

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 23, Number 40 Digital Version at www.HighlandsNewspaper.com Thurs., Oct. 8, 2026

Highlands soccer field issue lingers on

By Kristin Fox
Once again, how to solve the soccer field issue at Highlands School was a topic of discussion at the recent monthly meeting of the Macon County Board of Education held in September.

For years, there have been three options tossed around in discussion among the Highlands community, the school board, and the county commissioners on which is the best option to fix the soccer field.

The three options include Option A – fix the existing field behind the school and top with a turf field; Option B – turn the track field in front of the school into a regulation-size soccer field;

• See **SOCCER** page 18

•INSIDE THIS ISSUE•			
Mayor on Duty	2	HS Sports	12
Weather	2	Shopping Pullout.....	14-15
Snapshot.....	2	Spiritually Speaking	22
Investing at 4118 Ft.....	6	Police and Fire.....	23
Here's the Thing.....	8	Classifieds	25
Letters	11	Events.....	26



Terry Bell
MC Commission
Democratic Candidate
District 2



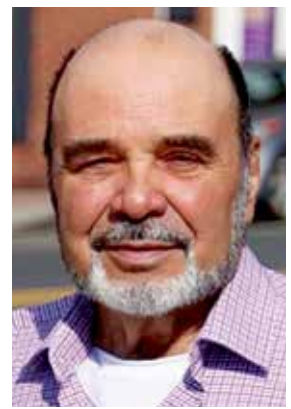
Kellie McConnell Burns
MC Commission
Republican Candidate
District 2



Dylan Castle
MC Commission
Republican Candidate
District 2



Janet Jacobs Greene
MC Commission
Democratic Candidate
District 2



Russ Lund
MC Commission
Democratic Candidate
District 1



John Shearl
MC Commission
Republican Candidate
District 1

Q&A with 6 candidates for MC Commission Districts 1 & 2

By Kim Lewicki
The six candidates – both Democrats and Republicans -- running for the three open seats on the Macon County Commission – two for District 2 and one for District 1 – were asked eight questions for the citizenry of Macon County.

Terry Bell
MC Commission Candidate
District 2

Commissioner?
I am running for County Commissioner because I care deeply about Macon County and want to help ensure it remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

I attended Western Carolina University, where I earned a degree in Middle Grades Education and a master's degree in Public School Administration. I spent 49 years in education and also served for 29

years as a volunteer firefighter and first responder with the Otto Volunteer Fire Department.

I have also had the opportunity to work directly with Macon County government. I was hired by the Macon County Commissioners to oversee school construction and renovation projects for three schools, including Nantahala School. My responsibility was to make sure those projects stayed on

budget and to report our progress to the county.

My experience in education, public service, emergency services, and county projects has given me a strong understanding of the responsibilities that come with serving the people of Macon County.

Redistricting?
I believe our current plan can continue to work well. A county commissioner should be respon-

sible for every resident of Macon County.

A commissioner should never be able to say, "I represent District 2, so the problems in District 1 or District 3 aren't my responsibility." Every commissioner should be concerned about the entire county and all of its residents.

As a commissioner, I believe my responsibility would be to make

• See Q&A page 4

Highlands Sotheby's INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Golf Course Living at Cullasaja Club
A Charming Cottage with Fairway and Pond Views

Jody Lovell
(828) 226.6303

70 Lake Villas Way | MLS 1003418

McCULLEY'S
The largest selection of Scottish cashmere in the U.S.A.
In Highlands ...on the hill
242 S. 4th St. • 828-526-4407
Open 7 days a week
www.mcculleys.com

• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

NC DOT will monitor 'air' traffic

I was at the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting of the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission last week. A commission staff member and an NCDOT engineer presented a new comprehensive transportation plan for the Western Carolina region. The plan will begin in the coming year and address all forms of transportation that will affect the region.

On several occasions in recent weeks, I traveled on NC106 and noticed the many heavy and large trucks moving goods back and forth to Highlands, along with the many vehicles of workers coming to our town. The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is a long-range plan covering the next 25 to 30 years, and as I listened to the presentation, my mind began to work on the idea that NC 106, from the state line to Highlands, will certainly be included in the plan.

But a question from the audience really jolted my perspective about the plan.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Someone asked the presenters about air taxis. I immediately thought, what planet is this person on, air taxis like I saw as a kid on The Jetsons cartoon TV show?

I was even more surprised when one of the presenters said yes, the plan will address air taxis and the growing use of drones for delivering goods. I suddenly realized that we were not guessing about science fiction ideas. In the next 25 or 30 years, within the scope of the plan, there certainly

will be, or should be, air taxis. Drones have already revolutionized warfare and are used in metropolitan areas for medication and food deliveries.

I confess I am a Fred Flintstone guy, but with the lightning-fast development of AI, air taxis, drone deliveries, and, for that matter, driverless vehicles are all just around the corner. Such a long-term CTP must include these transportation modes. And do not tell me they will not be in the Highlands; every advancement in technology eventually, and usually quite quickly, finds its way to the Highlands Plateau.

Driverless, or I should say AI operators, will be running automobiles here and everywhere very soon. Waymo's are already in operation in metropolitan areas. Now I know people will say I'm not about to get into one of those unsafe contraptions. I had a great-great aunt who would never ride in a Model T because she thought a horse and buggy were safer. But again, if we can harness AI technology, AI-operated vehicles will be much safer than the current human-driven car. Think about it: no more inexperienced teenagers flying down the road, no drunk drivers, just drunk passengers. Nor will there be old folks who have lost their reaction time and faculties, driving 15 mph in a 45-mph zone. No road rage, testosterone-high studs who think they own the road. No meth-heads behind the wheel or distracted drivers texting or talking to their best friend while driving. And no good drivers who just make a tragic mistake in a millisecond.

In the coming years, the airspace everywhere will become more congested, but new air control systems and air or drone ports

• See MAYOR page 6

• SNAPSHOT •



Can I
PLEASE go
to school
with
Hudson?

Photo by
Kim Lewicki

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.

• WEATHER •

Thu, 8-Oct	Fri, 9-Oct	Sat, 10-Oct	Sun, 11-Oct
			
74°F 51°F	69°F 54°F	57°F 55°F	65°F 54°F
Sunny and delightful	Partly sunny	Tropical Rainstorm Isaías	Cloudy, a couple of t-storms
RealFeel® High 80° Low 50°	RealFeel® High 75° Low 54°	RealFeel® High 57° Low 48°	RealFeel® High 65° Low 48°

Highlands NC 4-Day Forecast By AccuWeather.com

For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast,
go to www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Weather

Highlands Newspaper

www.HighlandsNewspaper.com

Phone: (828) 200-1371

Email:

HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki

Reporters: Kristin Fox

Digital Media/Circulation - Jim Lewicki

Locally owned and operated by

Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at

www.HighlandsInfo.com

265 Oak St. PO Box 2703

Highlands, N.C 28741

Copyrighted - All Rights Reserved.

5,000 copies printed weekly.

Independently verified by:

Gannett Printing Knoxville TN

Letter Policy:

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

Obituary Policy

Obituaries are \$8 per column inch.

\$10 per photo.

Payable prior to publication.

HIGHLANDER
ROOFING SERVICES INC.

New & Re-Roofing Applications Including:
Asphalt • Cedar • Metal • Synthetic Materials

Showroom: 1511 Highlands Rd • Franklin • O: 828-524-7773
info@highlandernc.com • www.highlandernc.com



PAT ALLEN



JULIE OSBORN



Pat Allen

REALTY GROUP

Not The Biggest... Just The Best!

www.patallenrealtygroup.com | 828.526.8784 | 295 DILLARD RD, HIGHLANDS
Voted America's Best by RealTrends Since 2021

One Level Home With Lots of Room for Hobbies



MLS# 1003892 | \$1,850,000 | 3BR/3.5BA Spacious ONE-LEVEL home designed with light-filled open spaces and a beautifully landscaped setting. Fire pit, two forts with a zip line, dog run, a putting green, deeded lake access to Lake Ravenel, huge workshop, and MORE.
JULIE OSBORN | (828) 200-6165

Downtown Highlands with a View!



MLS# 1003651 | \$2,500,000 | 3BR/3.5BA Downtown Highlands location, remodeled with elegance, high ceilings, beautifully furnished, two fireplaces, two great rooms, water feature, lots of windows, natural light, and a fantastic view!
PAT ALLEN | (828) 200-9179 + JULIE OSBORN | (828) 200-6165

New Build in Coveted Shelby Place



RENDERING

MLS# 1003951 | \$1,900,000 | 3BR/3.5BA Shelby Place is a desirable in-town neighborhood known for its walkability, greenspace, and pickleball, all just minutes from the vibrant shops, restaurants, and amenities of downtown Highlands. Currently under construction; estimated completion date is April 2027.
JULIE OSBORN | (828) 200-6165

Once in a Lifetime View!



MLS# 1003473 | \$1,500,000 | 4BR/3.5BA Perched in highly desirable King Mountain, this beautifully updated mountain retreat has extraordinary long-range mountain views. Private gated community with landscaped and paved roads, a heated pool, tennis court, and a clubhouse.
PAT ALLEN | (828) 200-9179 + JULIE OSBORN | (828) 200-6165



...Q&A continued from page 1

thoughtful decisions about county taxes, schools, emergency services, infrastructure, public safety, and other issues that affect people throughout Macon County.

Do you support the proposed 1/4-cent sales tax increase?

Yes, I support the 1/4-cent sales tax increase. It is estimated to generate approxi-

mately \$2 million annually for Macon County.

Under the present model, the state retains money that I believe should remain here in our county. A small local sales tax increase would allow that additional revenue to stay in Macon County and help support essential services.

It could also help reduce the need for future property tax increases. I believe we should look at every responsible source of revenue before asking property owners to shoulder additional costs.

School Funding?

I would like to see every legitimate school-need funded, but we have to have the revenue available to make that possible. Local government cannot do everything by itself. Assistance from the state and federal governments is necessary, and the proposed 1/4-cent sales tax could potentially provide another source of funding.

Economic Development?

Macon County definitely needs to improve its economic development program. I understand that there is a proposed plan, but I have not yet had an opportunity to review it.

Before making a commitment to a particular plan, I want to understand what is being proposed, what it will cost, and what results we can reasonably expect. Economic development should create opportunities while protecting the qualities that make Macon County such a special place to live.

Would you support a property tax increase?

I am not opposed to a property tax increase if it becomes necessary, but I believe we need to look at the entire financial picture before making that decision.

We have a property revaluation coming in the near future, we need to consider whether the 1/4-cent sales tax passes, and we need to look at other sources of revenue. We simply need to see how all of these factors come together before deciding whether a property tax increase is necessary.

At the same time, we definitely need additional space to relocate certain county departments and offices. The Senior Center and Board of Elections both need facilities that are more accessible. We also need adequate space for our veterans and, ultimately, a county jail so that we are not paying other counties to house our inmates.

There are ongoing discussions about these needs, but we also have to recognize the financial realities we face, including housing costs, energy costs, tariffs, and the rising cost of construction and services. Finding responsible solutions will take careful planning and hard work.

Fund balance?

I believe an undesignated fund balance

should never fall below 30 percent. Maintaining a healthy fund balance is important for the county's financial stability and also helps maintain our ability to borrow from financial institutions when necessary to fund major county projects.

We have to be responsible stewards of taxpayer money and make sure we are prepared for unexpected expenses and future needs.

What do you believe are the most pressing needs facing Macon County?

I believe the most pressing issues our commissioners need to address are infrastructure, the county employee pay scale, and mental health services.

We need to maintain and improve our infrastructure so that Macon County can continue to grow responsibly. We also need to make sure our county employees are paid fairly so that we can attract and retain good people to serve our community.

Finally, mental health services are an increasingly important need. We need to work with our community partners and other levels of government to improve access to mental health care and make sure people receive the help they need.

I believe the people of Macon County deserve commissioners who will listen, work together, make responsible financial decisions, and put the interests of the entire county ahead of special interests. That is the kind of commissioner I intend to be.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views and my commitment to Macon County.

Kellie McMcConnell Burns
MC Commissioner Candidate
District 2

Please tell us a little bit about you and why you feel you are qualified to represent the county as a commissioner?

I am a lifelong resident of Macon County, with deep generational roots. I have been married to the love of my life, Chris Burns, for nearly 31 years. God has blessed us with three children, three beautiful granddaughters and a sweet grandson who will be making his debut in December. I serve as the Manager and Vice President of a local bank, where I have the distinct privilege of serving the people of Macon County and beyond.

I believe serving as a county commissioner requires strong leadership, proven service, and a genuine commitment to the prosperity, wellbeing, and longevity of our residents. With over 29 years of banking experience, I will bring the financial expertise and discipline necessary to responsibly manage and oversee our county budget. I will

• See Q&A page 9

Bryson's Food Store

Proudly Serving Highlands, North Carolina since 1977

The best meals start here!

Area's Best Selection of Fine Wines!

Wine Tasting
Thursdays 2-5p



Open daily
7:30a to 7:30p

103 Highlands Plaza, Highlands, NC • (828) 526-3775

PRICE IMPROVEMENT!

