

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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Thurs., May 11, 2023

## Shearl disappoints but asks for 'patience'

By Brittney Lofthouse  
& Kim Lewicki

Highlands residents went to Tuesday night's Macon County Board of Commission meeting hopeful that Commissioner John

Shearl, who represents Highlands, would speak out in support of an expansion project for Highlands that would include adding two pre-school classrooms.

After over an hour of public

comment period, which included a handful of presenters again voicing their support for the school expansion project and thanking Commissioner Shearl for meeting

• See SHEARL page 10

## Town tax to decrease, school scholarships increase

Each month, the town gets closer to a FY '23-'24 budget that it can both justify and afford.

The big news that came out of the May 4 Budget Workshop meeting held at the Rec Park, was the proposed property tax rate, scholarships awarded Highlands School seniors and current college students and the selection of the new Town Attorney.

Though there was a \$100 million reduction in property values due to the reval, the overall property value within the town limits is about \$2,750,001,476.

There is the potential of further reductions through August 2023 due to some cases being reviewed with the Board of Equalization, but Town Manager

• See TAX page 14

## Mental Health begins with Kindness: 'Bee Kind'

By Jane Jerry

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month. This year the Counseling Center and the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation partnered to raise collective awareness around mental and behavioral health using the theme "Mental Health Begins With Kindness - 'Bee Kind'."

Highlands Middle School and High School students created 22 artworks that illustrate acts of kindness and the importance of mental health awareness. Each student wrote an artist's statement to describe the inspiration for their artwork.

Highlands Newspaper is proud to print the top three winners in successive issues of the paper starting today with First Place winner, 7th grader Arabel Aulisio. Second Place went to 10th grader Ophelia Contreras and Third Place went to 12th grader Alisia Johnson.

Judges made their decisions based on the entries that best captured the overall theme of "Bee Kind" and nurturing each other, ourselves and our environment.

Every Bee Kind Art entry reflects empathy and sensitivity. Hearing from young people in their own words helps

students, teachers, parents and grandparents understand the challenges young people face today. This project can be a tool for starting difficult conversations about depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and other disorders. The "Bee Kind" project also lessens the stigma around mental health issues in a positive, uplifting manner.

Jess Moschouris, Highlands School Art Teacher, coordinated the "Bee Kind" Art Project. "Think about how important it is to encourage other people through kindness," she told her students. It's equally important to be kind to ourselves and to our planet. Your art might be surreal, as you find ways to symbolize mental health, bees and opportunities to help each other bloom."

Over 20 community organizations came together to provide enriching activities that raise awareness and promote kindness throughout the month of May. Anything that can raise our collective awareness around mental and behavioral health is worth our time and energy.

### About the Sponsors

*The Counseling Center strives to strengthen families and individuals by providing access to quality mental health services regardless of financial ability.*

*The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation is committed to lifting health and well-being for all residents of our community.*



**Arabel Aulisio - 7th Grade - 1st Place**  
**"Buzzing Thoughts and Blooming Emotions"**

My art is about depression and how sometimes if someone is depressed you might not be able to see from the outside what is going on in the inside. The bees tending to the flowers represent how help and kindness can fight depression, which is represented by the thorns.

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Soul rejuvenation on the river

At the end of the day last Friday, my wife, Sallie, was exhausted, soaking wet, and sporting a black eye. But Sallie told me she had a great day. Say what?

We had just completed the first day of competition in the Three Rivers Fly Fishing Festival, during which I had organized a fishing trip by canoe down the Cullasaja River from Cooks Sawmill to Franklin for my son, his wife, Sallie, and myself. It was an ambitious attempt to catch trout on a scenic wild river, to say the least.

The good news is that we didn't turn the canoes over while shooting the rapids. Although Sallie and I came close on two occasions, she saved the boat with some unexpected last-minute maneuvering.

And about that black eye? That happened when we hit a rock in a fast rapid, and the top of her paddle flew back and hit her in the eye. Sallie didn't tell me what happened and kept on paddling.

We survived the rapids, but as for the fishing-catching part of the trip, we were less than successful. Sallie and I didn't



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

catch any fish because we were too focused on negotiating the perils of the Cullasaja. However, our daughter-in-law, Lauren, was more committed to fishing and caught two trout, one a 15-inch rainbow.

After the trip, and despite the failure to catch fish and a black eye, Sallie encouraged me to write about our experience. The theme for her was "the inconvenience of nature." Sallie is an enthusiastic birder and was intrigued by all

the birds she saw on the Cullasaja. We saw a green heron and a cedar waxwing, two species she had not seen before. We also saw a wonderful pair of huge blue herons, and they escorted us down the river for about a half-mile before peeling off.

Nature and other species can be conveniently ignored or forgotten by us humans. Our river trip through its presentation of the crystal-clear water, the magical sounds of the waters tumbling over the rocks, the magnificent trees that lined our way, and the new and exciting bird finds underscored our concerns for conserving wild and untouched spaces in Western Carolina.

