on the back patio for six months, while the vision of the Salt Kiln on The Bascom campus came to fruition.

All told, it took 18 months from start to finish. Engineers were consulted to make sure the proper infrastructure was constructed to support the weight of the 22 cubic foot kiln, while architects designed the pavilion and patio to make sure it blended with The Bascom's campus.

What transpired is a eye-pleasing, inviting patio with tables, chairs and red umbrel-



las that showcase the kiln.

The kiln is fired with gas, but unlike traditional kilns, when the temperature reaches 2,200 degrees, on a 10-second count, with a weed sprayer, sodium bicarbonate is sprayed through side ports, at which point the silica attaches to the clay body, and after firing it back up to 2,380 degrees,

a magical glaze appears so no glazing is necessary to "finish" the piece.

The Soda Kiln offers the cleanest form of atmospheric firing – in contrast to wood or salt.

Atmospheric firing refers to firing methods where the atmosphere within the kiln (the air surrounding the pottery) plays a significant role in the final appearance of the pieces.

In atmospheric firing, the specific gases, chemicals, and minerals present in the kiln's atmosphere interact with the clay and glazes, creating unique colors, textures, and effects.

The Bascom donors, said the Salt Kiln has taken the ceramic department to a new level.

...IMMIGRATION continued from page 1

support law-abiding, undocumented citizens who are at risk of deportation.

The 1965 act favored immigrants from all parts of the world, then in 1980 immigrant admissions were standardized by creating a system for refugee and resettlement as defined by the United Nations.

In 1986 the Reagan administration passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act which was aimed at controlling and deterring illegal immigration by including provisions for legalization of certain long-term unauthorized immigrants, sanctions for employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers, and increased border enforcement.

Olvera's father was granted amnesty under President Reagan's 1986 bill – which legalized 2.7 million immigrants with a huge number of those agricultural workers.

"A member of that group was my father, who was able to legalize under the amnesty bill and bring us over," said Olvera.

Prior to 1986 workers, usually male, could move safely across the border and back again so they could work during the growing season, return to their families and come back to the U.S. for the next season. This was the norm for Olvera's father who was a field worker in Scaly Mountain.

But with the 1986 act also came increased border enforcement so going back and forth was no longer an option. America still needed the workers so granting amnesty so they could bring their families and stay put solved the problem.

The immigration system is complex with no one-size-fits-all path to citizenship, which is where Pisgah Legal comes in.

Representing the 18 counties in WNC, Pisgah Legal helps immigrants understand their rights and how to navigate the path to legality and eventually citizenship.

"Becoming documented – legal – is the issue and the challenge," said Pisgah's Gonzales. "A common question is 'why don't they do it the right way ... get in line and apply?' The answer is, because the system isn't designed that way," he said. "The length of time it takes to obtain citizenship and do it legally is 18 years because only 23,400 visas are issued each year."

He said meanwhile, despite the visa backlog there is a high need for employees in this country and to compound matters, depending on the political atmosphere, the path to legal immigration changes.

Understandably, after 9/11 regulations tightened to focus on security related to immigration so in 2002 the Dept. of Homeland Security was created which brought departments under one roof.

• See IMMIGRATION page 21

...MAYOR from page 2

tank and part of the filter train installation, we are exploring the possibility of securing additional outside funding to fully fund these upgrades.

Finally, this year, the project to replace critical parts of the force main sewer line on US 64 west (Franklin Road), from the Mirror Lake area to the business district, will get underway. It is a high-priority project that is being funded by the town, allowing it to be completed without undue delays and approvals. Engineering reports and studies conducted by CK Dixon identify areas of the pipeline that have to be replaced. This project will get underway in the winter months when traffic volume will be at the lowest level of the year.

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SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

Don't miss the point of the Book of Revelation

**Sr. Pastor
Gary Hewins**
Community Bible Church

The Book of Revelation in the New Testament, may be one of the least understood parts of the Bible. The main point of this book, the vital part of the book, is often missed in its entirety.