556 Shortoff Road,
Highlands, NC 28741

Cozy Country Cottage in Highlands 3BD | 1BA | STR | +/- 0.41 ACRES

\$450,000





Merritt Shaw
828-421-7593
Merritt@MountainLifeRE.com

Mountain Life
PROPERTIES



Andrea Gabbard

c: 828.200.6742

AndreaGabbard@gmail.com



Lori Mattice

850-544-0162

lori.mattice@sothebysrealty.com

Highlands

Sotheby's

INTERNATIONAL REALTY



142 Lucerne Drive, Highlands

MLS# 1002568 | \$2,985,000 | 3 BR/3.5BA 2 minutes from Main St. in Highlands and not in an HOA. Vaulted, beamed ceilings. 4 rock fireplaces Timeless luxury & elevated design. 2 Primary Suites + a bunk room for the grandchildren. Large back porch w/ fireplace. Designed for living & entertaining. Garage.

ANDREA GABBARD | (828) 200-6742



38 Rock Hill Road, Highlands

MLS#1003409 | \$1,450,000 | 3BR/3BA Gated community. On the Atlanta Side of Highlands. Mountain views. The perfect blend of comfort, style, and serenity. Warm, designer-inspired interiors. Gas stove/ pantry/additional refrigerator/generator. Private backyard with a fire pit area. 2-car garage + EV charger.

ANDREA GABBARD (828) 200-6742



396 Azalea Lane, Highlands

MLS# 1003907 | \$1,850,000 | 3BR/3BA In Wildcat Cliffs CC. This villa has the MILLION dollar view and has been updated from floor to ceiling! Open floor plan. Sunsets from your private deck and hear the stream below. Separate guest suite/ office with kitchenette and full bathroom. 2 car garage with additional space.

LORI MATTICE (850) 544-0162



494 Country Club Drive, Highlands NC

MLS# 1004017 | \$3,875,000 | 4BR/4.5 BA In Wildcat Cliffs CC. Refined elegance. Located beside the 16th green. Chef's kitchen w/ cozy breakfast room. LR with a stone fireplace. The screened-in back porch with fireplace. Double garage + golf cart garage. Conveniently located near the clubhouse -for dinner and drinks.

LORI MATTICE (850) 544-0162 ANDREA GABBARD (828)200-6742



Price Adjustment!

540 Chestnut Street, Highlands, NC
5 Bedrooms • 3.5 Baths • \$3,795,000

- In-town – Ideal Location
- Fabulous low maintenance gardens
- Screened deck with wood-burning fireplace
- Stunning primary suite and spacious closet
- Gourmet kitchen with cozy sitting area in front of the fireplace
- 2-car carport with workshop
- Lots of storage
- Move-in ready
- Furnished with exceptions



PAM NELLIS
 Realtor
 M: 828-787-1895
 O: 828-482-5022
 Pam@HighlandsCashiersCire.com

IVESTER JACKSON
BLACKSTREAM

CHRISTIE'S
 INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

All information provided is deemed reliable but is not guaranteed and should be independently verified.



• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft • Fireplaces

"Hospitality consists in a little fire, a little food, and immense quiet"
 – (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

The top 3 questions we're hearing lately are: #1, "How's the market?" #2, "How's the weather?" And #3, "What weekend will the leaves change?" These days, all three answers are a few clicks away. Artificial Intelligence has it all. But AI can be both "artificial" and lack "intelligence." Want the real story? Ask a professional Real Estate Broker. There are 327 of us to choose from. We know the market, we're experts in meteorology, and we have no clue about the leaves (but they're turning as you read this)!

Today however, we bring you a word about fireplaces. When we show property in Highlands and Cashiers the fireplace gets a ton of attention, right up there with the kitchen. A home with a great fireplace and a lousy kitchen will sell, but a home with great kitchen and a lousy fireplace (or no fireplace) can be problematic. My point is that a great fireplace is in many ways the heart of the home, and it needs to be considered whether you're selling or buying. So, what is it about gathering around the fire?

The act of gathering around the fire dates to prehistoric times. There are proven social, psychological, and health benefits to a great fireplace. According to a University of Alabama researcher Christopher Lynn, being by the fire lowers blood pressure an average of 5%. The researchers hypothesized that "when we sit by the fire, all of our senses become absorbed in the experience, and having a calming focus of attention helps reduce anxiety."

As to the social and familial benefits the study concluded "especially in colder climates, sitting around a fire to keep it going is a very important job. Collecting kindling, keeping the fire stoked, cooking; all these things require the cooperation of others.



Pat Gleeson
828.782.0472
Christie's
International Realty

ers. Groups who are more successful at keeping the fire going would have an advantage over groups that don't."

Mountain residences in Highlands and Cashiers personify the need to be close to the fire, a fact that needs to be strongly considered when buying (or selling) your property. According to NAR sources, homes with fireplaces are valued 7% to 13% higher than those without.

Personally, there's something about beautiful andirons and the scent-sight-sound of real wood. I have nothing against gas log sets, many of which have an extremely authentic in look, feel, and offer no muss no fuss no mess. But I must admit there's something Americana about heading out to the woodpile, donning leather splitting the kindling, and putting my life at risk with a long-handled axe in my hand.

Hopefully, I've got you thinking about your fireplace, outdoor fire pit, patio, deck or remodeling the family room (my apologies if your budget just increased). You have amazing resources right here in Highlands and Cashiers. Google "Isokern Fireplace," a fabulous wood-burning option for adding a fireplace that's engineered to draw well and not stink up the room with "smolder, soot & ashes." The major propane suppliers in town all have the current gas log sets for you to see in action.

In closing, we hope you'll sit by the fire this very night, pour yourself a glass of something, count your blessings, and raise a toast to Highlands, North Carolina!

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

...MAYOR continued from page 2

will be needed. Someone at Town Hall recently complained about drones flying over their property. The cold fact is the town does not control airspace, nor do property owners; the FAA does. With that in mind, expect more drones and air passenger vehicles to fill the sky in the coming years.

In conclusion, the long-range transportation plans will of course include new roads

and bridges, rail lines, sidewalks, etc., but it will also include in a big way the emerging technologies I have described and some that we do not even know about now. As Bob Dylan once sang, the times they are a-changing. Changing faster than we old boomers who were once with it and on the cutting edge can imagine and dare, I say, accept.

159 Stoney Creek Circle, Highlands, NC



Primary on main

3 Bed 2.5 Bath
\$1,369,000 • MLS#1003773
Outside Town Limits • STR Possible

Brian Seifried
770.309.1143 • 404.352.2010

DORSEY ALSTON
 REALTORS®



FEATURED COMMUNITY

CHESTNUT HILL

HIGHLANDS, NC



Chestnut Hill

OF HIGHLANDS



MORE TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS

Housekeeping Available Lock and Leave Convenience No Lawn Maintenance No Gutter Cleaning	No Exterior Painting No Roof Replacement or Repairs Social & Wellness Opportunities Catering Available
--	--

CONDOS AVAILABLE

1 Bedroom - \$350,000
2 Bedrooms- \$465,000
3 Bedrooms- \$750,000

Enjoy effortless mountain living! Fully updated condos with modern finishes throughout. Relax on your private patio or deck, take advantage of the community & clubhouse amenities, including a fitness room & game space. Garages available!

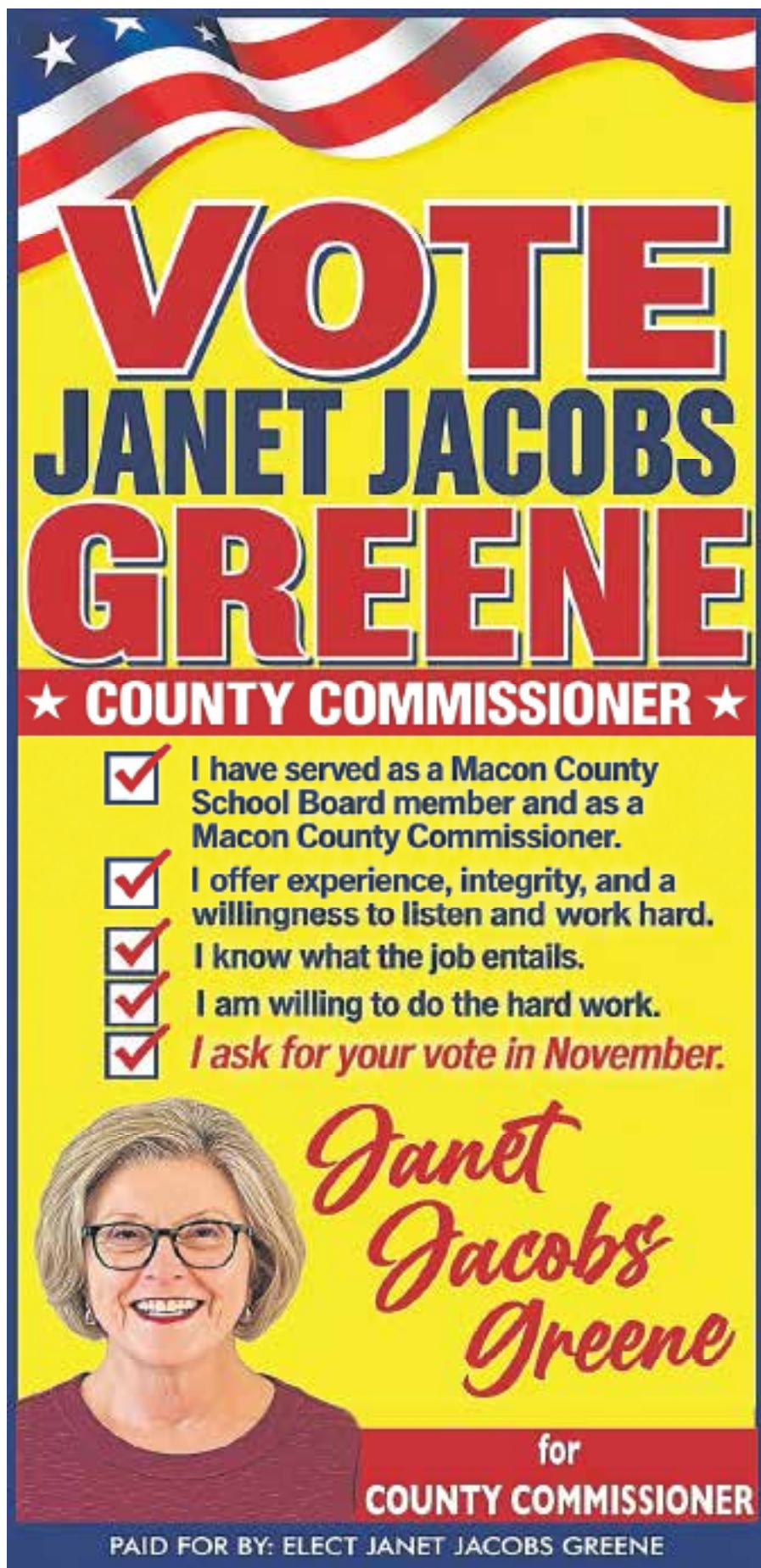
**BERKSHIRE
HATHAWAY**
HOMESERVICES

MEADOWS MOUNTAIN
REALTY

© 2026 BHH Affiliates, LLC. An independently owned and operated franchisee of BHH Affiliates, LLC. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices and the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices symbol are registered service marks of Columbia Insurance Company, a Berkshire Hathaway affiliate. Equal Housing Opportunity.

For More Information
Contact Us at 828-526-1717





VOTE
JANET JACOBS GREENE
★ **COUNTY COMMISSIONER** ★

- ✓ I have served as a Macon County School Board member and as a Macon County Commissioner.
- ✓ I offer experience, integrity, and a willingness to listen and work hard.
- ✓ I know what the job entails.
- ✓ I am willing to do the hard work.
- ✓ I ask for your vote in November.

Janet Jacobs Greene
for
COUNTY COMMISSIONER
PAID FOR BY: ELECT JANET JACOBS GREENE

• HERE'S THE THING •

Public Service Announcement

On Tuesday, November 3rd, we will either retain or reject the entire 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives along with a third of the 100-member U.S. Senate. Also, early voting begins on October 15th and ends on October 31st. And you can also vote by mail in North Carolina. When all votes are cast and counted, we will find ourselves either where we are now, someplace entirely different, or split in half as regards control of the U.S. Congress. This is not a presidential election year, which means either things won't change, they'll change a little bit, or for the next two years nothing will really happen.

I love my country, but I make no secret about my feelings when it comes to the American political system. It's broken, has been for a long time, and shows no signs of any time soon becoming something about which we can all be proud.

The two major political parties have repeatedly demonstrated no interest in governing, other than for their own benefit. I don't mean the interests of their constituents, I mean literally in the interest of the party's leadership and a small cadre of major financial supporters. Campaigns have become less about important issues and more about demonizing the opposition.

According to Gallup, fully 45% of American voters identify as non-partisan or independent. Republicans and Democrats each barely hang on to about 27%. You read those numbers correctly. Nealy half of all American voters want nothing to do with either major political party. Why should we? What do the parties actually do for the American people? That's not a rhetorical question. If we independent, unaffiliated, non-partisan voters ever manage to galvanize into a cohesive movement, candidates might improve and elections might get interesting again.

But way more than that is needed to fix the system.