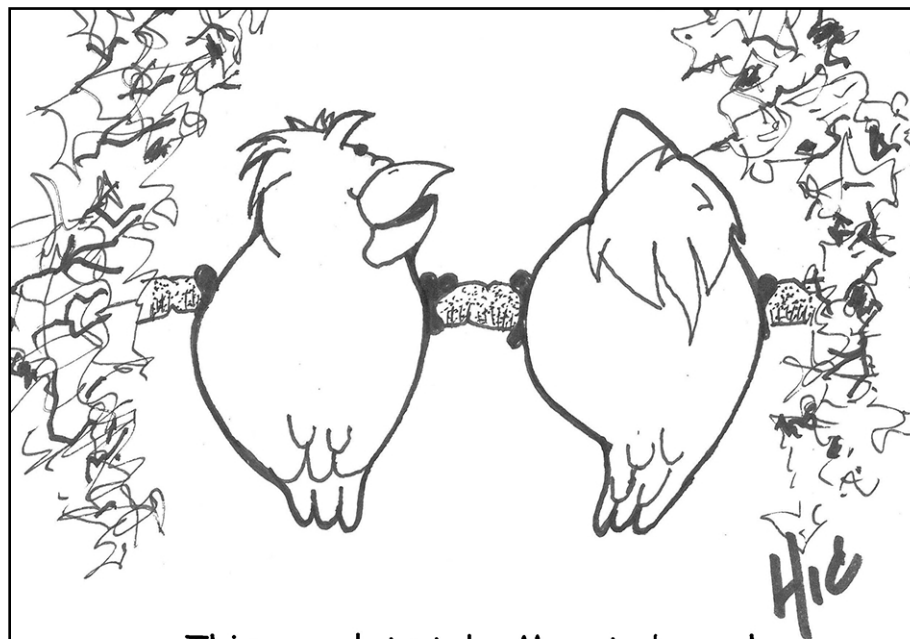
Many visitors come to this region to reconnect and experience nature, and those experiences are restorative and healing experiences that people need more than ever.

Others come with economic interests, and those economic interests and environmental interests need not be mutually exclusive. Some people may think I am anti-business and development, but I am not. I am cautious and believe we all share in the stewardship of the environment. I do see some folks moving to Western Carolina from metropolitan communities from all areas of the country. My message to them is to expect some "inconveniences" that conserving these natural places will bring. And I suggest they leave that city baggage behind and seek a lighter load that creates less of an environmental footprint.

As mayor, I hear those metropolitan cargo demands all the time. Mayor, we need more of this and that. Instead of more city amenities, I suggest trading for the amenities that wild rivers, wildlife, and mountain for-





• See MAYOR page 22

## • HIC'S VIEW •



This year lets take Mom to brunch,  
There is a great sushi worm place in Highlands."

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 11-May	Fri, 12-May	Sat, 13-May	Sun, 14-May
			
68°F 53°F	68°F 54°F	75°F 55°F	76°F 57°F
Times of clouds and sun	Cloudy	A stray afternoon t-storm	Couple of thunderstorms
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### Highlands Newspaper

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THURSDAY, MAY 18

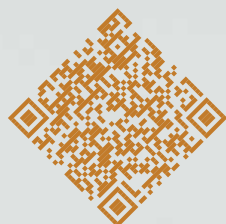
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## • INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

### On investing in Highlands

The Highlands & Cashiers Plateau is a beautiful and desirable area that is becoming increasingly popular with real estate investors and is one of the fastest-growing real estate markets in the country.

There are a number of reasons for this, including the area's stunning scenery, outdoor activities, and charming mountain lifestyle. Additionally, the towns of Highlands and Cashiers are located in a very desirable area, with strong economies and low unemployment rates.

Of course, there are also some challenges to investing in real estate on the Plateau. One challenge is that the towns are small, which means that there is a limited supply of properties available. Inventory is low and prices have remained steady. This can make it difficult to find the right property for your investment goals.

Here are some tips for investing in real estate on the Plateau:

- Be patient but be ready to act quickly. It may take some time to find the right property for your investment. But when



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the right property becomes available, be ready to make an offer.

- Work with a real estate agent. A good real estate agent can help you find the right property for your investment goals and negotiate a fair price. They can also keep you abreast of the market.

- Do your research. Before you invest in any property, it is important to do your research and understand the local market. This includes understanding the demand for real estate on the Plateau, the cost of living, and the local economy. A local Realtor will assist you with these items as well.

Real estate investing can be a great way to build wealth and achieve financial security. According to a study by the National Association of Realtors, real estate investors can expect to earn an average annual return of 10% on their investment.

However, it is essential to do your research and understand the risks involved before you get started. By following the tips in this article, you can increase your chances of success in real estate investing.

