

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 21, Number 20

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com

Thurs., May 16, 2024

District changes will dilute candidate pool for Highlands and Nantahala

Brittney Lofthouse
NC Senator Kevin Corbin
and Representative Karl Gil-

lespie have taken legislative steps to alter the district election format in response to a local resolution for county commissioners to in-
by Macon County commissioners
• See **ELECTION** page 4

HS hosts Special Olympic athletes

By Kim Lewicki
On Friday, May 10 athletes from the Special Olympic teams in Macon and other counties gathered at Highlands School to compete and say "Aloha!"

Dozens of athletes were greeted by school staff and community volunteers who prepared the track and field and greeted and cheered athletes on as they ran the track and more.

"Highlands School absolutely loved hosting the Special Olympics and it was a picture-perfect day!" said HS Principal Sarah Holbrooks. "The sun was shining and there was a little breeze throughout the day."

Area law enforcement and members of the Highlands Fire & Rescue team were on site helping with traffic flow and various tasks.

"Highlands School students in grades K-12 enjoyed having
• See **OLYMPICS** page 16

The 'Northern Lights' light up the skies of Highlands and Cashiers in the dead of night



A view of the Northern Lights from the Rhodes Big View overlook along US64 at 2 a.m. on Saturday, May 11. The lights in the bottom right of the frame are from Cashiers.
- Photo by Maggie Burd

Lady Highlanders are knocked out of playoffs

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Highlands varsity girls soccer team hosted Draughn on Monday in the first round of the North

Carolina High School Athletic Association girls soccer playoffs and ended in a loss with a final 4-0 to Draughn.
• See **PLAYOFFS** page 17

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Public cries 'foul' at proposed floodplain ordinance change

By Brittney Lofthouse

At the latest Macon County Board of Commissioners meeting, a proposal to relax the county's floodplain regulations sparked a wave of public concern. Citizens took to the floor during the public comment period to voice their opposition to changes that could potentially heighten flood risks.

The current ordinance prohibits the encroachment of fill material or other development into the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), the floodway, or non-encroachment area of any watercourse unless strict requirements are met. Commissioner Josh Young, having been ap-

• See **FLOODPLAIN** page 12

MC Library meetings are still contentious

By Kim Lewicki

The "once every two months" Macon County Public Library Board of Trustees meeting that took place at Hudson Library the first week in April was once again rather combative and derisive.

First, Chairman Bill Dyar, reminded the audience that verbal public comment and outbursts were not allowed under penalty of law – though his warning fell on deaf ears.

As part of each meeting, Macon County Librarian Abby Hardison presents a comprehen-

sive report detailing the work done at the Siler Road location, the Hudson and Nantahala libraries illustrating how MC libraries are gathering places in which Macon County citizens of all ages and genders learn and interact because there is literally something for everyone.

She told about digital classes offered by Southwestern Community College, Health and Wellness initiatives including blood pressure kiosks and monitor kits, senior memory activities and re-

• See **LIBRARY** page 8

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

The budget, pending legislation and more

Thursday evening, May 16, the Highlands Town Board will convene at the Highlands Recreation Center. Progress is being made on the renovations at the Highlands Community Center next to the ballfield, and I believe we will be there for the July meetings.

The monthly workshop meeting on Thursday will begin at 6 pm. The board and town staff will hear a presentation by another company that has software that tracks and can inform staff about STR activity in Highlands. The company also provides a 24-7 call service for any problem with a STR unit. Members of the Highlands Neighborhood Coalition have been requesting the implementation of such a system. The current provider has not been able to institute such a system.

At the workshop the board will have a discussion about how to proceed in setting up a liaison or committee system to address concerns of the business community, as well as the neighborhood folks. Even without such a system, concerned citizens can



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

always contact me or the commissioners. I will say that I can't always address those concerns to everyone's satisfaction, but I do listen and investigate problems. Normally, I will discuss the problem with the Town Manager and staff, and on some occasions the Town Attorney is consulted. I try to make sure someone, whether me, the Town Manager, or a staff member, follows up with the resident.