As broken as the party aspect of the system currently is, the way we finance elections is, if possible, even worse. Limits exist on how much people – meaning individual human beings – can contribute to a candidate's campaign. No such limits exist on how much other entities, such as businesses, partisan political action committees, trade



Bud Katz

and other types of organizations. These heartless, soulless entities can dump as much cash as exists in the universe into getting hand-picked people into office so those folks can do the bidding of these nonhuman entities. Voters? Citizens? Nah. They can fend for themselves. Their only concern is, what can we do for big Pharma, big energy, big tech, and the like.

This awful situation – how we finance elections in America – exists thanks to a terrible U.S. Supreme Court decision made in 2010 known as Citizens United versus the Federal Elections Commission. The 5-4 decision maintained that groups of people, while unable to actually cast ballots could, in fact, significantly, financially impact campaigns. The SCOTUS in this case, overrode the U.S. Constitution which makes no provision for campaign financing beyond INDIVIDUAL contributions. Don't get me started on this.

The system could also benefit from age and term limits, but those matters require elected officials voting against their own interests. I honestly don't see that happening any time soon.

Here's the thing. Like it or not, it falls on voters to fix things, and that won't happen unless and until ALL of us actually register and vote. Despite the rhetoric, elections in America are NOT rigged. Don't believe any suggestion that massive numbers of non-citizens are voting. They're not.

Only approximately two-thirds of those actually eligible to vote, meaning citizens who, where necessary, register to vote and then actually cast ballots. That means 32%, or a whole lot of others who could participate in elections choose not to. Instead, they leave it to others and then complain about the outcomes.

Although frequently attributed to Thomas Jefferson, it was actually an 18th century French philosopher named Joseph de Maistre who once said, accurately, "We get the government we deserve." Well, it's time to be honest and demand better of ourselves.

November 3rd. Do your part. Get out and vote.

• Bruce F. "Bud" Katz facilitates the Highlands Writers Group you can contact Bud, regarding this column or for information about the Highlands Writers Group, at brucefkatzauthor@gmail.com

...Q&A continued from page 4

proactively work to eliminate waste, identify inefficiencies, and ensure that our taxpayer dollars are used wisely and transparently.

As commissioner, I want to foster an environment that brings new, creative solutions that will move our county forward and lay a solid foundation for this generation and generations to come.

What is your stance on the redistricting question — leave as is, adopt the Planning Board's 3-2 scenario with partial at-large voting or form 5 districts with voters in each district voting for their candidate?

Naturally, I want to promote fairness, balance, and equal representation across our county. The question becomes, "How can we implement change without marginalizing one or more of our districts?" I will say that I find it strange that we are one of the only counties in North Carolina with a system like ours. As it currently stands, we allow one district to hold three of the five seats, which gives them the possibility of holding the majority of the vote. District 2 also gets to put one to two new candidates up for election every two years, whereas the other two districts have to wait every four years. One can certainly see where this could be deemed unfair. I believe we need to make sure that we are doing what is best for ALL the people of Macon County. With that being said, we need to hold a town hall meeting or have an electronic dropbox where residents can have their voices heard. Once all the ideas are compiled, we need to form a committee who will review these proposals and study the voting processes of other counties throughout our state to see what process would work best. Naturally, we need to consult with our Board of Elections regarding how a change like this might impact them. At the end of the day, our focus has to be on choosing the system that best serves and represents all the people of Macon County.

Are you for or against the 1/4 penny sales tax increase and why?

I am definitely for it, but I do not believe in taxation without representation, so I am glad it will be on the ballot for taxpayers to decide. I, personally, believe that a consumption tax is the only fair tax because everyone pays into the system— not just property owners. With almost 22% of our revenue coming from sales tax, we are missing out on a huge opportunity to capitalize on substantial revenue growth. We are the only county in our area that is not taking advantage of it and that is very disheartening to me. The revenue generated from this increase will help limit property tax increases. I think people hear the word "tax" and automatically take a stance against

it. The truth is, if you spent \$10,000 per year in retail sales it would cost you just \$25 more per year in taxes. Keep in mind, your taxes on groceries, medicine, gas, and medical supplies would not see this increase. Taking some of the burden off our property owners and allowing tourists, visitors from neighboring towns, and non-land owners to pay into the system is a responsible way for us to alleviate some of the pressure placed on property owners. My hope is that consumption taxes will eventually take the place of mandatory property taxes on primary residences. This is why I have been lobbying for years to try and get our senators and state representatives to expand and modify the homestead exemption to include all primary residences. I would also like to see them completely eliminate taxation on primary residences for our veterans, retirees, and disabled residents who fall under a certain income threshold.

About \$2 million in school funding was denied for FY '26-'27 budget. Consequently, the school system has had to cut programs and more. Case in point, the Highlands Pre-school, which was staffed and stocked and ready to go minus \$117,000 was nixed, not to mention the lack of funding for years for the HS soccer field which has recently been unplayable. How would you like to see the county fund the MC School System to meet the students', teachers' and schools' needs?

Investing in our children is the greatest legacy we can possibly leave behind. They are not only the most innocent faction of our population, they are our future. The little boy climbing up on that school bus may be your doctor someday. The little girl who is answering that difficult math problem may grow up to be your financial planner, and that precocious little boy in the back of the class may be the EMS worker that shows up to save your life one day. Investing in our children should be a top priority for us all. Our viability and sustainability depend on it. With that being said, the situation that we are dealing with here is unprecedented. Macon County is dead last in the state with a 2% local teacher supplement rate...in a state that is 46th in the country for average teacher pay. I want you to seriously stop and think about that for a minute. Is that something we should be proud of? The saddest part is how our state representatives and lawmakers sold us on an "education" lottery as a way to fund our schools, yet, there seems to be an incredible shortfall year after year. We need to start asking questions and holding people accountable. We, also, have to realize the role that we play in all of this and figure out a way to make things happen for our teachers and schools. A lot of people don't realize that when we started the 2024-2025 school year,

• See Q&A page 16

TOWN HALL

with Caleb Brown

We asked Karl Gillespie to debate.

NO RESPONSE

Voters in NC House District 120 deserve to hear directly from the candidates:

- » Public education and private school vouchers
- » Healthcare access and affordability
- » Rising cost of living
- » Jobs and the local economy



Caleb Brown is ready to answer ANY question

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12 | 6 – 8PM

Macon County Public Library
149 Siler Farm Rd
Franklin, NC 28734

★
CALEB BROWN
NC HOUSE 120

PAID FOR BY CALEB BROWN FOR NC HOUSE 120

• HIGHLANDS DINING •

HIGHLANDS BURRITO

Tuck into Tasty Mexican Favorites
& the Best Margaritas in Highlands

Host your next party at Highlands Burrito
for birthdays, game days & more!

CALL 828-526-9313 TO BOOK



DINE IN OR TAKE IT TO GO
226 South 4th Street, Highlands, NC



Open Mon.-Sat. 11a to 8p • Sun. 11a to 7p
Closed Tuesdays
828.526.3554
595 Franklin Rd. Highlands, NC

The Secret Garden



Sandwich shop and
gourmet food market

Open Year-Round

Mon.-Fri.. 11:30a to 4p

Sat., noon-4

Call (828) 305-7509 to place a pick-up order.

Catering and Custom Charcuterie

Courtyard and Indoor seating!



208 N. 5th St. • Village Square • Next to Pine St. Park

The Ruffed Grouse Tavern at Highlander Mountain House

Open for

LUNCH

Wednesday-Saturday

11:30-3p

Open for

DINNER

Wednesday-Saturday

5:30-9p

Open for

SUNDAY BRUNCH

with Blue Grass music

10a-3p



290 Main Street • Highlands • 828-526-2590
highlandermountainhouse.com

A HIGHLANDER MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL

OUTPOST INN



Now serving wine,
beer & coffee!
Open to the public!



Coffee Bar 8a to 4p daily
Wine/Beer Bar:
Thurs-Sat 5-10p

790 North 4th Street, Highlands | info@outpostinnhighlands.com | 828-482-7736

Open for our 37th Season

EST. 1990

LAKESIDE RESTAURANT

Open Tuesday - Saturday

Dinner Starts @ 5:30 PM

Serving Easter Brunch 11 AM - 2 PM

Outdoor Dining / Dine-In Art Gallery / lakesiderestaurant.info



531 Smallwood Ave. | 828-526-9419 | Highlands



828-526-4035

WILD THYME GOURMET RESTAURANT

Serving Lunch and Dinner Year-Round
Gourmet Foods & Full Service Bar
Town Square at 343-D Main St. • Highlands

Open 7 Days

Lunch: 11a-3:30p

Dinner:

5:30p - closed



Now
offering
Italian Organic
Gourmet Coffees!



415 4th Street • 828-500-1827
(next to Howard Hanna RE office)



**Shaved Ice
and**

- Espresso
- Cappuccino
- Americana
- Hot Chocolate

Open Daily 9a to 5p – CLOSED WED. & SUN.

HIGHLANDS — BISTRO —

"Formerly DonLeon's"

Elevated Comfort Food | International Menu | Family Owned



AVAILABLE FOR PRIVATE PARTIES AND CATERING
Open Tuesday-Saturday

BREAKFAST 7 AM-10 AM | LUNCH 11 AM-3 PM

Open Thursday-Saturday DINNER 5PM-8 PM

828.482.1513 | 462 Dillard Rd, Highlands, NC 28741

• LETTERS •

VOTE! And make sure your candidates support democracy, transparency and accountability

Dear Editor,

The words of Benjamin Franklin almost sound like an alarm as we celebrate 250 years since the Declaration of Independence. Franklin was asked after the constitutional convention in 1787, what do we have a republic or a monarchy? Franklin's reply was simple, "A republic if you can keep it." Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson both went on to write of the importance of citizen participation in order to keep the Republic strong.

I submit there are three elements for keeping a strong democratic republic, 1. Participation ; 2. Transparency; and 3. Accountability. If any one of these elements are not maintained and implemented with vigilance, the few will rule over the many and our Republic will be lost. Thankfully, presidential election turnout in 2020 and 2024 was the

highest in decades and midterm elections have also been higher. However, 66% for presidential elections and 50% for midterm elections is not necessarily an impressive turnout for such a great privilege. Voting is the primary method used by most citizens to communicate with their elected representatives and the participation rate should be higher.

Franklin and Jefferson also encouraged the electorate to stay informed and educate themselves on the issues in order to keep our Republic strong. I would argue this can only be done when we require transparency from our government. There are too many examples from Republicans and Democrats attempting to avoid full transparency. Our elected representatives need to represent the people and not their party to ensure true transparency. A free press is also critical to educating and providing transparency to the citizenry, and we must do everything in our power to keep it free and open to all. Allowing one company or individual

to control too much of the press should not be tolerated.

I firmly believe the most critical element to preserving our democracy is accountability at all levels of government and the private sector. The Inspector General's Office is the oversight agency of the federal government and should be well funded and employ the best and the brightest. The Constitution gives elected officials much leeway in how they execute their responsibilities, but this leeway should not be without significant oversight. Bottom line, we all behave better when we know we are being watched.

As we prepare to vote in the midterm elections this fall, I would encourage all voters to participate, and make sure their candidates support democracy through transparency and accountability.

Jerry Moore
Dillard, GA

• DINING •



DUSTY'S
"YOUR GO TO PLACE FOR"
STEAK* BURGER* CHICKEN* PORK
HOT DOGS* RIBS* SAUSAGE
TAKE AND BAKE SIDES AND DINNERS
FRESH SIDES, SANDWICHES & SALADS
BAKED GOODS* WINE* CHEESE
GOURMET FOOD & MORE!!

TUES-FRI 9:30-5:30, SAT 9:30-5
493 DILLARD RD 828-526-2762

Ensuring equity is not government's business

Dear Editor,

In his call for Highlands to "commit to equity," Mayor Pat's column in the Sept. 24 edition entitled "Highlands has become a diverse community," highlights an important distinction — the difference between equal opportunity and equity.

Equal opportunity is not equity or equal outcome. In America, a person's interests, initiative, talents, abilities and choices etc. should help determine their outcomes — not government decree.

Regarding Mayor Pat's "fence" illustration, government leaders could reasonably choose to spend tax dollars on a platform, steps or wheelchair access so everyone

has an equal opportunity to see the ballgame.

But that is where government's financial responsibility should end.

What each person does with that tax-funded opportunity is their individual choice. Government should not guarantee or mandate that everyone has the same view, experience or result.

When government moves from providing equal opportunity to determining or publicly funding equity/ equal outcomes, it assumes a far greater power than our founders ordained.

Chip Wisdom
Highlands and Gulf Shores, AL

The \$1.50 question: Who gets to belong in Highlands?

Dear Editor,

Highlands increasingly depends on people who cannot afford to live here.

Recently I attended a town meeting at our Community Center.

Every morning, workers drive up the mountain from Franklin, Otto, Clayton and elsewhere. Every evening, they drive back down. That commute is not free. It costs gasoline, tires, repairs, insurance and, perhaps most importantly, hours of a person's life.

And the squeeze is getting worse. Nationally, consumer prices were 3.4% higher in August than a year earlier; food was up 2.7%, gasoline 27.4%, and vehicle maintenance and repair 5.2%. Bureau of Labor Statistics Macon County's own housing study found that 88% of surveyed employers were already being adversely affected by housing problems, especially through difficulty attracting and retaining employees and added business costs. Macon GIS

Eventually this becomes Highlands' problem, not merely the worker's. More vacancies. More turnover. More training. More exhausted employees. Reduced hours. Higher operating costs. Fewer people raising families here. A town can become wealthier while becoming less of a community.