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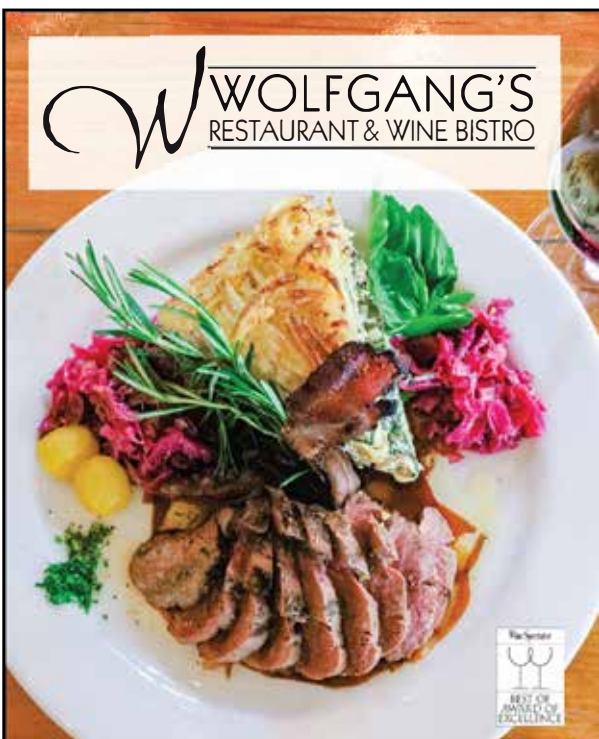
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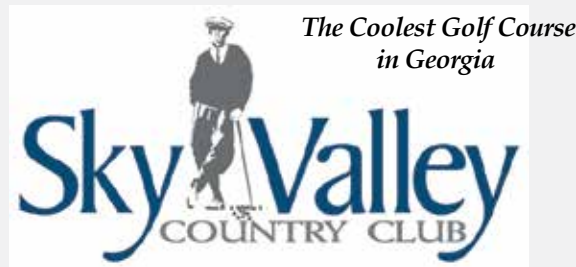


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# • THEN & NOW •

## The ache of memory

For years now from Good Friday to Mother's Day, I find myself in tears gazing out my window at a perfectly symmetrical blossoming dogwood tree. Every year. Yet a colleague of mine, a psychologist, explained why. My Mother died on Good Friday, was buried on Easter Sunday, and I could not envision a Mother's Day or any day without her. Now every spring when the first dogwoods bloom, I still cry. The hunger of her memory can never be satisfied.

I grew up in a sort-of Texas Baptist family made up of my Mother, Dad, and her four sons. Ours was a just-getting-by household, my Dad a proud reiver, a southern term for someone who owned his work, namely an old truck, some rusty tools, and a penchant for drifting from one temporary construction job to the next.

Some Fridays he would come home early, pile us all in his truck, whistle for the dog, turn out the lights, stuff a chaw of tobacco in his mouth, and drive away. Still, my Mother, the stoic Swede that she was, somehow cobbled together a family and future for us all. Whether romanticized or realized, sanctified or sanitized, whether memed in my mind or hymned in my heart, memories of her forever shaped my emotional and societal self. They still do.

Education irrevocably transformed me. It distanced but did not separate me from my childhood and family, but, above all, my Mother. Told that she must come to my elementary school and meet with the principal, angry that she would take time from her cleaning and ironing job because I had "misbehaved," she did not speak to me for two days. When I finally asked what the principal said, my Mother replied, "Well, she said you were very smart." Puzzled, I asked what that meant. "Not much at all," she replied, "I don't think anyone's going to come up to you and say, well, sonny, here's a dollar for being so smart. I think you'd be smarter if you worked hard and went to Sunday School." Mom was always right and righteous.

Going to college began the long, lonely process of remaking myself. Yet, whether at Rice, Georgia, or Oxford, I never felt I belonged socially or academically. Instead,



**Milton Ready**

I felt closer to those who worked with their hands as carpenters and cleaners on campus. In the Army and stationed overseas in a combat unit, I never received any letters from my Mother, only a girlfriend and a former high school teammate. Home on convalescent leave, I asked Mom why she never wrote. "Well, son," she said, "you're educated and I'm not. My letters would embarrass you." Mom only went to the sixth

grade, Dad to the seventh. Afterward, I went to the local post office, bought lots of postcards, wrote fill-in-the-blank comments like "I'm doing well" and "It hasn't rained in weeks" on them along with my APO address and gave them to Mom. She used them all.

When I married, the ceremony was held at River Oaks First Baptist Church in Houston. Told she must attend several bridal events, my Mother refused. Why? "Well," she replied, "what would I wear?" And, who would I talk to? How am I supposed to act?" In perhaps one of the most shameful acts of my life, I explained to her that I would buy her a new dress and teach her how to use all the silverware set before her so that she could be like "the rich folks." She wept. And went. But never wore that dress again.

I never thought my childhood in Texas a "lost Eden" or romanticized the closeness of my parents or family. Except my Mother. The complexities and contradictions of that cultural dilemma of being in two worlds never surfaced in my return family visits, in that calming assurance as we ate dinner together and laughed over life's dilemmas.

Even now as you read this, know that sometimes I go outside at night, marvel at the stars so visible here in the mountains, and softly sing that simple hymn I learned as a child from my Mother. She would not like me changing the words.

And she walks with me  
 And she talks with me  
 And she tells me I am her own.  
 And the joy we share  
 As I tarry there  
 All others should have known.

With gratitude to all our Mothers.



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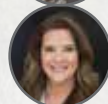
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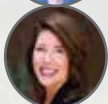
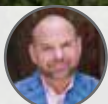


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# ...SHEARL continued from page 1

with Highlands residents April 28, Shearl addressed the public to ask for more time to gather information.

"I am your representative. I will do everything, everything I can and I will give you every ounce of my energy to represent you," said Commissioner Shearl in response to the last member of the public to ask for support of the Highlands School Expansion project. "The biggest thing since our meeting is that I have had conversations with the board of education and also there has been communications with the state leadership in education and so I think there is a lot of information we are trying to gather through this Pre-K and everything as a whole. And how it is funded and everything else. And hopefully we can get to the bottom of this for all the school systems for the Pre-K needs. But all I ask you is for patience. I am working, we are working, we are working for everybody. We are going to try to do this to benefit our children and the working families in Macon County. So please just give us patience and a little time."