At the formal business meeting that begins at 7 pm, the Town Manager will present a proposed town budget for fiscal year 2024-2025. As I have stated before, this new budget will appear to be very large and expansive due primarily to the 13 million dollars the town has received in state grants and because reserve funds are being used to address critical infrastructure initiatives. The projects and budget carryovers will continue for several years.

For instance, we have received funding for the dredging of Mirror Lake. An engineering firm has been chosen to manage and oversee the project. Since the dredging will be done in phases, the funds for the project will be carried over into forthcoming budgets until the project is completed.

Another topic on the agenda will be a discussion and review of short-term rental legislation that may come before the state house and senate in this short session. The word in Raleigh going into this short session was that there would be no action concerning STRs. My contacts at the NC League of Municipalities held this view also. But some sources indicate that STR legislation might not be a dead issue. Also, there are several bills that would also impact state building and development codes. Our staff and attorney will be tracking these developments as they unfold in Raleigh.

I anticipate Representative Gillespie's bill to limit tractor-trailer trucks on the Gorge Road to pass the Senate. Senator Corbin is working hard to get that bill over the senate finish line and on to the governor for his signature.

Also, HB 246 is being considered by the Senate. That bill would guarantee fair reimbursement for local pharmacies in filling prescriptions. Without this bill, local pharmacies, like our independent pharmacy, will have a hard time making ends meet. Please





• See MAYOR page 15

• HIC'S VIEW •



"OK now I see but I still can't find a violation.
He even got a building permit."

• WEATHER •

Thu, 16-May	Fri, 17-May	Sat, 18-May	Sun, 19-May
 73°F 52°F	 65°F 57°F	 68°F 55°F	 71°F 53°F
Warmer with clouds and sun	Cloudy, a shower and t-storm	Cloudy, a shower and t-storm	A shower and thunderstorm
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For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Weather

Highlands Newspaper

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Phone: (828) 200-1371

Email:

HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki

Reporters: Brittney Lofthouse

Brian O'Shea

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Letter Policy:

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

Obituary Policy:

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

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Franklin Gem Society Museum celebrates 50 Years

Spring Gem Show in the Robert C Carpenter Center May17-19, 10am – 6pm

**By Dr. Susan Ray
FGMS Vice President & Secretary**

During the snowy winter of 1971 a small group of Franklin rockhounds met in various basements and schools around town to share their knowledge and love of gems and minerals. As their club membership grew, they realized they needed not only a permanent meeting place, but a way to display their collections so others could enjoy the beauty of such treasures.

The Gem and Mineral Society of Franklin, Inc., having incorporated with the state in 1972, was rapidly growing and by December of that year had over 110 members. The club officers presented a plan to the Macon County Commissioners to renovate and use the old, dilapidated county jail as their museum and meeting site – at their expense.

In the 50 years since its opening, the museum has collected a plethora of gems, minerals, fossils, Native American artifacts and unique items. In 1979 the museum negotiated a deal with a local farmer who had acquired a 48 ½ pound corundum crystal in a land trade deal. The crystal had been discovered in 1888 in the famous Corundum Hill Mine. He wanted to keep it in Macon County and negotiated with Society. The Society, got the giant crystal but acquired in the deal a 2 ¼ pound ruby, a 7 ½ pound white/blue corundum, and a one-pound dark pink corundum crystal – all for \$1,500.

Today, the museum's collections are housed in eight rooms. The States Room has displays from all 50 states, the Native American Room has a large collection of bowls, arrowheads, and hand tools, some 3,000 to 6,000 years old. The North Carolina Room houses over 2,000 specimens including emeralds, rubies, sapphires, topaz, aquamarines, and other NC gems. Included is a display of the white clay Kaolin. In 1767 tons were extracted from the Cherokee area by locals for the representatives of England's Wedgwood Potteries. The clay was used to create Wedgwood's "biscuit porcelain." The Fluorescent Room contains stones that glow in the dark under ultraviolet lighting.