So perhaps we should first define community.

A community is not just its property owners. Nor just its year-round residents, workers, businesses, retirees, second-home owners or visitors. It is all of them. But a healthy community should offer the people whose lives and labor sustain it a reasonable opportunity not merely to work here, but to live here, participate here, build security here and perhaps someday own something here.

That may be less expensive than we think.

I recently asked a Highlands restaurant worker what someone needs to earn to live here. The answer was about \$50,000. I suggested \$60,000 might provide not merely survival, but some chance to save and eventually own a home.

At that restaurant, three lower-paid employees earn roughly \$35,000. Raising each to \$60,000 requires another \$75,000 annually.

Now the surprising part.

If a restaurant serves 200 meals a day for 300 days, it sells about 60,000 meals annually.

\$75,000 divided by 60,000 meals is \$1.25 per meal.

Allow something additional for employer payroll costs and call it roughly \$1.50.

...on the Verandah
Restaurant
on Lake Sequoyah

43 Years of Fine Dining

OPEN

7
Nights a week
5:30-9p

828-526-2338

US 64w • Highlands

www.ontheverandah.com



• HIGHLANDS ATHLETICS RECAP •

Cross Country sets personal bests, Soccer dominates, and Volleyball sweep

It was another action-packed slate for Highlands athletics, featured by stand-out individual runner performances, a multi-goal soccer blowout on the road, a home swim meet, and a dominant home performance on the volleyball court.

Cross Country delivers PRs and Top-10 finishes at Tri-State Conference Meet

The Middle School Cross Country team traveled to Tallulah Falls to take on rival conference competition at the Tri-State Conference Meet. Highlands turned in a remarkable collective performance, with

every single Highlander runner clocking a personal best time on the course.

The boys' side was spearheaded by a pair of top-10 finishes: Asa Garner stormed across the line in 2nd place overall with an impressive time of 10:46, David Rogers claimed 7th place overall, stopping the clock at 12:19, Gauge Hennequin placed 14th with a time of 13:05, Hansel Favela-Cortez finished 17th at 13:42.

On the girls' side, Valentina Gooch led the way with a strong 15th place finish (15:14), while Willa Mae James battled hard to capture 24th place (18:17).

Middle School Soccer explosive in 9-0 road victory at Cherokee

The Middle School boys soccer team hit the road to take on Cherokee and delivered a masterclass performance from the opening whistle to the final horn, rolling to a commanding 9-0 victory over the Braves.

Highlands' attack was unselfish and balanced, with seven different players finding the back of the net: Axel Mendoza (2 goals), Tripp Holbrooks (2 goals), Porter Bowers (1 goal), Bryan Munoz (1 goal), Asa Garner (1 goal), David Rogers (1 goal), Josh Tift (1 goal)

Middle School Swim hosts lone home meet

In the pool, the Middle School swim program hosted its only home meet of the season, showcasing their hard work and progress in front of an enthusiastic home crowd. Highlands finished 6th out of 7.

Leading the scoring for Highlands was Anna Nicole Schelgachova who finished 3rd with a PR (personal record) in the 100 yard IM (Individual Medley) and 5th in the 50 backstroke scoring 30 pts. Valerie Nadzorau started the meet by singing the national anthem, then scored 25 points. She finished 6th in the 100 Freestyle and 7th in the 50 butterfly. She had PRs in both. Jr. Olympian Bella Batista finished 3rd in the 50 breast stroke.

The girls next meet will be the Far West NC Middle School Championships at the Buncombe County Schools Aquatic Center on Thursday, October 8.

Varsity Volleyball Ssleps Nantahala in commanding fashion



Brett Lamb
Athletic Director

The High School Varsity Volleyball team put on a clinic at home, controlling every facet of the match against Nantahala to secure a decisive 3-0 victory. The Lady Highlanders came out with high energy and never let up, taking the sets in dominant fashion: 25-10, 25-8, and 25-7.

Volleyball: Youth Night & Pink Out Match

The High School Volleyball team recently took the court against #12 (2A) ranked Murphy. The special evening served a double purpose: recognizing the Highlands Youth Volleyball teams and hosting the school's annual Pink Out Game to raise awareness for breast cancer.

Despite a spirited crowd and a high-energy atmosphere, the strong Murphy squad proved too much to handle, taking the match 3-0 with set scores of 17-25, 12-25, and 16-25.

The Lady Highlanders will look to bounce back at home this Thursday, October 8, as they host Blue Ridge for Senior Night. Game time is set for 6 PM — come out to the gym and help us honor our three graduating seniors: Jordyn Borino, Taylor Hays, and Charlotte Westendorf

Soccer: Ranked #2 in 1A after hard-fought week

The High School Boys' Soccer team continues to turn heads, climbing all the way to the #2 spot in the state 1A rankings.

Earlier in the week, the boys traveled for a tough matchup against a scrappy Cherokee team. In a defensive battle, the Highlanders secured a 1-0 victory thanks to a single, decisive goal from Blaine Dendy, who converted on a key corner kick.

Returning home to face #12 Blue Ridge in a high-stakes conference showdown, the team found themselves in an absolute battle. After 80 minutes of regulation, the teams remained gridlocked at 2-2. Despite two grueling 10-minute overtime periods and several close scoring opportunities for both sides, neither squad could break through, leaving the match in a thrilling 2-2 tie.

SALE! 35%-55% OFF

HAND CLEANING • RESTORATION • APPRAISALS

OTHER SHOWROOMS: TAMPA • NAPLES • SARASOTA ORLANDO

Mon-Sat 9:30AM-6PM Sun 12NOON-5PM

We Purchase Antique Rugs

(828) 526-5759

Main Street • Oak Square
Highlands, NC 28741
www.shirazruggalleries.com

Cash or Checks Accepted

Open for the last 41 years, Shiraz has been offering wholesale prices to the public on its entire inventory of genuinely hand-woven oriental rugs. Thousands of antique and contemporary pieces from around the world.

30% off Cleaning & Repairs

TAILGATE WITH THE CANDIDATES!

Good food. College Football. No speeches - Promise!

Join us for a relaxed community tailgate! Wear your favorite team colors!

SATURDAY, OCT. 10 • 4:30-8PM

Carpenter Community Center
1288 Georgia Rd, Franklin, NC 28734

Free food & refreshments

Big screen football & fun

Meet your neighbors

Talk with the candidates and other community members

Bring your friends, bring your appetite, and bring your questions!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

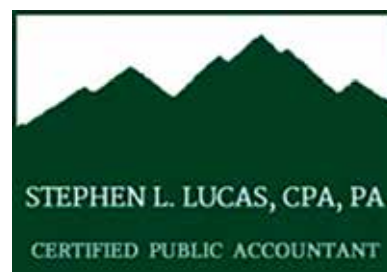
CALEB BROWN

FOR NC HOUSE DISTRICT 120

PAID FOR BY CALEB BROWN FOR NC HOUSE 120

The Town of Highlands Scholarship Golf Tournament Fundraising Committee
would like to thank our partners and supporters who made the
2026 Tournament a successful event!

Thank you, Cullasaja Club of Highlands and ...



FIRST BANK

Leaf-looking begins in Highlands!



470 Dillard Road
Highlands • 828-716-9651



OPEN:
Tues. - Fri.: 11a to 3p
Saturday: 11a to 1p

Highlands Mercantile on Main OBAGI Open House

- Learn about the benefits of Obagi Medical Skincare.
- Raffles & Refreshments



Book
Signing
Sat.,
Oct 17!



Thurs.,
Oct. 8, 10a - 3p

20% all Obagi Products

Books • Chocolates • Coffee • Guy Gifts • Home • Skincare
322 Main Street, Highlands • 828-482-0818

7 DIAMONDS



338 Main St.
526-4777

**Fine American Handcrafts including
Pottery, Jewelry, Fun Gifts and More!**



**PEAK
EXPERIENCE**

2820 Dillard Road
Highlands, NC

828-526-0229

BIG FALL SALE

(Shoes & Clothing)



S. 4th Street
526-4473



Stylish hats
at affordable prices!
Visit The Highlands Hatter
To get your Hattitude
adjusted!



Open 10am Daily
828-482-1920
221 N. 4th St.
(Across from Town Hall)

It's Leaf-looker time in Highlands!

PLANET
by Lauren G

pj harlow
SURROUND YOURSELF IN SOFTNESS
COSABELLA

JV
JULIE VOS

326 Main St.
828-482-4375



JOHNNYWAS

Lulu Bleu

Check out our new store in Cashiers!
Lulu & You - 142 HWY 107

DRIFTWOOD

nanky panky

THML
NEW SEASON SS'24 shop new arrivals

THE cat's PAJAMAS

Order online at www.facebook.com/LuluBleuNC



Gourmet Kitchenware

- Cookware
- Bakeware
- Cutlery
- Gadgets
- Tabletop
- Stemware
- Small Appliances
- Greeting Cards

(828) 526-5226
450 Main St.
Highlands

Highlands' greatest sweater collection!



Wits End

A Highlands tradition since 1940
Our 86th season on Main Street
Mon.-Sat. 10a-5p • Sunday 12-5p
828-526-3160

NATURAL SELECTION



- Tinctures and oils
- Hemp products
- Jewelry/accessories
- Felt decor
- Dreamcatchers
- Local art
- Candles

(828)421-3546
361 Main St • Highlands
(Next to Annawear)

New
FALL Arrivals

ANNAWEAR

Free People • THML •
Mother Denim • Michael
Stars • Vintage Havana

Jeans By:

Joel • AG • Hudson • Mother



Shoes By:

- Gola Sneakers
- Diba
- Blowfish
- Matisse
- and MUCH, MUCH MORE!

355 Main Street
(in The Galax Theatre)
526-4660



JULIE VOS

THML
NEW SEASON SS'24 shop new arrivals

THE cat's PAJAMAS

dylan
WOMENS

dizzy lizzie
tizzie



Modern MTN Life
Books • Gifts • Her • Home

nanky panky

entro

erin gray

Fate

Lulu & You

142 Hwy 107 Cashiers, NC • 828-743-8030
Open Year Round Mon-Sat 10-5

Rotary

Club of Highlands
Chartered 1945



Rotary Club Report from Josh Bryson, President, Rotary Club of Highlands



As we enter October, our club joins Rotary International in two significant observances. On October 21, we commemorate World Polio Day and reaffirm Rotary's commitment to a polio-free world. Rotary's tireless efforts have brought us closer than ever to eradicating this devastating disease, but our work is not done. We will continue to support this vital cause until

polio is history.

We also celebrate World Interact Week this month, recognizing the energy and leadership of Interact clubs. We are especially proud to sponsor the Interact Club at Highlands School, where remarkable young people, aged 12 to 18, are already making a difference in their communities and inspiring us all with their spirit of service.

Thank you for your dedication and passion as we work together to create lasting change.

In service,
Josh
JOSH BRYSON,
PRESIDENT

UPCOMING EVENTS



Coming up in October, the Rotary Club of Highlands will feature luncheon programs including:

- In October the Rotary Club of Highlands will feature weekly luncheon programs including:
- October 8, Professor Chris Cooper from Western Carolina University will discuss the November 3rd mid-term election for local governments as well as the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.
- October 13, Stacy Carter, Founder of Sage Hope update club member regarding services and assistance for those who receive a late-stage cancer diagnosis.
- October 20, Kirsten Gentry provides information about services from and eligibility for the Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic.
- The October 27th luncheon gathering will feature a Club Assembly chaired by Rotary Club of Highlands President Josh Bryson discussing, among other club activities, the upcoming Halloween activities.
- Our Rotary Club of Highlands-sponsored Bingo Night on October 9th will take place at 6:00 pm at the Highlands Community Building for the benefit of Wreaths Across America honoring deceased American Veterans.
- For additional information on the Rotary Club of Highlands, please visit www.highlandsrotary.org.

...Q&A continued from page 9

Macon County lost the 'low wealth supplement' from the state which caused us to lose over \$1.08 million. This change was supposedly due to the fact that our property evaluations increased significantly in 2023, causing us to fall outside of the formula's guidelines. Even though our values went up, we decided to stay revenue neutral which means the tax rate was lowered to keep residents from feeling the impact. However, the state supposedly looks at the potential for wealth in their formula and that ultimately caused us to lose the \$1.08 million. At this point, we need to be aggressively looking for grants, finding ways to eliminating waste and proactively educating people on the quarter-cent sales tax.

Given financial needs of the county and its municipalities, are you for or against limiting property tax increases by local governments and why?

This is a tough one. I am for decreasing and eventually eliminating property taxes on primary residences. I do not believe the government should have a right to your home, and as long as they can tax your home, they can take your home. Unfortunately, we are not at a place to make that happen anytime soon, but I do believe it can happen if we put pressure on the state to expand and reform our current homestead exemption. In saying that, I do not want the state telling a county what is best for them. I believe these matters should be handled on a local level. The county should decide what is best for its people. The state has no way of knowing the exact condition and needs of any specific county and that is why we elect commissioners. We need to limit the power the state has over us, not increase it.

Macon County needs decent jobs to attract and keep young families here. What would you do to improve the county's economic development department?