Hollywood, typically, does a pretty good job of entertaining the public by using the themes of the Book of Revelation. Any movie with an "End Times" kind of feel has some allure. Who isn't curious about prophesied, cosmic events unfolding in today's modern world? Today's advances in technology, coupled with various nefarious figures on earth, possibly fitting the description of the Antichrist, can certainly sell tickets. In many respects, the world is preoccupied with the end of all things as we know it.

The true purpose of the Book of Revelation centers on the word "Apocalypse," which simply means "unveiling." The wild prophetic predictions published in many books over the past century have been consistently errant. The primary purpose of this magnificent text is the unveiling of the entire Christ Himself. Enjoy the magnificent description of the unveiled, glorified, everlasting Christ, who exposed the cause-and-effect relationship between the cosmic throne in heaven and the ever-devolving earth below. "Revelation" reveals a richer and fuller understanding of the risen Christ, far beyond the incarnate account of Him growing up in Nazareth, walking around the countryside with young people only to revolutionize His present-day world. The gospels rightly share a divine and human Christ coming to give Himself as a ransom for sinful mankind. The Revelation goes much further.

We should not forget that the Revelation was written for the seven persecuted churches who first received it as an encouragement. Some of these seven churches were in abject poverty, highly persecuted, and many times imprisoned or martyred. The Roman Emperor, Domitian, claimed to be divine and anyone who did not worship and swear allegiance to him were harmed, banished from the marketplace and/or annihilated. The literacy rate of the first century church may have been as low as 10%-15%. Were those first century recipients expected to dissect and absorb the commentaries and literature as we do, while taking a mental leap into the 21st century?

The Revelation unveils the Sovereign, majestic Christ, worthy to open scrolls no one else could ever consider opening. The only appropriate response to seeing His glorified beauty and power is to worship Him. The book of Revelation is intended not to scare you but woo you into the blessedness of seeing the King of every King in an eternal context. For three years, the Apostle John enjoyed a transparent and special nearness to Christ. When John sees the vision of the resurrected and glorified Christ in a heavenly context, he abandoned his previous familiarity and fell at Christ's feet as though dead.

• See SPIRITUALLY page 19

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

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

GRACE CHAPEL ON HIGH HOLLY

9615 Dillard Rd Scaly Mountain, N.C.

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas. <http://www.Graceonhighholly.com>

Sunday School 9:45; Worship 11; Prayer Service Wed 5:30p

Men's and Women's Bible Study throughout the week

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Rev'd Dr. Michael Matlock, Rector

464 U.S. Hwy. 64E, Cashiers, NC

CAC@christiancashiers.org • 828-743-1701

Sunday: Adult Christian Ed. 9:15a; Holy Eucharist, 10:30a;

Fellowship 11:45a; Wed: Bible Study/Contemplative Prayer, 5p

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS

Pastor Jacob Tedder • jacob@cashiers.church • 743-5470

www.cashiers.church

Sun. 10:45a; Wed Study 5:15p supper and childcare.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.

Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

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

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

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

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

Wed.: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mon. 4:30pm, Tues.

10am; Men's Bible Study: Wed. & Thurs. 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

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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,

Morning 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

Rev. Emily Wilmarth, pastor; Rev. Kelley Connelly Asso. Pastor

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10a; Worship 11a.; Tues: Men's Group 10a;

Wed: Bell Choir 4p. Chancel Choir: 5:30p

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

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

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

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Sunday Worship is at 9a. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from July 5. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

July 5

• At 7:05 p.m., Charles Carroll Schoen IV, 61, of Naples, FL, was arrested for DUI when stopped on NC 106 (Georgia Road). He was issued a \$800 secured bond. His trial date is Aug. 6.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from July 1.

July 1

• At 12:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Split Rail Row.
• At 4:48 p.m., the dept. re-

sponded to a fire alarm at a residence on the Bowery.

• At 8:15 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Hideaway Trail.

July 2

• At 6:44 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on W. Cypress Lane.

July 3

• At 11:55 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Crescent Trail.

• At 8:20 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Skylake Drive.

• At 12:19 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid in Jackson County at a residence on Macs View Drive.

• At 6:41 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on McCall Road.

July 4

• At 11:30 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

• At 6:17 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west (Franklin

Road).