After the community meeting in Highlands, many residents expected Commissioner Shearl to express his support of the expansion project on behalf of the community as well as ask his fellow board members to reinstate the contract and reallocate the funding that was removed from design contract for the expansion earlier this year. However, Commissioner Shearl didn't report details of the 2 1/2 hour long Highlands Community meeting to his fellow board members during public session on Tuesday.

Specifically, Highlands residents asked Commissioner Shearl to encourage his fellow commissioners to provide \$160,000 to finish the design plans for the expansion project, which would make the project

"shovel ready" so potential funding could be secured in the future. However, no such ask was made during the commissioners' meeting on Tuesday.

"The Highlands Community made their wishes loud and clear that their expectation was for the LS3P contract to be reinstated, and then the entire Highlands School project eventually funded," said Macon County Board of Education Board member Hilary Wilkes, who represents Highlands. "I'm glad the conversation is still on the table, and I hope that we will have movement on this issue sooner rather than later."

Many residents are confused as to why Commissioner Shearl continues to claim time is needed to "figure out how Pre-K is funded" or why he is hung up on the two preschool classrooms at all, because the \$4.7 million Highlands Expansion/Pre-K Project is much more than that. It includes desperately needed renovations and repairs to the campus, which would result in two additional classrooms that could be used for preschool.

The expansion project would include a remodel of the school's library and of the computer lab as well as expanding space to focus on the school's career and technical education (CTE) offerings. The primary focus of the Highlands School expansion project would take place in the middle school and high school wings of the facility and will accommodate needed classroom space for CTE courses as well as more ITV classes in the high school wing.

The project proposal includes renovation to the elementary wing of the school to repurpose two classroom spaces - currently used for the high school - to be used for Pre-K classes - which has been identified as a significant need on the Plateau.

During the Highlands Community

meeting April 28, Commissioner Shearl made a comment that Pre-K was comparable to "free daycare" which is something he didn't think was necessary.

While the Highlands expansion project encompasses much more than just the two preschool classrooms, Commissioner Shearl's comments at the BOC meeting Tuesday night regarding "looking into how Pre-K is funded" implies he still doesn't understand the state program.

The NC Pre-K Program Requirements are designed to ensure that a high-quality pre-kindergarten classroom experience is provided for eligible four-year-old children in each local NC Pre-K Program and that, to the extent possible, uniformity exists across the state. Programs are also required to meet the NC Child Care Rules. NC's Pre-K program meets a number of nationally accepted benchmarks for measuring quality early learning. These include comprehensive Early Learning Standards; staff who are required to meet education/licensure requirements, professional development; 1:9 staff/child ratio; developmental screens and referral; evidence-based curriculum and formative assessments; monitoring and nutritional requirements.

Funding for NC Pre-K comes from the North Carolina Education Lottery, federal funds, local funds, and state funds. In NC's funding model, the state pays about 60% of the cost and the local community pays 40%. The 40% paid for by the "local community" does not mean county government, it means 40% of the funding is covered by private-pay preschool spots.

State spending on NC Pre-K in 2021 was \$113,509,071 with an additional \$68,300,000 in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and \$3,581,732 in federal CARES funds. The remaining funds for the state's preschools are made up of private-pay spots for individuals. Macon County has a specified number of private-

pay spots at each preschool site in the district which cost families \$497 per month.

Each year, Macon County Schools has an extensive waiting list for students looking to attend Pre-K. The county school system serves about 90 preschool students annually, though it has 300 students in kindergarten each year. The roughly 210 students who could attend Pre-K the year prior to attending Kindergarten are either at home enrolled in a private childcare center, the waiting lists for a private childcare center, or in unlicensed, unregulated home daycares.

Currently there are 57 children on the waiting list for the two early childhood education programs in Highlands.

With extensive research being conducted to show the impact Pre-K plays on development, it's evident that early education is far more than a "free babysitter."

A study by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina found that children who attended NC Pre-K showed higher language, math, and social skills at the end of Pre-K and maintained these gains through the end of kindergarten.

Research has also shown that participation in Pre-K programs is associated with higher high school graduation rates and increased chances of attending college or other post-secondary education.

There is also significant data to support the global economic benefit of early education for communities at large.

Investing in early childhood education, including Pre-K, can yield significant economic benefits in the long run.

Studies have demonstrated that high-quality early education programs generate positive returns on investment through increased earnings, reduced crime rates, and decreased need for social services. Information reported by Public Schools First NC through the National Institute of Early Ed-

• See SHEARL page 22

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## May/June Program Highlights

**Starting Your Plants Off Right**  
Tuesday, May 16, 2-4pm, \$30/\$40 Member/Non-member

**Home Landscape Design (Part 1 of 3)**  
Wednesday, May 17, 10am-12pm, \$60/\$70 Member/Non-member

**Botanical EcoTour: Spring Wildflowers at the Headwaters of the Chattooga**  
Monday, May 22, 9am-12pm, \$50/\$60 Member/Non-member