For starters, we have to be realistic when it comes to job creation. Unfortunately, we don't have the infrastructure or housing to attract most industries so we need to start thinking outside the box. I believe we need to capitalize on a market that we haven't quite tapped into, yet, which is REMOTE JOBS. We need to start being proactive in finding ways to get those jobs here, to Macon County. It is important that we have a strong economic development department that will cultivate an environment capable of attracting these remote jobs to our area. We need to partner with NC Works, SCC and FHS to find ways to adequately train and prepare our students and residents for this new market. We need to seek out opportunities and use all means necessary to facilitate this. Let's face it, remote jobs are the future. They give workers more job opportunities, the potential for higher pay

and a flexibility that most onsite jobs don't provide. I believe remote jobs will play a significant role in the future of job creation and we don't need to be the "last ones to the table."

What are your plans to address some of the space needs in the county -- new justice center, board of elections, senior center?

All of those things need to be a priority, along with taking care of our schools. When it comes to our infrastructure I believe in being proactive instead of reactive. If our budget allows, I would like to see the county contract with an outside agency to periodically inspect all of our buildings. I believe we can do a better job at maximizing the longevity of our infrastructure if we find and repair the small issues before they become big issues. As for our current buildings that are beyond repair, we need to use the extra money in our fund balance and seek out grants to build new, viable facilities.

The Government Finance Officers recommend no less than two months (16.7%) of regular operating revenues or expenditures in the undesignated Fund Balance. Macon County holds on to much more than that. Do you think that policy should change especially since the county doesn't want to raise taxes to pay for services, capital expenditures or school system needs?

As a banker, I do not agree with that stance. I believe 25% is a more responsible percentage to hold back. With that being said, I do not agree with holding anything over that amount per se, because you are holding onto taxpayer's money with no direct intentions.

Commissioners are responsible for the oversight of a, now, \$69mm budget and to me that requires financial discipline, careful planning, and a commitment to accountability. We need to start prioritizing our spending based on need. We need to have a clear, transparent path forward. We need to focus on being proactive instead of always being reactive. I think one way of doing that is by working hand-in-hand with our county department heads and employees to find ways to eliminate waste and identify inefficiencies. I am even a proponent of incentivizing them for doing so if that is something we can legally do. This is one of the best ways to ensure that our taxpayer dollars are being used wisely. I also believe we need to be transparent by having a 10-year plan that lays out necessary capital improvements and outlines a vision for our future. We need to know where we want to be in 10 years and forge a path on how we plan to get there. In

...LETTERS continued from page 11

A \$50 plate becomes \$51.50.

For that difference, three people might reclaim hundreds of commuting hours, reduce transportation expenses, remain with their employer longer, establish roots, save money and perhaps eventually become Highlands homeowners.

The employer is likely to gain loyalty, experience, reliability, reduced turnover and lower recruiting and training costs, all of which is likely to make for a happier workforce serving with a smile, and perhaps even boosting that plate sale even higher!

So I would ask every major Highlands employer to run the numbers.

Not simply: "What would higher wages cost us?"

But:

"What is it costing us that the people we depend upon cannot afford to belong here?"

Sometimes a very large problem may begin with a surprisingly small number:

\$1.50.

David Baumgarten
Highlands

Constitutional Amendments on the Ballot

Dear Editor,

I wanted to share my thoughts about the confusing ballot measures so that people know what they are voting for. Remember: once something is in the constitution, it is extremely difficult to change.

The Tax Rate Cap sounds good, reducing the maximum income tax from 7% to 3.5%. The thinking is it would encour-

age people and businesses to move to NC. In reality, the scheduled tax cuts plus the new tax cap are projected to eventually put N.C. over a fiscal cliff. Macon County is already operating at a deficit. Do we really want more people putting more strain on our already underfunded roads, schools, health and human services at a time when the federal government has cut funding and shifted the burden to local governments.

A big part of Macon County's shortfall is due to tax dollars funneled to pri-

• See LETTERS page 18

Turning North Carolina blue



ROY COOPER

United States
Senate



JAMIE AGER

House of
Representatives



ANITA EARLS

NC Supreme
Court



TOM DOWNING

NC Senate
District 50



CALEB BROWN

NC House
District 150



For too many Americans, the middle class feels like a distant dream. Please vote the Democratic ticket up and down the ballot. These Democratic candidates will build an economy that works for more than just the wealthiest among us.

Judges

John Armstrong
Tobias S. Hampson
Christina Walczyk
Justine Greene
William Jones

County Commission

Russ Lunn
Janet Greene
Terry Bell

School Board

Bob Perkins
Stephanie Laseter

Paid for by Macon County Democratic Executive Committee. Not authorized by any candidate.

the 15th Annual Fall Pottery Show

Discover one-of-a-kind pottery handcrafted by Bascom Studio Members. From functional wares to sculptural pieces, works were created and fired on-site. Proceeds support the artists and The Bascom's Creative Community Initiative, bringing accessible arts experiences to our region.

OCT Friday & Saturday
9-10 10 am - 4 pm

VISIT
Highlands



Funding is due in part to
a Tourism Grant
with Visit Highlands

THE BASCOM
A CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

323 Franklin Road Highlands, NC
828.526.4949 | TheBascom.org

...LETTERS continued from page 17

vate schools by way of the new school voucher program. Originally designed to help poorer families, now anyone regardless of income can get them. Just this year, \$840,000 was taken from Macon County public schools to fund private, largely unregulated, (mostly religious) schools. This cost the state nearly \$600,000,000 last year alone (carolinaforward.org).

The proposal to cap property taxes would reduce the flexibility of local governments to raise money for needed projects, emergencies, etc. Do we want the state dictating what our local governments can do to fund local services? Especially now when the state and federal government are sending less money our way?

Personally, I'd like to see the property taxes of long-term year-round residents grandfathered in, and increase the taxes on new construction because that is what creates most of the need for more infrastructure, not us locals.

The third amendment would create a constitutional standard for strict voter ID.

This is unnecessary because voter ID is already the law. Additionally, it would create an impediment for overseas and military voters who don't have easy access to the required documentation.

I do support the additional ¼ cent sales tax. It's hardly noticeable and will not apply to unprepared food, gas or prescription drugs. 40% of it would come from visitors. The \$2.3 million it is projected to bring to Macon County the first year is the equivalent of a 2-cent raise in property tax.

The alcohol referendum seems fair to me. Currently any form of alcohol can only be purchased within the town limits of Highlands and Franklin. My understanding is the law would allow stores and gas stations to sell beer and wine throughout the county as well as allowing alcohol sales at restaurants.

These are just my thoughts. I encourage you to do your own research and decide for yourself.

Cynthia Strain
Highlands

Help the Emergency Council fund lunches for Highlands School students

Dear Editor,

As a teacher at Highlands School, it was my home away from home for 22 years. Cange, Haiti, has also been another home away from home for 24 years. Friends in Haiti find it hard to believe that in the USA children HAVE to go to school because in Haiti children GET to go to school. Many children in Haiti go to school so that will have a meal - probably their only one that day. In Haiti I expect to see children who were malnourished or have very little food. We have planted gardens, had goat projects for families, and built fish farms in lakes to help people have food. Now it's time to help in Highlands.

With the increase in food costs, there has been an increase in the cost of school

lunches. This has been a burden on many families at Highlands School. Nine schools in Macon County qualified for a grant for free lunches - Franklin High School and Highlands School did not qualify. Last year the county commissioners allocated around \$200,000 to cover the difference in the two schools, but NOT this year.

The Highlands Emergency Council is working with the "village" to help fund the cost of lunches at Highlands School for those children who are unable to afford the money each day for lunch. The Emergency Council welcomes any help with this need. Call 828) 526-4357.

Jane Chalker
Highlands

...SOCCER continued from page 1

and Option C - fix the field at Zachary Park to a regulation soccer field for the school's soccer programs.

School board members and education liaisons to the commissioners, Hilary Wilkes and Diedre Breeden have both said something needs to be done to solve the problem of Highlands School soccer players not having a decent field to play on. In addition, the poor condition of the field prevents the school's PE program from

utilizing the outdoor field.

This fall, the boys' soccer program has once again been negatively affected by the subpar soccer field at Highlands School. It's been another season of postponed and canceled soccer games for the middle and high school soccer players, caused by excessive rain turning the soccer field into a muddy, unplayable, and unsafe field.

• See **SOCCER** page 23



PREMIUM CONNECTION. READY FOR EVERY MOMENT.

Take your Internet to the next level with Gigabit speeds.

Your connection should keep up with everything you do.

Whether you're sharing, working, or relaxing, enjoy a connection that delivers a seamless experience throughout your home with 1 Gig Internet + MaxFi.

-  Fast, reliable performance for streaming, gaming, and video calls
-  Smooth streaming in every room
-  Multiple devices running at once without slowdowns
-  Clear 4K viewing and video calls

CALL OR VISIT OUR STORE

 **833-986-1570**

 **670 N 4th St, Highlands, NC 28741**

Packages, prices, features, and availability are subject to change. Not all services available in all areas or properties. Taxes, fees, surcharges, and installation charges may apply. Actual speeds may vary due to network conditions, wiring, device limitations, and other factors. Other restrictions may apply. Includes Fision MaxFi+. Additional \$10/mo. applies if 5 or more retail Wi-Fi devices are required. Coverage applies to weatherproof and habitable areas only. Wi-Fi speeds are not guaranteed and vary by environment and device capability. Other restrictions may apply. MaxFi is a service mark, Hotwire and Fision are registered trademarks of Hotwire Communications, Ltd. ©2026 Hotwire Communications, Ltd. All rights reserved.

...Q&A continued from page 16

a nutshell, I believe we need to balance our priorities, control our spending, and plan for long-term stability all while building prosperity, sustainability and longevity for the people of Macon County. It is a delicate balance that, if done right, can move us forward and make a difference for generations to come.

What are the biggest needs county commissioners need to address in the next four years and how would you address them?

Since I have already touched on job creation and infrastructure, I am going to start off with technology. I would like to see our technology improve countywide so that our employees can work more effectively and efficiently. Our county needs advanced, user-friendly technology that will not only help to enhance the lives of our employees, but that will also help to create a centralized county government communication system. A system where residents can go to get the latest information about anything and everything relating to our county...from school closings to emergency management information and beyond. I would also like to implement an "electronic dropbox" where residents can log ideas and concerns. That way we can ensure that every resident has a medium through which their voice can be heard. I believe that state-of-the-art technology is crucial to moving us forward and keeping our residents informed and safe.

Secondly, I would like to see the county

enhance our Emergency Preparedness Plan to include trained volunteers who are willing to be on "standby" in the event of a natural disaster, pandemic, or any other countywide emergency. In addition to promoting preparedness and volunteerism. This would strengthen our existing preparedness efforts all while encouraging volunteerism and community involvement.

Thirdly, I want to start a "Farming for the Future" initiative that will help our county return to its farming and agricultural roots. I feel like expanding our farmer's market and establishing a commercial cannery would be a huge step in the right direction. Farming is not only a profitable industry, but it also promotes sustainability, teaches self-reliance, promotes and boosts agri-tourism, and helps to cultivate healthy eating habits which will ultimately create a healthier community. The benefits are endless. Imagine tourists and residents, alike, having access to fresh, local, preservative-free foods. Envision young people seeing agriculture not as a thing of the past, but rather, realizing that it can give them a viable, meaningful future right here at home...a future that is certainly worth fighting for.

I would also like to see us form a stronger alliance with other commission boards in WNC so that we can band together to diligently fight for our residents here and beyond. We all know that there is power in numbers and by standing together, our counties can have a stronger, collective voice at the state and national level. I would love to see an expansion of the homestead exemption. It is my hope that sometime in the near future we can eliminate property taxes for primary residents altogether but, unfortunately, that has to happen at the state level. This is where a collective voice matters and how we can band together to bring about much needed change.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to address our current housing crisis. I want to partner with realtors, contractors, investors, and developers to form a "Future Homeowner Advisory Committee" to tackle this issue. It is my hope that we can develop sustainable housing options that may open up the market for this generation and generations to come.

As you can see there are a lot of thgs I believe we can do to preserve what we have and prepare for the future.

Dylan Castle

**MC Commission Candidate
District 2**

Please tell us a little bit about you and why you feel you are qualified to represent the county as a commissioner?

I have been in Macon County since I

was in the 3rd grade. My family moved here after my parents both retired from the US Air Force. I was homeschooled from 4th-12th grade where my parents emphasized a Bible based, traditional education. My family was also very involved in our church in Sylva, Victory Baptist. I attended a Christian college in Pensacola, FL where I studied Youth Ministries and Pastoral Ministries. After graduating in 2016, God lead me back home to Macon County, where I began serving as a Youth Pastor and Christian School teacher.

Since 2020, I have pastored a home fellowship that meets in homes in Macon and Jackson counties. I have been self-employed since 2023. I have been married to my wife since 2017, we have 2 sons currently, and one daughter who passed away. Running for County Commissioner is something that I believe God has called me to do and He has shown me great favor in this endeavor. Growing up in a military family that dates all the way back to Kings Mountain, means patriotism is in my DNA. This is why I'm proud to be your Pastor and Patriot candidate. My experience and leadership as a Pastor, History and Government Teacher, and Businessman will be beneficial to the Board of Commissioners.

What is your stance on the redistricting question – leave as is, adopt the Planning Board's 3-2 scenario with partial at-large voting or form 5 districts with voters in each district voting for their candidate?