July 5

• At 5:09 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Azalea Lane.

• At 7:25 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Azalea Lane.

• At 10:25 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Mirror Lake Road.

• At 2:29 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Lower Lake road.

• At 6:06 p.m., the dept. responded to a CO2 alarm at a residence on Bruner Lane.

July 6

• At 8:55 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

• At 12:40 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on the Bowery.

• At 4:30 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Horse Cove Road.

• At 2:13 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cullasaja Club Drive.

...SCHOOLS continued from 14

lunch applications.

“We will be making a push for students and their families at both schools to fill out those applications, because the more families that we can get qualified as free and reduced helps us as they would then be truly covered by federal funds.”

Lightner stated that he has submitted the free and reduced application to the state for their approval; once it has been approved, he can release and make it available for parents to fill out.

Pre-K Program

Chief Academic Officer for Macon County Schools Mickey Noe presented an update on the Pre-K program at Highlands School. A year later than planned, the Pre-K program at Highlands School will not officially begin until the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year.

According to Noe, the project is progressing well; however, there is still a lot that has to be done before the Pre-K program is a reality at Highlands School. To date all paperwork that has been submitted to the state has been approved. While there will be additional paperwork that has to be submitted, he said they

were on track. Pre-K furniture has been ordered and playground equipment and technology are in the discussion phase.

“Everything is moving in right directions with all those facets, so far so good,” said Noe. “The windows are out and the demolition in the media center is coming along to create the classrooms.”

However, the Pre-K program cannot start until the final license has been granted and a lot still has to be completed before this can happen.

“All classroom manipulatives, learning stations and curriculum have to be in place and then approved before the final license is approved. This would include computer programs, learning games and anything that will be used in those classrooms; it all has to be in place before we can you get the final license approved.”

Noe said it would cost up to \$10,000 to set up the classrooms. The funds for this have not been budgeted and could be a discussion point at the upcoming budget workshop.

The school system will use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3)

designed for use in preschools and kindergarten to assess both environmental provisions and teacher-child interactions that affect the broad developmental needs of young children ages three to five, as well as health and safety.

Tuition for future students in the Pre-K classrooms will be both private pay as well as state-funded slots.

Soccer Field

Last May during a budget work session with commissioners, the school board requested funding to explore what it would take to have a turf soccer field at Highlands School. After consulting with representatives from Astro Turf, it was determined that \$70,000 would be needed to complete the initial phase of engineering and planning.

This design and engineering piece would take up to three months to complete and an additional three months would be needed to get all the necessary permits for the project.

The board of commissioners did not allocate money for the Astro Turf project; it is to be funded from the lump sum allocated to the school board.

...SPIRITUALLY continued from 18

Who today is without a need for a deeper and increasingly desperate curiosity to engage with a more “unveiled” Christ? The second coming of Christ is no doubt exciting for those who believe. In the meantime, be encouraged to discover the less veiled Christ that John saw. He is like a freshly slain Lamb but equally the Shepherd of the flock. He holds the church -- His beautiful bride -- in His hand. He is omnipotent, omniscient as He sits on the throne of grace, awaiting your arrival, your devotedness, your prayer and your worship.

He is worthy of all praise. There are angelic creatures around His throne that have eyes all around them. Whichever direction they turn, they remain affixed on the majesty of Christ.

May you discover a more unveiled Christ in the here and now. May we each have a refreshed perspective of His splendor in our own hearts and minds today. May the Spirit of God show us things of the Risen Son that baffle us, inspire us, even cause us to tremble. May your understanding and experience of Christ be so acute and enlarged

that your challenges seem ever so small. Look closely and see what He wants you to see. Listen closely for His voice that is like the sound of many waters. Ask Him in your own personal and humble way, to reveal Himself to you.