**Unclutter Your iPhone or iPad**  
Wednesday, May 24, 1-4pm, \$40/\$50 Member/Non-member

**Home Landscape Design (Part 2 of 3)**  
Wednesday, May 31, 2-4pm \$60/\$70 Member/Non-member

**Ellicot's Rock: Surveyors' Footsteps on the 35th Parallel**  
Tuesday, June 6, 10am-12pm, \$30/\$40 Member/Non-member

**Vignettes From 39 Years of Diplomacy (with Ambassador Gene Cretz)**  
Thursday, June 8, 10am-12pm, \$30/\$40 Member/Non-member

**Presidential Transitions: Friendly and Hostile Takeovers**  
Monday, June 12, 10am-12pm, \$30/\$40 Member/Non-member



### Featured Programs:



**Talk and Hike: "In the Footsteps of a Wild Vision - Japanese Immigrant George Masa's Journeys on the Highlands Plateau."**  
Presenter: Brent Martin, Wednesday, May 31, 10am-3pm, \$70/\$80 Member/Non-member (or for the talk only, \$30/\$40, 10am-12pm)  
Learn about the life of Japanese photographer George Masa, particularly his time spent photographing the Highlands plateau in 1929. After the presentation, head out to explore the areas Masa photographed.



**Goldwater Girls Grow Up**  
Presenter: Robin M. Morris, PhD, Monday, June 19, 10am-12pm, \$30/\$40 Member/Non-member  
Examine the efforts of female volunteers and organizers behind historically successful conservative men. Trace these women's contributions from the 1960s to eventually running for office decades later in this riveting lecture.

**To register for these and other CLE programs, please visit [clehighlands.com](http://clehighlands.com)**

 (828) 526-8811
  [office@clehighlands.com](mailto:office@clehighlands.com)

## ...TAX continued from page 1

Josh Ward said the new rate of 10.2 cents per \$100 valuation should still fit the town's needs, regardless.

Since the Town Board hadn't planned on a tax rate hike, and because there was a reval, the town is required to adopt a revenue neutral tax rate.

Revenue neutral is when a taxing jurisdiction budgets the exact same amount of property tax revenue, in dollars, for the upcoming budget year as they did for the current year.

"As a conservative approach, we have figured in a reduction of an additional \$100 million which will bring the overall value within the Highlands City limits to approximately \$2,750,001,476," said Ward.

The revenue neutral tax rate of 10.22 cents is down from the current tax rate of 15.16 cents per \$100 of valuation.

The new tax rate includes .015 currently earmarked for paving, that after three years, is now scheduled to sunset June 30, 2023.

Ward recommended continuing to earmark the amount – even to make it a permanent -- to continue assisting with paving and sidewalk projects into the future without the need for sunseting.

"I don't want to see us get behind like we have in the past and have to play catch-up," he said. "Because it's a never-ending cycle."

However, Commissioner John Dotson's suggested voting on the earmark each year.

"I have a problem with making the paving earmarked permanently," he said. "I think we need to sunset it every year because at some point, that money will go somewhere else. It needs to stop each year and whoever is on the board needs to be held accountable for that money every year. If it's needed, so be it."

Dotson said if it isn't sunset each year, the earmark becomes a built-in tax to the taxpayers, and it's just forgotten about.

"I think it's better to be held accountable every year," said Dotson. "That way, if needed, it can change or be used for something else."

### Scholarships

This year, thanks to an anonymous \$100,000 donation and \$25,000 in various small donations, \$56,000 is being awarded to the 21 Highlands School senior going on to higher education while continuing to support those already in college.

"That's as high as it's ever been," said Commissioner Amy Patterson. "It was \$26,000."

Town Treasurer Rebecca Shuler said since donations increased the scholarship pot, the committee agreed to make the

scholarships higher this year and the next three years.

"We have been trying to make it higher so they can give better scholarships to the kids, so with that \$125,000 we divided it by four and added it to the fund," she said.

In four years, the committee will go back to awarding the average it gets through the golf and fishing tournaments which is usually about \$26,000.

### Reconnect Fees

The board agreed to increase disconnect fees from \$75 to \$150 because Shuler said it's the same people over and over again who don't pay their bill that results in service being cut off. It's hoped the increase will be a deterrent.

After-hours service fees will be broken out for water and for electricity -- \$150 for water and \$200 for electric.

The increases will offset the manhours it takes to service those types of calls.

### Town Attorney

The board agreed in a 4-1 vote to hire Bob Hagemann of Poyner Spruill out of Charlotte – the firm and lawyer who represents the town in its Short-term Rental legal cases.

Hagemann will be assisted, when necessary, by Chad Essick and Nick Tosco. They will each attend meetings via Zoom.

The vote was contingent upon clarification of the "General Waiver of Conflicts" paragraph in the Engagement for Legal Services contract.

Commissioners agreed that obviously, the firm represents many other clients, but it was the verbiage in the General Waiver of Conflicts paragraph that concerned the board.

"During the time we are representing the Town, we may also represent other existing or new clients—including clients who are direct competitors or may otherwise have interests that are adverse to the Town's interests—in disputes or transactions directly or indirectly adverse to the Town that are not substantially related to this representation. Therefore, the Town agrees that our representation of it in this matter will not disqualify our firm from opposing it in future litigation, transactions, or other legal matters that are not substantially related to the subject matter of this engagement, and the Town consents to any conflict of interest with respect to those representations," reads the contract.