The redistricting discussion is one that I believe a large portion of Maconians still are uncertain about. I am thankful that the current board is slowing the process down and looking to create more dialogue in the community. I think that it would be beneficial to have several town halls with legal counsel and representation from the School of Government to be sure everyone has a chance to ask questions and get direct answers from the experts and authorities on the matter. When dealing with a system that has been in place for so long, slow changes with transparency is the best way to see success. At the end of the day, if we're looking to give voters a better system, we need to make sure that voters understand and are on board.

Are you for or against the 1/4 penny sales tax increase and why?

The County Commissioner's role on this subject is to inform, not influence voting. I believe that if a County Commissioner were to publicly say "yes" or "no", they would be influencing voters. As I am seeking this office, I believe I should hold myself to the same standard. The three big facts I like to add to the conversation are: 1) a very diligent citizen could avoid most of the tax increase impact if they are very careful about their purchases, 2) sales taxes are typically favored over property

tax increases, and 3) if any government increases any tax, they better be using the pre-existing monies as efficiently as possible.

About \$2 million in school funding was denied for FY '26-'27 budget. Consequently, the school system has had to cut programs and more. Case in point, the Highlands Pre-school, which was staffed and stocked and ready to go minus \$117,000 was nixed, not to mention the lack of funding for years for the HS soccer field which has recently been unplayable. How would you like to see the county fund the MC School System to meet the students', teachers' and schools' needs?

This question requires a joint conversation with the School Board and Administration. The state constitution makes it clear that education is a responsibility of the government, therefore we need to be very serious about our obligation to provide the best education for our students, not simply allocate funding and then washing our hands. I am eager to develop a relationship with the school system to discuss how the Board of Commissioners can help with the recurring lapses, not just in funding, but also in resources, staffing, reporting, etc. As a Commissioner, I believe it is my responsibility to ensure the accountability and effectiveness of every tax dollar we allocate. I am not one to "pass the buck" or say "that's not my problem."

Given financial needs of the county and its municipalities, are you for or against limiting property tax increases by local governments and why?

I, like most Americans, believe that government already takes more of our money than they should. While I realize that most of that waste is not at the local level, we cannot be naive to think that there is zero waste in our local government. My opinion will always be, if a government wants more of my money, I want proof that they are using existing funds as efficiently as possible. It is also interesting to note that taxes never seem to have an expiration date, even the ones that were supposed to be temporary when enacted.

Macon County needs decent jobs to attract and keep young families here. What would you do to improve the county's economic development department?

As a business owner and young family man, this is a passion of mine. Early in my campaign, I began researching other small/rural communities in NC and the country to see what ideas seem to be working. One that I am very interested in is "Remote Worker Friendly Community," where we focus on remote workers and attract them to our area. Remote workers do not require massive companies to move into the area but typically do boost the tax base and the local economy. This would require some attention to our

• See Q&A page 21

COREY JAMES GALLERY
& Estate Consignments

Bronze sculpture • Paintings
Vintage & Antique Collectables &
Furniture • Costume Jewelry



On the corner of 3rd & Spring
(828) 526-4818

...Q&A continued from page 20

infrastructure needs, but those are needs that benefit all of Macon County and most Maconians have been asking for (internet, business growth, beautification, natural resource management). It can be a great way to see the growth we are looking for, without the sprawl that kills small town charm.

What are your plans to address some of the space needs in the county new justice center, board of elections, senior center?

These are needs that have been in discussion for a decent amount of time, so we need to go back to those minutes, motions, and votes and see where the progress is at and what needs to happen to pick up the momentum. The “wheels” of government may turn slow, but I have found that people get done what they want, when they want, especially if enough pressure is applied. If there are legitimate pauses, delays, or changes, the public needs to know, so rumors and conspiracies are less common. I would love to see a master “County Project Timeline” where anyone can see 1) the date a vote was cast that launched a project, 2) delays, changes or updates, as well as 3) projected completion. This will not only aid in accountability and transparency, but by sharing community information, those who are new to the area can also see what is happening and what has happened.

The Government Finance Officers recommend no less than two months (16.7%) of regular operating revenues or expenditures in the undesignated Fund Balance. Macon County holds on to much more than that. Do you think that policy should change especially since the county doesn't want to raise taxes to pay for services, capital expenditures or school system needs?

Yes, I do believe that the undesignated fund balance should be adjusted. I am thankful to see the current board already making progress on this. There is a fine line between conserving/saving money and over taxing citizens.

What are the biggest needs county commissioners need to address in the next four years and how would you address them?

First and foremost, we have to

stop thinking in just 4-year terms. I like to ask, “Where do citizens want to see Macon County in 50 years?” and then create a forecast and plan of what can be achieved in 4 years to work towards that 50-year goal. This will help us with maintenance, new buildings, space needs, jobs, housing, etc. Often times when a government only looks at each term, decisions are made that then create more problems, or, money is used on projects that fail to achieve the desired outcome. Whether it's a new school, senior center, landfill, justice center, or even ordinance adjustments, we need to make sure our decisions fit into a longer range plan than just one term.

Janet Jacobs Greene
MC Commissioner Candidate
District 2

Please tell us a little bit about you and why you feel you are qualified to represent the county as a commissioner?

My family roots run deep in Macon County. I think this helps me better understand issues here because I know our history. I have worked in family businesses on Main Street in Franklin and retired as a United Methodist minister. Now I own and manage commercial property on Main Street in Franklin. My service to the community includes having served as County Commissioner Vice Chair, School Board Vice Chair, Franklin Sesquicentennial Chair, Founding Member of the Arts Council of Macon County and the Scottish Tartans Museum. I am a former Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year. I have been serving our county for many years. Currently, I serve as Franklin Town Planning Board Chair and Angel Medical Trustee Vice Chair. I have been a member of the Rotary Club of Franklin for 30 years and served as President of the Club in 2018-2019.

What is your stance on the redistricting question – leave as is, adopt the Planning Board's 3-2 scenario with partial at-large voting or form 5 districts with voters in each district voting for their candidate?

We only had three (3) commissioners for many years. Anyone in the county could run but those elected tended to live in the current Franklin district, which holds two-

thirds of the county population. In 1979 we increased the County Commissioners by two (2) and created three districts. The three sitting commissioners resided in what became District 2. District 1 was created to encourage a voice from the Highlands area but to get enough population it had to include some areas that are in the “Franklin area” – Ellijay, Sugarfork and Flats. District 3 was likewise created to encourage a voice from Nantahala, but again, to get enough population, that district had to include Cowee, Burningtown and Cartoogechaye.

I understand the voices from Highlands calling for five districts with each district electing their own commissioner. Highlands' choice for commissioner has not been heard in recent elections and this option, they feel, would give them a better chance of electing their own candidate. However, I'm not sure how it would work for each district to vote for only one commissioner. Would the commissioners tend to be more divided on issues because they could only speak for their own constituents? I feel our county population is too small to work for only one area of the county. Also, the number of votes to elect each commissioner could be very small, depending on how many people came out to vote in each district.

I am against the proposal for three districts and two at-large commissioners because this further dilutes the chance for Highlands and Nantahala to have their voice heard. If any change is made to the current districts, I would favor one that holds to the intention of allowing voices from Highlands and Nantahala to be heard.

I have not yet heard a plan better than the one we currently have, but I am open to more discussion and sharing of thoughts on how we could change.

Are you for or against the 1/4 penny sales tax increase and why?

I support the 1/4 penny sales tax. When you go to the Dollar Store and purchase an item for \$1 you don't pay tax of 6.75 cents. You can't. You pay 7 cents tax. Every purchase you make where the sales tax comes to 1/2 a penny or

• See Q&A page 23

**Walk-ins
Welcome!**



Monica



**Hair Cuts,
Color & Styles
for
Men &
Women**

- Beard Sculpting & Trims
- Luxury Shaves
- Men's Cuts

Balayage • Eyebrow Tints & Facial Waxing
Premium Hair Extensions
Bridal Services

322 Main Street • Highlands, NC
828-482-1112

!!! FIRE SALE !!!
CALL FOR DETAILS



THE
FIREWOOD COMPANY

Highlands • Cashiers • Atlanta

828.200.3050

bobhenritze@gmail.com • www.firewoodcompany.us

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING



Letting Go

Randy Lucas
Pastor
Highlands United Methodist Church

I'm in a season of transition with automobiles. The car I've driven for nearly 10 years has literally reached the end of the road. Part of that transition is cleaning out the trunk and the console between the front seats and the glove compartment. I spent this past Monday morning gathering up and cleaning out. It's amazing how much stuff one can stuff into places. Human beings are apparently quite adept in this way. Can I get an "Amen?"

During my travels over the past 10 years, I apparently stopped at every welcome center at every state line I crossed to secure a map. Who uses maps anymore? I must have had 10 maps stuffed in my console. And napkins! Oh, my stars, I could keep a McDonald's restaurant in napkins for at least a week with all the napkins I had stuffed in the console. And unwrapped straws? Oh, my goodness! I found way more books of stamps than I realized I had, more than a few toothpicks still in their wrappers and some CDs I had long since forgotten even existed. And the items in the trunk? Well, let's just leave it there!

Maybe it was because of the delightful October air Monday morning, or maybe because I remembered it was my turn to offer the "Spiritually Speaking" column this week, but for whatever reason the cleaning out reminded me of autumn's gentle lesson of letting go. The leaves are turning, the colors are lovely, and the branches of the trees will soon begin their annual work of letting go of the leaves. We'll watch it happen right before our eyes.

And if we'll be attentive to the classroom surrounding us, we'll receive autumn's annual message once more. Life is full of seasons. Seasons can bring change, and not all change is welcome. We live through seasons of work and play, of love and laughter, suffering and sickness, death and grief, beauty and wonder, joy and sorrow, strength and weakness. And autumn reminds us that some seasons are about letting go.

Letting go is not always of course. Letting go of people or things or places we love is heartbreaking. Letting go of good health can be depressing. Letting go of our independence or our home or our dreams can be discouraging. Hard seasons of letting go are inevitable. And if you happen to be in one of those hard seasons, may the Lord bless you and keep you!

Autumn's seasonal message can also invite us to consider possible things in our lives of which we would do well to let go. Perhaps there are past hurts, old grudges, unhealthy attitudes, habits or behaviors that need to fall to the ground. Maybe it's a good time to free yourself from a long-held prejudice or misguided bias.

"Life is so beautiful. Life is so hard." So says Duke professor and best-selling author Kate Bowler. And she's right you know. So whatever season you find yourself in today, may you live it well. May you be the best version of yourself you can be today. May you strive to be fully who God has created you to be. And may the console between your front seats ... be annoyingly organized.

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor 706-782-3965

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

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

5th Sunday Singing featuring Georgia Mountain Trio;

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

Senior Pastor: Rev. Amy Spivey

Assoc. Pastor: Rev. Wonyeong Lee 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30; Worship & Kids 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. Marc Robertson & Rev. Nick McGee

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

CAC@christanglicancashiers.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

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.

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

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

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS

Non-Denominational-Contemporary Worship

242 Hwy 107N. 1/4 miles from Crossroads in Cashiers

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

Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

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

The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily

sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

Sunday Worship is at 9a. & 6p. Wednesday Worship is 6p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376

In-Person and live-streamed Worship Services

909a Bluegrass and 11a Traditional

www.highlandsmethodist.org

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Rev. Ken Langsdorf

Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.

Visit our website: Holy Family Lutheran Highlands NC

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

Pastor Zane Talley

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

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

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

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

Rabbi led service 3rd Saturday AM, Rosh Hashanah & Yom

Kippur.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church. 4224 Big Ridge

(4.5 miles from NC 107)

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

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

Sat. 4pm thru Oct 24.; Sun. - 11am

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

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

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Richard Salmonson

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

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Sun. 9a (English); Mon. 9:30a (Vatican II in Latin); Tues.

7p (Spanish); Wed., 9:30a (English)

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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

Sunday Service (summer): 9am & 11am

Visit our website: www.goodshepherdofcashiers.com

Bazaar Barn outreach is open Fri & Sat. 11am-3pm

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • uufranklin.org

Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers • 828-743-2122

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Sept. 26. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Accidents responded to:

Sept. 26

• Vehicle 1 was parked facing north in the Old Playhouse parking lot. Vehicle 2 was parked facing south in Old Playhouse parking lot. Vehicle 1 backed into Vehicle 2.

• Officers issued 9 Citations and 21 Warning Tickets

Sept. 27

• At 8:50 p.m., officers responded to a call of an aggravated assault by hitting and choking at a restaurant on Main Street.

Sept. 30

• At 6:20 p.m., officers received a report of the larceny of a bicycle valued at \$500 in Wright Square.

Oct. 3

• At 11:06 a.m., officers received a report of 2nd degree trespassing in Kilwins in Town Square.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Sept. 27

Sept. 27

• At 6:24 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

Sept. 29

• At 8:55 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Leonard Road.

• At 12:23 p.m., the dept. was first-re-

sponders to a residence on Zermatt Circle.

• At 4:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on hidden Springs Way.

• At 4:57 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Buck Creek Road.

• At 7:56 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

Sept. 30

• At 10:04 a.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a residence on Arnold Road.

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

Oct. 2

Highlands Fire & Rescue and others respond to wreck on The Gorge Road



At approximately 1:11 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 4, Highlands Fire and Rescue was dispatched to 14901 Highlands Road – the Gorge Road above Turtle Pond -- for a reported head-on motor vehicle accident, with one person lying in the roadway and another person trapped inside a vehicle.