Do not worry over the end times and cost yourself a new vision of Christ, the hope of glory. Christ is the epicenter of all things. Look to him. Look for Him. Call out to Him. *And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Heb. 12:1-2).*

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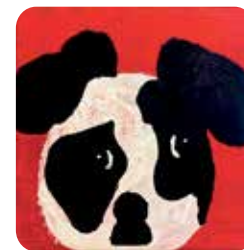
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FOR RENT

...IMMIGRATION continued from page 17

"Currently, there are six departments immigrants have to, or may access, to deal with residency/citizenship each with its own hierarchy and set of regulations and way of dealing with immigrants," said Gonzales,

There is the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services which deals with benefits allotted immigrants; Immigration Customs and Enforcement and Customs and Border Patrol (ICE) which is the enforcement arm and works with local law enforcement through the 287G which means local law can act on behalf of ICE; there is the Executive Office Immigration Review which is immigration court; and there is the Board of Immigration Appeals, which appeals court orders.

However, there are ways to be in America legally.

In 2012, Deferred action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was passed that allowed young people who arrived before 2007 to have some sort of temporary legal status. These are children who were brought over by their parents but who don't have any type of legal documents. No new applications are being accepted but they can be renewed every two years for \$580, so recipients can get a work permit, but it's not a path to citizenship.

There is a 2-part process for juveniles who were abused, abandoned, or neglected but they must first go through the state court with an order that verifies that status. In those cases, a visa can be had in five years, but juveniles age-out at 18, so cases must be completed by then.

Asylum is another path to legality, though not citizenship. It's for immigrants who fear persecution in their home country due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. They must apply for asylum within one year of entering the U.S.

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Gonzales said these cases are hard to win and because there aren't enough judges there is a huge backlog. However, it's a way to be in the country legally at least temporarily.

Then there are UVisas for undocumented victims of certain serious crime who are likely to assist with the investigation and/or prosecution of a crime that occurred in U.S. or a U.S. territory, or have suffered substantial physical and/or mental injury as a result of the crime. The victim must submit an I-918B UVisa Certification signed by a designated law enforcement or judicial official to begin the process.

"This is where local law enforcement can get involved," said Gonzales. "Unfortunately in Western North Carolina, not all law enforcement agencies agree to help in this way, though Highlands Police Chief Andrea Holland has helped."

UVisas are granted for a four-year period along with work authorization and the person is eligible to apply for legal permanent residency after three years.

Gonzales said this isn't an easy or fast path to legality.

"The crimes which come under this category are particularly heinous," he said. "And you don't want to be involved with them."

Additional paths to legal status include a battered spouse waiver and a Tvisa for victims of labor or sex trafficking, and family-based petitions. Temporary Protect Status, special work visas, diversity lottery, refugees, parole-in-place for families of military personnel and Uniting Ukraine, are other programs.

Attorney Gonzales said undocumented people who live in America have protections under the Constitution.

"We provide this information to the community to educate them to rights, not to encourage unlawful activity," he said.

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

POOL SCHEDULE

• Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri. 6am-9:45am, and Saturday 10am-11pm - 6 lanes. Water Aerobics: 18 y+ Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers. Adult Swim: 18y+ Mon.-Thurs. 11am-3:30pm, Friday 11am-1:30pm. Public Swim: Mon. thru Fri. 11a-7pm, Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday 1-6pm

PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. every Monday - Friday 10am-1pm indoors for the winter (notice the days and time has changed),

THIS WEEK'S MOVIES

• No movies until September

MOUNTAIN FINDINGS

• Open: 10 am - 1 pm. Spruce Street. www.mountainfindings.org

SATURDAY MARKET

• Farmers Market in KH Founders Park on Pine Street from 8a-12:30p rain or shine.

ALL WEEK

• 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 Presbyter-

rian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. Women's Group 5:30, Tuesdays. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. For more info, visit www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-4357.

Mon.Thurs.

• At First Presbyterian Church, ArtSpace is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The next exhibit will start in mid-August. For information contact fpchkelley@gmail.com

Mon-Wed-Fri

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

• Balance, Stretch & Strengthen Class at the Rec Park 8:30-9:30am. The cost for the class is \$30 a month and is led by Cathy Hodgson. Call the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

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 combo class with different types of exercise. 828-526-3556

Mondays

• At the Literacy Council, Free Online Weekly Classes. 6:30 - 7:30p. Online via ZoomFor the link, visit <http://theliteracyandlearningcenter.org/esl>

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. For more info call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004

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 info 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.

• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers – Tuesdays from 5-6:30 PM.

Wednesdays thru Sept.

• Farmers Market every Wednesday May-Sept. at the Cowee School Arts & Heritage building in Franklin at 51 Cowee School Dr.

2nd Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, at 11 AM..To register, stop by the library or call 828-526-3031.

2nd & 4th Wed.

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

Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15a. at the Rec Park. No martial arts background necessary Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

• At First Presbyterian Church a free concert "Music for Prayer" at noon. These casual concerts are almost entirely improvised and

last 30-45 minutes. This offering is called Music For Prayer.

• At Hudson Library, special children's events will be on tap on Thursday afternoons at 3:30 Kids Zone programs.

• At the Highlands Nature Center, free Zahner Conservation Lectures at 6 p.m. Small reception follows.

Fridays

• At Hudson Library, Friday afternoons at 2 PM, there's a variety of children's programs including board games, STEM programs, and crafts.

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 9am.

Sundays through August

• Church in the Wildwood, on Horse Cove Road. Old Fashioned Hymn Sing 7-8 p.m.

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 July 20

• Online Macon County youth soccer registration ends July 20th and practice will begin the week of August 11th. Games will start Saturday, August 30th.

Thru July 13

• Presented by the Mountain Theatre Co., The Marvelous Wonderettes and Forever Plaid at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street. For tickets call 828-526-2695 or go to boxoffice@mountaintheatre.com

Sat. & Sun., July 12 -13

• Pickleball on the Plateau Tournament at the Highlands Rec Park. Saturday, Men's & Women's; Sunday, Mixed. Prizes, Raffle and Swag Bag. For more info call Dr. Sue Aery at 828-200-9191.

July 12-15

• Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival presents Week 2 in Highlands and Cashiers. Go to h-cmusicfestival.org for details.

Sat., July 12

• The Cowee School Arts & Heritage will have over 20 vendors on Saturday from 9a to 2p. Vendor booths will have an array of antique goods, pottery, fiber arts and other local crafts. Coffee and pastries will be on sale in the Mercantile Store during the event.

Wed., July 16, 23, 30

• At the Literacy Council, Tinker Time for Tots and Caregivers. 11 am – Noon. FREE. No registration required

Thurs., July 17

• At First Presbyterian Church on Main Street, Family/Children's Concert featuring the Gary Motley Trio co-sponsored by Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival with Ice Cream Social following in Coleman Hall at 3pm.

Fri., July 18

• At PAC, Rodney Marsalis' Philadelphia Big Brass at 7:30 p.m. For tickets, go to highlands-performingarts.com/concerts.

• At Hudson Library, Atlanta/Highlands author Maggie Bailey will introduce her recent cozy mystery, Quilty as Charged, on Friday July 18 at 2PM. Books will be available for purchase and signing at this free program.

Sun., July 20

• At PAC, The Modern Gentlemen – long time members of "Frankie Valli & The four Seasons – at 4 p.m. For tickets, go to highlands-performingarts.com/concerts.

July 21 – 25

• At the Literacy Council FREE summer camps. College Essay Boot Camp. 2 - 4 pm. High School Seniors and Recent Grads

Wed., July 23

• The Sky Valley Garden Club is hosting an Arts and Crafts Show on Wednesday from 10 am to 2 pm at the Sky Valley Country Club located at 568 Sky Valley Way.

• At First Presbyterian Church on Main Street, Trey Clegg Chamber Singers at 2pm.

Sun., July 27

• For the Literacy Council, Swingin' Soiree at The Farm at Old Edwards. To purchase tickets and for information visit <https://www.theliteracyandlearningcenter.org/swingin>

...PAC continued from page 1

world's youth and inspiring them to reach for their dreams. A veritable "dream team" of virtuoso brass players, the group burst onto the music scene with a debut performance in Philadelphia's Kimmel Center in Verizon Hall, a residency for the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, and a special feature on the National Public Radio show, "All Things Considered."

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Then on Sunday, it's The Modern Gentlemen at 4p.

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