The World Room and the International Hall have displays from all seven continents, including Antarctica and outer space – meteors!

The Fossil Room has fossilized plants, insects, and animals. It also includes a raptor dinosaur egg and copralite (dinosaur excrement) – a favorite of young visitors.

The Franklin Gem and Mineral Museum 50th birthday is May 25 at 25 Phillips St. in Franklin or stop by the Spring Gem Show in the Robert C Carpenter Center May17-19, 10am – 6pm where the Gem Society will have a room dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of the museum. For more information about the museum phone (828) 369-7831 or by exploring our website: www.fgmm.org

• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

Just the facts, Ma'am!

What a lovely spring we have had with showers of blessings and blossoms! With a few storms that blew our way some were without power for a short time and a big thank you to our linemen who are always quick to rev us back up!

Our landscape is changing back to a base color of green with a colorful palette of blooms that beckon us outside...finally! Very little snow graced us this winter and all of us on Facebook couldn't wait to post about snowflakes, but no snowmen were visible around town. Many of us were disappointed!

As far as real estate goes, here is the state of our current market on the plateau which includes Highlands, Cashiers, Toyaway, Glenville and Sapphire. Entering May, we have a six-month supply which is good for such a large demographic area. The average closed sales price is up 9% compared to last year so we continue to climb, and values continue to increase. It seems wise to invest your money in real estate here!

We had 78 new listings in April with an average list price of \$1,837,000. The number of active listings is +/- 400 including May to date. The number of pending sales for April was 104 at an average price of \$1,902,000. Closed sales in April were 51 at an average price of \$1,220,000. In the last 12 months there were 684 sales at an average sales price of \$1,292,000 and we expect an increase by the fall season.

In 2024 year to date we have sold 182 homes with average days on market being 128. It seems the Covid rush of 4 days on market has ended!

Having been named the number one small mountain town in the country by



Pat Allen BIC
Allen Tate Realtors/Pat Allen Realty Group.

Travel and Leisure Magazine ignited interest and exposure to Highlands once more. Even though the average prices seem exuberant there are still homes in lower price ranges so don't feel you can't get into our market. Good brokers can guide you and help with your specific needs.

Our "season" officially kicks off Memorial Day with the Mountain Garden Club's annual plant sale at the ballfield and we welcome our second home buyers back! Wishing you all

a lovely summer and look at all the events taking place from music in the park, performances at the PAC and Mountain Theatre, the car show, non-profit events, wine dinners galore, Village Green activities and Music, art shows, classes of all sorts, fashion shows, and way too many others to mention. Check with the event listings in Highlands Newspaper and the Laurel Magazine or get on the Visitors Centers email list for the current events.

Enjoy it all, sit back and relax among the fresh mountain air that lifts your spirits! And perhaps lift a spirit in hand with the mountain as your backdrop! How very fortunate we are to live here or visit here. We are glad you are here as part of our mountain family!

• Pat Allen is Broker-in-Charge of AllenTate/PatAllen Realty Group: the number one independent firm in the country with sales over \$7.5 Billion last year. Allen has been a top producer and award-winning broker since her career began 20 years ago. She and her partner and daughter, Julie Osborn, broke a new record with over \$68 million in sales in 2023. She may be reached at 828-200-9179 or pat.allen@allentate.com

...ELECTION continued from page 1

clude two at-large seats.

Companion bills Senate Bill 903 and House Bill 1060, have both passed both readings and are now in committee. This change, introduced by Commissioner John Shearl and championed by Commissioner Paul Higdon, has reignited discussions on electoral equity and public engagement in local governance.