Commissioner Patterson suggested and others agreed that the firm isn't used to representing municipalities and perhaps that paragraph was over-extending and



# 2023 Outdoor Concert Series

Each Friday and Saturday night from May through October, the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/ Visit Highlands, NC hosts live music downtown.

*Join us for our May and June concerts!*

All shows take place from 6 – 8:30 p.m.

## *Friday Night Live*

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MAY 26  
Silly Ridge

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JUNE 9  
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JUNE 16  
Steady Hand String Band

JUNE 23  
Southern Highland Band

JUNE 30  
Byrds & Crows

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JUNE 3  
Nu-Blu

JUNE 10  
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# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

## EXTENDED POOL HOURS

• Public Swim: Mon.-Wed. 3:30-7p; Sat. 11a-6p; Sun. 1-6p. Adult Swim: Mon.-Wed. 11a-3:30p and Thurs. and Fri., 11a-2p. Lap Swim: Mon-Fri 6a-9:45a and Sat. 10-11a. Water Aerobics: Mon.-Fri. 10-11a. 828-526-1595.

## ONGOING

• Looking for a fun, engaging way to explore Highlands with your family? The "Kids Hike Highlands" trail passport program has been refreshed for the 2023 season. pick up a copy of the Kids Hike Highlands passport map at one of the four prize locations or you can download a copy at [www.highlandsbiological.org](http://www.highlandsbiological.org).

## Mon-Wed, Fri-Sun

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands Mountain View Group holds open meetings in Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. A ZOOM meeting is available Wednesday at 7PM (ID# 921 817 2966, password CVG2020). For more information, please visit [www.aawnc80.org](http://www.aawnc80.org) or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-4357

## Second Mondays

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

## 1st Tuesdays

• Indivisible Highlands from 5-6:30 pm at the Hudson Library.

## 2nd Tuesdays

• Highlands Writers Group meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 3pm. Writers still uncomfortable with in-person gatherings may participate via Zoom meetings held on the second or third Tuesday of each month at 3pm. Members receive weekly notification regarding when and how the group will assemble. For more information contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at [budandlynn@me.com](mailto:budandlynn@me.com)

## Tuesdays

• Strength Training 8:15-9:15am.

Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone.

## Mon-Fri

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

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

## Mon., Tues., Thurs.

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

## Mon. & Wed.

• New Mobility Class with Anna Norton It's all about movement. 5:30-6:30pm and Wednesday 6:45-7:45. For more info, call 267-825-0716.

## Mon, Wed, Fri

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

• Aerobics w/Tina Rogers 8-9a. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

## Tues. & Thurs.

• New Zumba class with Gay Chaplin from 4:30-5:30p. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

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

## First Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health, at 11a. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health issues of particular interest to them.

## Wednesdays

• ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 5:30-6:30pm. No registration required -- just show up and participate. Questions? Visit [www.maconncliteracy.org](http://www.maconncliteracy.org), call 828-526 - 0863 or email [info@maconncliteracy.org](mailto:info@maconncliteracy.org)

## Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15am. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• At Hudson Library, Kids Zone at 3:30 pm with a wide variety of STEAM, nature, and craft activities.

For more information about any of these summer activities, contact Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

## 3rd Fridays

• At the Rec Park, Senior Lunches noon in the meeting room. For any other information call Lester Norris or Maxine Ramey at 828-526-3556.

## 2nd Saturdays

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

## 3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in their Community Room/909 Chapel. We serve breakfast at 9am and hold our monthly meeting at 10am. We invite ALL Veterans to attend. Contact Ed McCloskey, Commander for any information @828-787-1660.

## Through May 31

• The Fontana Regional Library system, including Hudson Library in Highlands, is starting an Active Audio Challenge that will run from March 1st through May 31st. Participants who listen to 25 hours of audiobooks, while being active, will receive a prize. To register for the Challenge, come by Hudson Library and pick up the logbook used to record entries. For more information or to request an accommodation, please call the library at 828-526-3031.

## Thurs., May 11

• "Bee Kind Bingo" at the Highlands Community Building, : 869 N 4th Street, Highlands at 6:30-8:30. Bring cash! \$1 per bingo card, Raffle tickets for prizes: \$5 each or \$20 for 5. Food for purchase. For more info, contact Linda Kirkman at [linda\\_a@kirkman.com](mailto:linda_a@kirkman.com) or 770-296-2762.

## Sat., May 13

• **Bee Kind:** Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau MayFest 12-3p. The Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau welcomes the youth and families to join BGCP, and our local schools/non-profits for a fun day filled with creative learning activities, games, and more! Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau 558 Frank Allen Road, Cashiers For more info, (828) 743-2775 <https://www.bgcplateau.org/news-and-events>

## Sun., May 14

• At PAC, Steep Canyon Rangers. For tickets, email [highlandspacnc@gmail.com](mailto:highlandspacnc@gmail.com).



# • HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

## Wed., May 17

• At Acorn's a book signing from 2-4 pm, with Chef Steven Satterfield of Miller Union in Atlanta who will be signing copies of his book, "Root to Leaf: A Southern Chef Cooks Through the Seasons."

## Thurs – Sat, May 18-20

• "Nightwatch" with the Highlands-Cashiers Players at PAC at 7:30 p.m. Unable to sleep, Elaine Wheeler paces the living room of her Manhattan townhouse, troubled by unsettling memories and vague fears. Her husband tries to comfort her, but when he steps away for a moment, Elaine screams as she sees (or believes she sees) the body of a dead man in the window across the way.