Upon arrival, crews found that all occupants were out of the vehicles. Firefighters immediately began assessing the scene and determining the number of patients.

Two patients were identified as needing medical attention, and crews promptly initiated patient care. Both patients sustained significant injuries and were transported to appropriate medical facilities for further

treatment.

The Gorge Road remained closed for an extended period while emergency crews worked at the scene and the NC State Highway Patrol conducted its investigation.

We appreciate the public's patience and cooperation while emergency personnel worked to assist those involved and ensure the scene was handled safely.

We would like to thank Macon County EMS, Highlands Police Department, Macon County squad 4, Macon County - NC Sheriff's Office, Macon County NC 911 for all of their assistance.

– submitted

...Q&A continued from page 21

¾ penny, the tax is rounded up. That money is going to Raleigh but not coming back to us. By voting to change our tax to 7 cents on each dollar instead of 6.75 cents on each dollar we will get back that money – to the tune of \$2.3 MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR OR MORE. That income windfall will help offer more services to our community. To get that much money by raising taxes we would have to raise property taxes by 2 cents! Property taxes are only paid by Macon County citizens. The ¼ penny sales tax would be paid by citizens, yes, but also by tourists. In 2025 Macon County had the second largest increase in sales from tourism – second only to Cherokee! And this tax does not apply to the necessities of

groceries, gas or medical supplies or prescriptions. Let's vote to get this money back into Macon County.

About \$2 million in school funding was denied for FY '26-'27 budget. Consequently, the school system has had to cut programs and more. Case in point, the Highlands Pre-school, which was staffed and stocked and ready to go minus \$117,000 was nixed, not to mention the lack of funding for years for the HS soccer field which has recently been unplayable. How would you like to see the county fund the MC School System to meet the students', teachers' and schools' needs?

What happened to the Highlands PreK was a tragedy. It should have been funded

• See Q&A page 25

...SOCCER continued from page 18

Wilkes said a referee has taken her aside to inform her that he has heard conversations among other referees expressing concerns for the safety of the athletes competing on the field. In addition, she said several players have gotten injured playing on the unsafe field.

Option A would require the removal of the muck that lies under the current soccer field, replaced it with new soil and proper drainage and then cover the field with a turf.

Many think this option is a waste of money and a poor investment of county resources.

“The most recent assessment by a turf company said there were a lot of unknowns with Option A,” said Tracy Tallent, Macon County School System Maintenance Director. “So how could you put a number on that, and then say it would be two million dollars plus the unknowns? That's hard to swallow.”

“Option A is something that we all know will not be done,” said School Board Chairman Jim Breedlove.

Option C considers the possibility of fixing the field at Zachary Park on Buck Creek Road for use by the Highlands School soccer programs. But parents, teachers, and staff because of the inconvenience of the field not being located on the school grounds.

Wilkes and Breeden suggested to the school board that the county consider Option B – make the track field a regulation-size soccer field.

“At this point the condition of the Highlands field has become a safety issue,” said Breeden. “We need to do something else and get it done. They can't even play. I think the most cost-effective

approach would be to move forward with Option B. Move away from Option A that has become such a point of contention and take a different approach with Option B.”

School Board member Stephanie Laster said she has heard repeatedly how much the students, parents, and the staff want the soccer field at the school.

Breeden said a conversation with Wilkes concerned her.

“Students are choosing between basketball and soccer, because they are afraid of getting injured during the soccer season which would mean not being able to play basketball in the winter season,” she said. “The community seems to be in favor of Option B, and it is our preference as liaisons,” she added.

Wilkes and Breeden would like to see the Highlands School soccer field on the list of high-priority capital needs for the school system and are hopeful that commissioners will consider moving forward with Option B and finally give Highlands School soccer players a decent field on which to compete.

Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor has been pushing to move the soccer field to the current track field location.

“They can get a soccer field in the space they have and then put a 200-meter track on the current soccer field and enclose it,” he said. “It would be the only indoor track in the region and teams would come to run.”

He said the enclosed building could also be used for PE activities during the winter months and on rainy days.

MC Commissioners asked the School Board to host a listening/Town Hall so everyone has a chance to voice their opinion about the field. Wilkes said she is trying to get it scheduled before Nov. 3.



HIGHLANDS CHURCH

Come join us
each Sunday at 8:45 a.m.

- Small group environment
- Casual
- Breakfast included
- LIVE stream ANDY STANLEY (NPCC)

For more information and location
Call Bee at 404-307-1415



Elevated Home Maintenance & Repairs, LLC

A Step Above the Rest
Carpentry • Tile Work • Drywall • Remodels
Painting • Flooring • General Labor • Realtor Punchlists

(828) 371-9071
ElevatedHomeMaintenance.com



ALLAN DEARTH GENERATORS AND SONS

► 828-526-9325 ◄

*Generators aren't just a "thing" we do,
generators are all we do!*



**356B MAIN STREET
ESTATE JEWELERS OF
HIGHLANDS**



WE BUY AND CONSIGN OLD JEWELRY

Appointment Only!
Call: 828-526-1960
Text: 770-855-0825
Email: ejofhighlands@gmail.com



- Grading
- Excavating
- Driveways
- Build sites
- Hauling
- Septic Systems

Edwin Wilson
Cell (828) 421-3643
Office/fax (828) 526-4758
wilsongrading@yahoo.com



Kiln dried FIREWOOD

Delivery or pickup

2460 Cashiers Road • Highlands 828-526-2395
highlandslawnandgarden.com



828-787-2360
2851 Cashiers Road, Highlands

*We're proud to be a family-owned company with 43 years in the business, and even prouder to now serve the Highlands community.
~ Bob Saladna, Owner*

Here's what Highlands Automotive is all about!

- Same-day service for most maintenance and routine repairs.
- Top-tier diagnostic & programming tools – just like the dealer.
- New tire, alignment & balancing equipment for precision and speed.
- Same experienced technicians.

We service ALL domestic and foreign vehicles.

Also serving customers in:
Atlanta, GA | Dallas, TX | Houston, TX
Come see the difference.



COUNSELING CENTER OF HIGHLANDS

Offices in Cashiers and Highlands
828-482-7417
info@counseling-center.org | counseling-center.org

PIANO TUNING

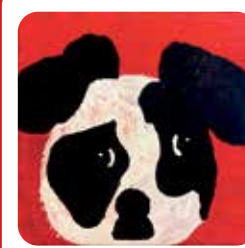
Professional Service Since 1985

Bob McCollum
828-507-5760
Bobbohl@yahoo.com




EST. 1957 **HOWARD HANNA**
ALLEN TATE REAL ESTATE

#1 Family-Owned in the U.S.
Al Stoneham
Realtor-Broker
Luxury Home Specialist
Licensed in NC & GA
Cell: 828.332.9767
al.stoneham@howardhannatate.com

**LISA THOMPSON
DOG SITTING**

- daily drop-in visits
- overnight & extended stays
- dog walking

828.424.4637

...Q&A continued from page 23

from Fund balance. There are three very important areas that the county is responsible for funding. Health and human services (the health department, including animal services), public safety (sheriff's department and EMS), and our schools. The county has always been responsible for school buildings. It used to be that the State paid the teachers. However, as the NC Legislature has reduced the amount of funding for teachers, and has not paid the percentage amount for funding education that was agreed when the state lottery was created, NC counties have been having to add supplements or flat out pay for teachers and bus drivers, etc. Added to that is a lack of teachers available, creating competition for workers. When Federal and State taxes are reduced, rural county Local taxes bear the heaviest burden because we depend on state and federal funding more than large cities or wealthy counties. We have to shoulder more of the tax burden here in Macon County. I believe in public education. I am a proud graduate of Macon County schools. But there is much state funding (your tax dollars) going to private schools in NC.

As a County Commissioner I can join my voice to the voices of Western North Carolina counties calling for better thinking in Raleigh. However, in the meantime, we are left with a situation that has to be dealt with. We must fund our schools AND we must fund our PreK classrooms. It is a fact that children who have PreK experience are better prepared for learning. Today, children are expected to already know their letters when they get to kindergarten so they can begin reading there! As a former School Board member, I am a supporter of Macon County public schools.

Given financial needs of the county and its municipalities, are you for or against limiting property tax increases by local governments and why?

I am totally against this amendment to our NC Constitution to allow the NC legislature to limit local government authority. They already have a law that sets county property tax limits and currently no counties in NC are anywhere near that limit. Given that the thinking in Raleigh is often in favor of big business and corporations over the rural property owner, I think property owners are more likely to be heard by their County Commissioners than by their legislators. I like keeping local government local. I urge people to vote against this amendment.

Macon County needs decent jobs to attract and keep young families here. What would you do to improve the county's economic development department?

We need an economic development director. Since our former EC Director retired,

we have been paying someone in Asheville who is supposed to help all of Western North Carolina. Well, that hasn't worked! We lost the Amazon plant and those jobs here. It moved to Hayesville!! We need boots on the ground in Macon County working to keep our small businesses and bring new businesses, restaurants, and hotels to Macon County. We also need a Business Hub where folks who work remotely can rent a desk or an office for a day or for hours to meet clients or connect with others. This would allow more young people who love living in our mountains to locate here.

What are your plans to address some of the space needs in the county -- new justice center, board of elections, senior center?

I want Macon County to have an inventory of buildings and needs and see how we might move offices around or what needs to be built and where. What property does the County own that could be put to better use? How can we think outside the box? We need thoughtful long-range planning for the use of our buildings that allows us to be ready to take advantage of state and federal funding when it is available.

The Government Finance Officers recommend no less than two months (16.7%) of regular operating revenues or expenditures in the undesignated Fund Balance. Macon County holds on to much more than that. Do you think that policy should change especially since the county doesn't want to raise taxes to pay for services, capital expenditures or school system needs?

If we have learned anything from our neighbors after Hurricane Helene, we must keep a healthy fund balance. However, our county has been adding to the fund balance rather than paying for bus drivers and teacher supplements and other services to Macon County citizens. I believe if we hold a healthy fund balance then all incoming taxpayers should be spent on Macon County citizens rather than adding to the fund balance.

What are the biggest needs county commissioners need to address in the next four years and how would you address them?

Affordable housing underlies all the urgent needs we have. If we do not have adequate affordable workforce housing, we cannot add teachers, nurses, law enforcement and our small businesses cannot grow. This is a national problem and there was a federal housing bill passed by Congress recently. I want to search for federal and state grants, as well as non-profit help that could work with our local builders to make it possible to build neighborhoods and apartments that are affordable. Murphy, NC recently partnered with a non-profit in Hendersonville to build workforce housing there. The Town of

Franklin paid for a study in 2024 that noted a need then for 670 homes and 181 apartments needed for people making \$58,000 to \$87,000 a year in Macon County. I want to create a Workforce Housing Taskforce that can make an action plan and show us how we can apply for grants, streamline permitting and create workforce housing overlays for the Towns of Franklin and Highlands planning boards.

Affordable workforce housing, economic development, our schools and helping keep the beauty of our county by protecting our forests and farms and streams are all close to my heart.

Russ Lund MC Commission Candidate District 1

I have lived in Macon County for 10 years with my partner Carol. I am a Vietnam-era Veteran and POW survivor. I spent most of my career as a reconnaissance jet fighter pilot. After mandatory retirement, I had one of the largest used motorcycle shops in Daytona Beach, FL. I also owned several construction companies and did work for the State of NC installing handicap bathrooms for low-income disabled citizens. Although I have no previous political experience, my real-world experience has taught me discipline, fiscal responsibility, and how to make tough decisions under pressure. Macon County is where we will spend the rest of our lives and I

would like the opportunity to help grow and strengthen this beautiful place we call home.

Redistricting?

I think redistricting should be a public input decision.

¼ cent Sales Tax

I am for the ¼ cent sales tax increase because it makes good sense for tourists to help pay their part instead of Macon County citizens paying for it all. The estimated 2 million it could generate would go a long way toward helping our community.

School Funding?

I believe funding our public school system should be a top priority. Cutting programs and services like pre-K, special education teachers, and the lack of school bus drivers is unacceptable. I would never prioritize a \$2.9 million pickleball court over funding schools. If elected, I will work closely with the School Board to understand their needs and to support and provide our kids the best education.

Property Tax Referendum?