During the November 2023 meeting, the Macon County Board of Commission-

ers passed a resolution advocating for a review of their election system, with Shearl emphasizing that the request was only for consideration rather than direct action.

Yet, the forwarded resolution explicitly proposed a mixed model of district and at-large representation, reflecting a longstanding interest by Chairman Higdon who noted, "This has been something I've talked about for a number of years."

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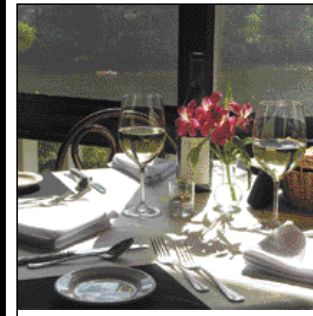
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• OBITUARY •



David Henry La Cagnina

David Henry La Cagnina, of Highlands, NC, went home to be with the Lord on April 28, 2024. He lived many places in the USA and Europe, but he found his true home in

Highlands where he spent the last third of his life.

David was well known for sharing life and joy with friends, and the Sunday brunch he regularly hosted around a crowded banquet table in his art gallery in town was always open to one more guest. He was a devout Christian and an ardent supporter of Community Bible Church.

La Cagnina was born to Henry and Alice La Cagnina on March 1, 1937 in Washington, DC. After spending his early years in Puerto Rico, the family moved to Concord, NH. When the family relocated to West Palm Beach, FL, David attended Palm Beach High School where he served as Secretary to the Key Club, alongside his friend, Burt Reynolds, who was President. He also sang in the Trinity Episcopal Church Boys Choir in Palm Beach.

David received an appointment to the US Naval Academy and was graduated in 1959 with a BS in electrical engineering. During his Naval Academy tenure, he was an award winning Olympic hopeful swimmer, and also a sailing devotee. He sailed in the Newport-Bermuda race in 1958. Following flight school in Pensacola, FL, La Cagnina flew A-4 fighter jets aboard the USS Enterprise off Cuba during the Cuban Missile crisis. He later flew from the USS Shangri-La in the Vietnam War.

He was employed by the Lilly Industries for many years, until he and his father moved to Highlands, NC full-time to open the art gallery on the Franklin Road, which remained open until 2021.

La Cagnina was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Michael Leonardo La Cagnina (Joyce). He is survived by his wife, Jane Webb La Cagnina, his sons, Adam Vyvyan La Cagnina (Julie) and Dominic Vyvyan La Cagnina, their mother, Valerie Vyvyan La Cagnina Thoresby, his sister Giulia La Cagnina Saucier, and nephews, Michael Henry La Cagnina, his brother, David William La Cagnina (Tracy) and their children, Bella and Noah. His lonely, devoted canine, Zac, looks for him every night.

He will be greatly missed by all those in the Highlands community who loved him.

The family is so thankful for the expertise and love of the home caregivers, Eileen Anderson, Loretta Pickelsimer, Robert Doe, Wallie Vinson and the angel/nurses at The Eckerd Center and of Four Seasons Hospice.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in David's memory to Four Seasons Hospice (171 Hospital Drive, Unit 600, Highlands, NC 28741, The Fidelia Eckerd Center, 250 Hospital Drive, Highlands, NC 28741) The Literacy and Learning Center (675 4th St., Highlands NC 28741) where he has volunteered, to the Performing Arts Center (507 Chestnut St., Highlands NC 28741), or to the organization of your choice.

A service, conducted by Dr. Gary Hewins, will be held at Community Bible Church in Highlands, NC on May 21, 2024 at 3:30p followed by a celebration at High Country Wine Tasting (nee La Cagnina Gallery) on Highway 64.

Online condolences can be left at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Atrium Series The Bascom Shop

From May to October, The Bascom will present its Atrium Series, featuring 20 retail artists in The Bascom's Greehey Atrium through four six-week presentations of work. The series will showcase artists from across the Southeast in a variety of mediums, curated by Anna Huff, the Grants Program Manager for the Metropolitan Arts Council in Greenville, SC.