## Thurs., May 18

• **Bee Kind:** Satulah Sunset for the Spirit Satulah Sunset for the Spirit. Meet at Kelsey Hutchison park at 7p and hike to Satulah for the 8:30 sunset. Keep the 17th open as well just in case the weather doesn't cooperate! Easy uphill hike with incredible views & the best place in town to soak up the sunset. For more info, call Hope Corbin at 301.523.0445

• At OEI's The Farm from 6-9 PM, James Beard Foundation award-winning Chef Steven Satterfield of Miller Union in Atlanta. "Root to Leaf: A Southern Chef Cooks Through the Seasons" (featured on CBS This Morning). \$185

per person, plus tax and gratuity. Book Online: <https://www.simplenetix.com/e/chef-steven-satterfield-dinner-tickets-123309>

## Friday, May 19

• Dedication of the new Fire Station at Oak and Main streets from 4-6 pm.

## Sat., May 20

• "Meander in May," the free, self-guided arts festival includes painting, woodworking and ceramics demonstrations along with performances by a myriad of bands and musicians. The immersive arts experience begins at 11 a.m. and culminates with a free concert by The Boomers in K-H Park from 6 - 8:30 p.m.,

• **BEE Kind** Forest Bathing Walk 5-8p at 111 Lower Lake Road, Highlands. Cost: \$20. In addition to the psychological and emotional benefits, Forest Therapy has a positive impact on human physiology in the form of improved biometric measures and function. Each walk is 3 hours in length, and consists of a series of invitations crafted to encourage the participants to connect with nature through their senses. Events are rain or shine, unless the weather is threatening. For more info, contact Paige Engelbrektsson, [paige@highlandsbiological.org](mailto:paige@highlandsbiological.org) or 828-526-2623.

• **Bee Kind:** Saturdays on Pine Concert Series kicks off with The Boomers, 6-8:30p.

Returning for the 2023 season!



*Written by Lucille Fletcher / Directed by Michael Lanzilotta*

Thursday–Saturday, May 18, 19, 20 @ 7:30 pm  
Sunday, May 21 @ 2:30 pm

Thursday–Saturday, May 25, 26, 27 @ 7:30 pm  
Sunday, May 28 @ 2:30 pm

Highlands Performing Arts Center—507 Chestnut Street

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[www.highlandsp Performingarts.com/hcp.html](http://www.highlandsp Performingarts.com/hcp.html) | 828-526-9047



*Meander in May*  
THE ART OF HIGHLANDS, NC

**MAY 20**  
11 a.m. x 8:30 p.m.



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# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



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

First of all, I applaud any effort to accentuate the need for greater awareness of mental health needs here on our plateau. We are no doubt the kind of community that needs to raise awareness and diminish any stigma toward mental health issues of all kinds. We are the kind of community that needs a greater kindness toward one another as we navigate the ways in which we meet one another's needs, emotional and mental health needs.

Over 14 years ago I was called to serve Community Bible Church and this local community as well. Like most who make their way to our plateau, I was taken aback by the beauty of Highlands and Cashiers, alike. Yet, on this beautiful mountain, I soon discovered an underlying pain among those with unmet needs in the area of mental health. I found myself personally involved with families dealing with drug overdoses, and a handful of suicides. Some adolescents were cutting themselves and addictions of many kinds were certainly an issue. I was becoming increasingly aware of serious mental health issues among people of all ages that needed serious intervention. The very issues I was accustomed to seeing in Atlanta seemed to be even more statistically prevalent here on the mountain.

It became real clear, real soon, that real consistent mental health care needed to be a real priority here on this plateau. One problem though, there was an abiding stigma that kept many from reaching out for help. Even forming a 12-Step support group was more of a challenge than I realized because people were reticent to open up concerning their problems. Some hurting people fear "losing face" in the community and the marketplace. We are just small enough as a community to hinder the transparency many need in recovery. I found it fascinating that people in Franklin and Sylva were coming to Community Bible Church in Highlands to receive counseling out of a fear that someone in their immediate community would become aware of a need they had.

As a result of my increased awareness of the unmet needs of people in our community I personally champion any strategic effort to merge resources, network among mental health professionals, scale counseling costs through financial assistance and even fund new facilities. Western Carolina is in great need of mental health care centers for children and adolescents. Like never before there are needs for acceptance among young people coupled with a need to help parents navigate new waters when it comes to help-

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

**John 3:16**

### BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

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

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

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

### CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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### CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

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www.cashiers.church

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Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

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

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

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

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

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

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

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

Thursdays 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

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

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

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

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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; Choir 5p; Prayer Mtg 6:15p

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Emily Wilmarth, pastor

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

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

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

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

### HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

### HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

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

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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

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

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

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# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from April 25. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.**

## April 25

• At 10:28 p.m., Geronimo Garcia Mendoza, 31, of Franklin, was arrested for DUI when failing to stop at a stoplight on Main Street.

## May 1

• At 12:04 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on Main Street.

## May 6

• At 1:14 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on Main Street.

## May 7

• At 7 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on U.S. 64 east and Carolina Way.

## The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from 4/25.

## May 2

• At 9:41 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Cullasaja Club Drive.