Local government should have control over property tax, which funds our local essential services like police, fire departments, and schools, just to name a few. Macon County ranks 4th-lowest in property rates in all of North Carolina. While our tax rate is low, the state-required property reassessment

• See Q&A page 26

• CLASSIFIEDS •

FOR SALE COTTAGE ON LAKE BURTON

\$129,500 - North Georgia Mountains. 1br/1ba. 1 year old with modern design, all appliances and furniture. Beautiful gated community. www.sugarmillcreek.com Tel: 912-222-2448



NEW MIELE SS 30" WARMING DR., New Allen & Roth gas log set, New 49" ceramic double sink top, Used Gaggenau 24" wall oven & steam oven, EGO line trimmer, New Cutter-Hammer 400amp. circuit breaker, and two 200amp. Main breaker, Antler chandelier, new moving pads, new Kenmore 3-burner gas grill 305-401-0568. (10/8)

17FT ALUMINUM LAKE CANOE, excellent condition with paddles \$600. 828-421-0124 (st. 7/9)

1.06AC LOT ON 8900 Buck Creek Rd. \$79,900. 828-421-0124 (st. 7/9)

FOR RENT

NEW 2BD, 2BA, FURNISHED

APARTMENT within a half mile of downtown. \$1,200 a month. Call 404-234-2516. (st.7/2)

2BD/2BATH SINGLE WIDE \$1,100 per month internet included. First and last security. Mark 828-200-0765. (st. 5/29)

SERVICES

CREATURE COMFORTS - In-House Pet or People sitting. Call Peg Ellis. Retired RN. References available. 828-200-1028. (st. 11/20)

PLATEAU PAINTERS - Interior and exterior painting, pressure washing, decks, and sanding and staining wood floors. Division of Chatlos Construction. Fully insured. Free estimates. Call Mike at 828-200-4071. (6/25)

HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HANDY-MAN - Chatlos Construction - Remodels, Additions, Framing, Siding, Roofing, Decks, Painting. References. Insured. 828-200-4071. (6/25)

JUNK REMOVAL - We take anything. Call 828-200-0492

CUSTOM WELDING - gates, railings, trailer repairs, fencing, hand rails and more. I come to you! Call Gavin at 828-200-4219 or email smallgavin26@gmail.com

NEED FURNITURE MOVED OR ANYTHING HAULEDAWAY? Call or text James of Going Gone at 828-421-2655. (7/30)

• 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+ only. Weekend public swim: Sat., 11am-6pm and Sun., 1-6pm

PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. there are three indoor Pickle Ball courts and six outdoor courts. Pickle Ball can be played every Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs. and Friday 10am-pm outdoors for the summer

MTN FINDINGS

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

FIBBER MAGEES

• Fibber Magee's Thrift Store on Laurel Street Hours. Wed. & Fri. - 10a to 4p. Sat. - 10a to 2p.

FARMER'S MARKET

• The "market" is open every Saturday 8a to 12:30p in KH Founders Park on Pine Street.

ALL WEEK

• Scaly Mountain/ Highlands/ Cashiers Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in

the A.A. recovery program.

• Open meetings are held at Scaly Mountain at Grace Chapel, 9915 Dillard Rd., Scaly Mountain each Tues & Sat at 5:30 pm;

• In Highlands at the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Mondays at 5:30 p.m. and a NEW WOMEN'S GROUP Tuesdays at 5:30 pm; and on Wednesdays & Fridays at 12:00 noon.

• Open in-person meetings are also held in Cashiers at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library, 249 Frank Allen Rd. on Sundays at 5 pm, on Tuesdays at 7 pm, on Friday at 5:30 pm and on Saturday at 9 am. For more information please visit our website www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of A.A. 24/7 call our HELP Line 828 349-4357

Thurs., Oct. 8

• OBAGI Open House at Highlands Mercantile on Main from 10a to 3p. 20% off all OBAGI products.

• Highlands Wreaths Across America Bingo night 6:30-8:30 pm at the Highlands Community Building 869 N 4th St (next to the ballfield

Oct 9-10

• At The Bascom, the 15th Annual Fall Pottery Show, 10a to 4p. 323 Franklin road, Highlands. 828-526-

4949

Fri., Oct. 9

• At the Highlands Biological Center, Crafting Wild Creatures, 11a -1p at Cook Pavilion, 888 Horse Cove Rd. FREE. No registration required.

Sat., Oct 10

• At the Highlands Biological Center, Amazing Moths, 10a to noon. Cook Pavilion, 888 Horse Cove Rd. FREE. Registration Required.

• Tailgate with the Candidates. Free food and refreshments, college football, no speeches. Where your favorite team colors. 4:30-8p. Carpenter Community Center on Georgia Road.

Mon. Oct 12

• A "Town Hall" with Caleb Brown for NC House District 120. Macon County Public Library on Siler road, 6-8 p.m. Ask questions. He is ready to answer.

Tues., Oct. 13

• With the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, Tales from the Continental Divide Trail with Jeff De Graffenried who raised more than \$10,000 for the HC Land Trust by hiking the Continental Divide Trail from Mexico to Canada. He will tell his tale at 5:30 p.m. at Western Carolina Brew and

Wine. The event is free and open to all. RSVP at 828-526-1111.

Wed., Oct. 14

• Book signing of "All the Hidden Pieces" with Dana Ridenour, award-winning author and retired FBI special agent at the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library from 2p-4p.

• Pink Partini at Town Hall restaurant from 5-7p. Coming to-

gether and sharing what we know about breast cancer. Come share your story, Bring your question. Lite bites, cash bar and mocktails while connecting in a relaxed and supportive setting.

• At the Highlands Biological Center, Science & S'mores: What Do Insects Have to Do With Climate? 6-7p. Valentine Meadow + Cook Pavilion, 888 Horse Cove Rd. FREE.



From left: Breast Cancer survivors Jan Pittman, Pat Buchanan, Mary Adair Trumbly, Mary Beth Brody, Jan Roush and Robin Armstrong.

Pink Partini at Town Hall restaurant Wed., Oct. 14 from 5-7p. Come and share what you know about breast cancer. Come share your story; bring your questions. Lite bites, cash bar and mocktails while connecting in a relaxed and supportive setting with women who have been through it, too.

...Q&A continued from page 25

ment is causing pressure on our fixed-income elderly (32% of our population). Rather than placing limits through a constitutional amendment we should be working to develop a better system

Economic Development?

The cost of living continues to rise, but local wages are not keeping up with the increases. Our county employees, teachers, and public service employees are critical to our community's growth, future, and safety, and we must retain them. We cannot accomplish that if we do not make it financially feasible for them to stay in Macon County.

Space Needs?

I would like to look at the possibility of the County purchasing the old Macon Bank Headquarters above Angel Medical Center. This believe it would make an excellent Senior Services facility and may have adequate space for other agencies as well.

Fund Balance?

Our current Fund Balance seems a little excessive. In my opinion, what is the point of having growing surplus when there are real needs that are piling up. Delaying capital expenses, like a new justice center, senior center and Highlands soccer field, just to name a few, makes no sense because the costs to build these will just keep rising and the need is not going away. We need an intense conversation about the Fund Balance, including community input, and what is a reasonable and safe amount for the County to hold onto while still addressing critical needs.

Needs in the County?

School funding and capital projects like the justice center, senior center and Highlands soccer field. Also bringing our county employees, public service employees, and teachers up to, at minimum, competitive pay compared to surrounding counties.

Thank you for the opportunity

to let me voice some of my thoughts and ideas. I love Macon County and look forward to being a Commissioner who listens and makes the best decisions for Macon County long-term.

John Shearl

MC Commission Candidate District 1

I am currently the District 1 County Commissioner and I am seeking re-election

Redistricting?

The Macon County Board of Commissioners have postponed any actions on redistricting at this time for further review

Do you support the proposed 1/4-cent sales tax increase?

The Macon County Commissioners voted to place the sales tax initiative on a referendum and the taxpayers/voters will decide in the November election.

School Funding?

The Macon County Commissioners have increased funding to

the Macon County School System by millions of dollars over the last 3 years. We don't dictate what the school system uses the funds for. This is a question better asked to the elected School Board members and Board of Education.

It is quite humorous that your question is the Board of Commissioners don't want to spend any money for the schools of Macon County. The taxpayers have spent almost 160 million dollars in school needs over the last few years. Approximately 99% of the county debt is for the Macon County School System. How much more can the taxpayers endure?

Do you support the proposed property tax question?

The property tax increase issue is on the ballot and the voters will decide in November.

Economic Development?

The Macon County Economic Development Commission is currently discussing this issue.

Space Needs?

The Board of Commissioners have been actively discussing and planning for the future needs of our citizens and county.

Fund balance?

If the county has too much money already in the Undesignated fund balance as your question suggests, then why would anyone be voting to raise the sales taxes or any other tax increase? The current Board of Commissioners have lowered the enormous fund balance by paying cash for Highlands School expansion, Highlands new playground, upgrades to Zachary Park, the new Franklin High School and among a lot of other much needed repairs and upgrades throughout the county.

Pressing Needs?

Protect the taxpayers and continue to move our county forward as I/we have done in my first 4-year term as your District 1 County Commissioner.

SILVER EAGLE

Native American Jewelry
Crystal & Gem Gallery



349 Main Street, Highlands, NC
828.526.5190 silvereaglegallery.com



COUNTRY CLUB PROPERTIES
Bright Square Office
Real Estate

Country Club Properties
*Your local hometown
Real Estate professionals.*
3 Offices 828-526-2520
www.CCPHighlandsNC.com



highlandermountainhouse.com

**Highlander
Mountain
House
&
The Ruffed
Grouse
Tavern**

Weichert
REALTORS
Highlands Properties
450 N. 4th St. Highlands, NC
828-526-5522
www.highlandsproperties.com

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY | MEADOWS MOUNTAIN REALTY
HOMESERVICES



CHARMAN'S CIRCLE
BH HS
GOLD

TOP 2%
BH HS
OF THE NETWORK

LUXURY COLLECTION™
Of the 55,000+ BHHS agents across the globe,
Faye ranks in the TOP 2% and is a
Luxury Collection Specialist.

FAYE WURM
828.200.1345
faye@bhhsmmr.com
2334 Cashiers Rd, Highlands
https://fayewurm.meadowsmtnrealty.com/



CREEKSIDE LIVING



**34 W. Forest Way
Highlands, NC**
Significant Price Reduction
Now Offered
at \$985,000

- 3 Bed, 3 Bath
- Creekside Screened Porch With Stone Fireplace
- Meticulously Maintained and Furnished
- STRs Allowed



Clif Gottwals
303.887.7479
Clif.Gottwals@Gmail.com

CHRISTIE'S
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE
— HIGHLANDS CASHIERS —

HighlandsCashiersCIRE.com
210 North Fifth Street
Highlands, NC 28741



HOWARD HANNA
ALLEN TATE REAL ESTATE

Darlene Conley
Mountain Luxury
*Your Dream. Your Journey.
YOU'RE HOME.*
Dedicated to
finding the home
you've always wanted.
Cell: 404.427.2448
darleneconley@howardhannatate.com

#1 IN THE CAROLINAS

• Steve - 404-219-1349
• Rick - 404-906-5113
• Wes - 828-482-2742
teamricksteve@howardhannatate.com
www.teamricksteve.allentate.com

HOWARD HANNA
ALLEN TATE REAL ESTATE

TEAM RICKSTEVE
Group Real Estate Group




Ace is the Place,

Reeves

Hardware

**At Main & 3rd streets
Highlands 526-2157**



Highlands | Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

114 N. 4th Street • Highlands, NC
Local Expertise, Global Connections.

Licensed in NC and GA
office: 828.526.8300 • cell: 828.337.0706
sheryl.wilson@sothebysrealty.com • highlandssir.com

Denise Boothby
828-482-2434
LiveLoveHighlands.com



Mountain Life
Live Love Highlands
134 Maple St. Highlands, NC

CHRISTIE'S | HIGHLANDS CASHIERS
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

Highlands Office | 210 N. 5th Street

Cell: 828-787-1895
pamela.nellis@yahoo.com





Pat Allen

REALTY GROUP

Not The Biggest...Just The Best!

www.patallenrealtygroup.com

828.526.8784 | 295 DILLARD RD, HIGHLANDS



PAT ALLEN

828.200.9179

JULIE OSBORN

828.200.6165

More than
33 years of exemplary
service in the luxury
housing market!



JULIE OSBORN

VOTED AMERICA'S BEST by RealTrends since 2021

STAY A
lifetime

For real estate, visit
LANDMARKRG.COM
or call **828-743-0510**.



LANDMARK
REALTY GROUP

*your mountain story begins here—
embracing both the life you lead
and the getaway you crave*



Jody Lovell

(828) 226.6303

#1 Broker
IN THE CAROLINAS

\$1 Billion +

TOTAL CAREER SALES VOLUME

#8 Agent Worldwide

AMONG 26,100+
SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY AGENTS

PER REAL TRENDS, HCMLS AND COUNTY RECORDINGS

Highlands

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY | MEADOWS MOUNTAIN
HOMESERVICES REALTY

**If you want an
award-winning real
estate experience,
choose an
award-winning
agent.**



MITZI RAUERS

Broker / Luxury Collection
Specialist

(404) 218-9123

mitzi@bhhsmmr.com

*Based on 2023 sales data. Out of a global network
of 55,000+ BHHS agents.



**DAVID
BOCK
BUILDERS**

www.BockBuilders.com 828-526-2240



**We Serve to Help You
with Life's Next
Chapter ... Beginning
with Coffee and a
Conversation.**

CHRISTIE'S
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE
— HIGHLANDS CASHIERS —

BEE GLEESON

Broker | Realtor® | 404.3071415
BeeGlee4@Gmail.com

PAT GLEESON

Broker | Realtor® | 828.782.0472
PatrickGleeson4@Gmail.com

JESSICA HABERKERN

Broker | Realtor® | 254.718.7494
JessHaberKern@Gmail.com

HighlandsCashiersCIRE.com | 210 North Fifth Street, Highlands, NC 28741



...on the Verandah
Restaurant
on Lake Sequoyah
828-526-2338

43 Years of Fine Dining

NOW OPEN

7 Nights a week
5:30-9p



www.ontheverandah.com

M'CULLEY'S
CASHMERE

Scotland's Best Knitwear

Open 7 days a week

526-4407

242 S. 4th St.