Image credit: Meredith Skinner

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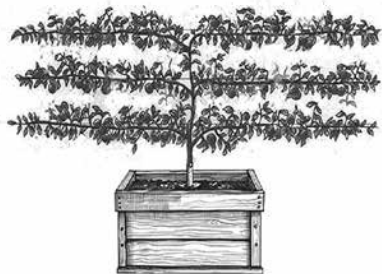


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Libraries are not the place to promote perversions

Dear Editor,

In response to a recent letter opposed to banning books, I'd like to say, "Congratulations for joining 99% of normal people who do not wish to ban books." The writer made some valid points, but overall, is misguided. The narrative of library issues nationwide has been that people want to ban books. That is totally false, yet gets emotions ginned up for a noble crusade. There has not been a single book banned in all of WNC since leftists began the brouhaha-- although 1 person failed in their effort to ban the Bible.

The real problem has been a shift in library culture. Beginning in 2021, libraries decided to stir controversy by advocating for certain lifestyles despite libraries being historically neutral on social and political issues. This is done in the way of celebrations, displays, pronoun usage, bathroom nonsense, and literature dispensed in unsuspecting appearance. It is especially troublesome when sexually themed and gender confusing materials are repeatedly placed front and center to minors. Parents should not be forced to explain to little Johnny why the boy's bathroom suddenly has tampons in it or why there are constant promotional displays of sexual materials. Those conversations should be left to parents' timing the same way as parents deciding what materials their kids can read without libraries putting their thumb on the scales.

There are never any conservative or biblical promotions/displays at libraries, so why the sudden sexual propaganda? A library's job is not to promote "health and wellness." None of our preferences are above others, and no alternate lifestyle is

special. So called diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) propaganda has done more harm than good by creating unnecessary conflicts.

Furthermore, the European Society of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (ESCAP) recently issued a policy statement advising doctors NOT to pursue prescribing children treatments that will transgender them.

"ESCAP calls for healthcare providers not to promote experimental and unnecessarily invasive treatments with unproven psycho-social effects and, therefore, to adhere to the "primum-nil-nocere" (first, do no harm) principle," the policy paper said on page 4.

Notably, ESCAP acknowledges lifelong consequences for children who are transgendered. According to scientific literature, these consequences can range from sterility, cancer, heart problems and death, despite pro-transgender medical institutions claiming otherwise. The paper also discussed how the decision to transgender a child is based on unreliable data.

If a credible major psychiatric organization is hesitant to pursue this recent trend of perversion, why in God's name are we celebrating and promoting it at an entity that has historically been a safe place for kids?

Most people don't care what others read or their personal choices, but there would be more harmony if we united together in neutrality instead of believing false narratives and giving special preference to private lifestyles in order to appear virtuous.

Jim Gaston
Franklin

...LIBRARY continued from page 1

sources like Hudson Library's Dementia Caregivers Support Group, grants being pursued for various programs, education programs like Summer Reading, Read2Me, MC Schools Telehealth, STEM programs, historical showcases, a solar eclipse celebration, Western Carolina's Mountain Heritage and MountainWise collaboration, how the Franklin Police explain financial scams, the use of private study rooms in area libraries, the availability of notary services and tax aides; how donations of food and personal hygiene products are distributed; and under the Recreation and Leisure category, the Books & Bites author-talks and Spring into Dance and Walking with Spring programs.

Finally operational expenses and details regarding the new Nantahala Library as well as a 7.4% budget request for FY

'24-'25 due to COLA increases, increased health insurance and retirement costs and the request for two part-time positions as well as the cost of replacing 18 obsolete computer workstations with systems that don't require a fan thereby decreasing power consumption, noise and dust generation that will represent at 79% savings.

All this shows that the MC Library system is concerned with far more than Pride Displays and sexually explicit books which is what at least two board members continually circled back to at the April meeting.