## May 3

• At 8:10 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

## May 5

• At 11:44 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

## May 6

• At 4:52 p.m., the dept.

responded to a call of an illegal burn at a location on Cherrywood Drive.

• At 6:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 28 south.

• At 9:51 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Arnold Road.

• At 10:59 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.

## May 7

• At 7:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Carolina Way

## May 8

• At 2:48 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on W. Church Street.

## ...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 18

ing their sons and daughters.

I encourage increased, honest awareness of mental health challenges and resources in our community. Continue caring for one another. Encourage those around you to seek help when needed. Listen closely and look for people's pain and love them through a process of restoration. Know your limitations when it comes to helping people deal



with mental health issues and "hand them off" to professionals. Share your concern with parents, teachers, school counselors, doctors, and clergy. We are here to help one another.

What kind of community are we

when it comes to mental health issues? Hopefully the kind that comes together to provide excellent care as we care for one another with kindness.

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." Jesus.

## ...TAX continued from page 14

should be changed.

"This is very open-ended," said Ward.

Commissioner Dotson said if Poyner Spruill is willing to narrow the terms of the paragraph, it would behoove the town to move forward.

"Ask them to narrow it and give us the right to review the circumstance," he said.

Commissioner Patterson said since she couldn't imagine the circumstances they are talking about, she didn't know if she should object or not object.


"Every circumstance may be different," she said.

Commissioner Marc Hehn, said he didn't see how the town can pay them to represent whoever "them" might be and the town, too.


Police Chief Andrea Holland said it sounds like they are saying "We can represent either and we reserve the right to represent who we want to represent."

Commissioner Patterson suggested since Poyner Spruill doesn't typically represent municipalities,

• See TAX page 22



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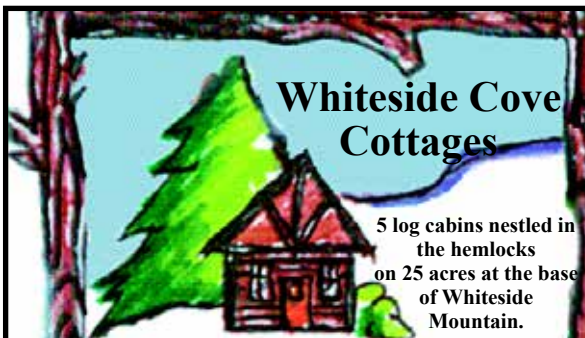
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## ...TAX continued from page 19

it's possible they don't have a municipal-specific contract."

"Maybe they just left this in there," she said. "But if they are the town attorney, they would be representing everything we have not just the specific thing they are representing us for now [Short-term Rentals]."

The board voted to hire

Poyner Spruill as the town attorney contingent upon the clarification.

However, Commissioner Hehn voted "no."

"I was pleased with the other applicant who was willing to come to every meeting," he said. "I think there is a lot to be said for that. Read the room. Watch what goes on. Plus, [referring to the contract

presented] I can't vote for something I haven't read."

Ward said an attorney was needed for the Wednesday, May 10 Zoning Board meeting. Therefore, the board voted to move forward with the aforementioned contingency.

- Kim Lewicki

## ...SHEARL continued from page 10

ucation Research (NIEER) found:

"Children who attended Pre-K are less likely to develop alcohol or drug problems, commit a felony, and go to prison. They are half as likely to be arrested.

Every \$1 invested in Pre-K saves taxpayers up to \$13 in future costs in incarceration, education, and welfare.

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Investment in NC Pre-K pays off by reducing the likelihood that a child will be placed into special education classrooms showing decreases of 29% in 3rd grade and increasing to 48% in 5th grade. Special education costs nearly twice as much as regular classroom education."

Wilkes said a joint meeting between the MC BOC and the Board of Education will be scheduled for some time in late May or early June.

"Hopefully, some of these items will appear as we work out the budget," she said.

## ...MAYOR continued from page 2

ests can provide. Another benefit can be the embracing of a small and somewhat simple community life. In short, people long for connectedness to nature and with other people. Highlands and Western Carolina is a place where these relationships can be made.

As for me, I discovered a couple of things during the trip: First, after 43 years of marriage, I discovered I am connected to a wild river woman, as Sallie displayed an intuitive sense for negotiating the whitewater on the Cullasaja. And second, nature's "inconveniences" that we encountered on our river adventure were far outweighed by the connections we made to nature and to one another.

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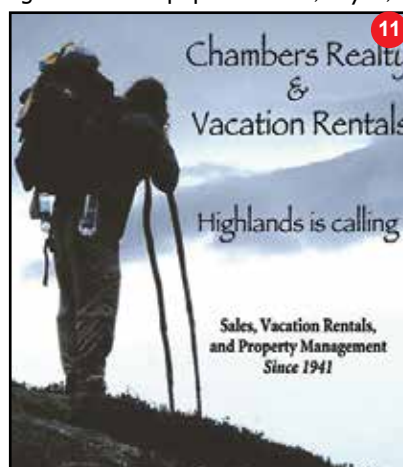
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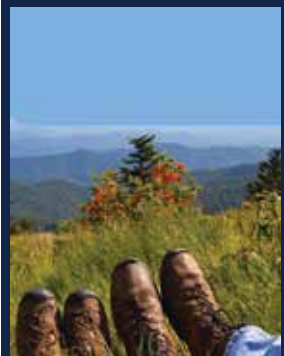
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