In fact, three years after the Pride Display at the Siler branch caused community uproar, Librarian Hardison said such displays haven't been exhibited and won't be again.

• See LIBRARY page 13

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Ribbon cutting ceremony at 5:00 pm

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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

Fri.-Wed., May 17-22

• **The Rec Park gym and aerobics room will be CLOSED. floors are being refinished. For more information, call Lester Norris or Janice Mathis at 828-526-3556.**

POOL SCHEDULE

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

PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10:00am-1:00pm indoors for the winter (notice the days and time has changed), everyone is welcome meetings

ALL WEEK

• 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 in Highlands @ the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 p.m. and on Wednesday & Fridays @ 12:00 noon. Open in person meetings are held in Cashiers @ the

Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library, 249 Frank Allen Rd. on Sunday at 5:00 pm, on Tuesday @ 7:00 pm, on Friday at 5:00 pm and on Saturday at 9:00 am. Cashiers Open ZOOM Meetings are on Wednesday @ 700 pm. ZOOM ROOM 921 817 2966 PASSWORD CVG2020. 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.

Mountain Findings Hours

May: Fri. and Sat. 10a to 1p.

June: Thurs.-Sat., 10a to 1p.

Thurs.-Sun., May 16-19

• At PAC, Highlands Community Players presents "Always a Brides-

maid" at 7:30p and 2p on Sunday. For tickets go to: www.highlandscashiersplayers.com or call 828-526-9047.

Fri.-Sun., May 17-19

• The 2024 Franklin Gem & Mineral Show at the Robert C. Carpenter Community Building on the Georgia Road. Beautiful gems, jewelry, minerals. Hourly Door Prizes, demonstrations, displays and more. Open to the Public. For more information, email FGMSPresident1@gmail.com

Fri., May 17

• At the Literacy & Learning Center, Tinker time for Tots at 10 a.m., No registration needed. Free.

• High Style Meet & Greet in Kelsey Hutchinson Founders Park on Pine Street 5-6:30 p.m. Join us for an evening of mingling, sipping, and savoring. Music by Zorki. Food, beer and wine included in the ticket price. \$45

• Friday Night Live showcases traditional mountain music and exceptional local talent on Main Street's Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. – Silly Ridge (High Style event weekend)

Sat., May 18

• High Style Fashion Show in Town Square at 341 Main St. from 9:30-11 a.m. Whether you are a fashion enthusiast, a trendsetter, or simply looking for entertainment, the High Style Fashion Show promises an unforgettable experience for all. Price includes seating, beverage and swag bag. * We encourage guests to embrace their personal style and dress to impress. * \$25 VIP seating

• A benefit for Nurse Gina Fox on Saturday at the Cashiers Community Center at 4. \$10 pork plates includes drink and dessert, cake walk, raffle items, auction with an auctioneer, and family fun.

• Saturdays on Pine features a variety of popular, regional bands and musicians at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park 6-8:30 p.m. – Continental Divide (High Style event weekend)

Tues., May 21

• Boys & Girls Club of the Plateau ribbon cutting ceremony at its Highlands location on the HC Hospital campus - 171 Hospital Drive. Refreshments, outdoor activities and optional self-guided tour following the ceremony.

• Free Sports Physicals at Highlands School at 2 p.m. Rising 5th-12 graders who will be participating in NCHSAA sanctioned sports. A state-mandated sports physical is re-

quired prior to trying out for any sport. Parents or guardians should plan to attend the sports physical to answer questions the medical team may have during the exam. For more information contact Highlands School's Mission Sports Medicine Athletic Trainer Will Mathiowdis at William.Mathiowdis@HCAHealthcare.com.

• Democratic Women of Macon County will have its monthly meeting at Hudson Library, Tuesday at 5 PM. Men are members and welcomed to attend. The speaker will be Hilary Wilkes, who is the Board of Education member from Highlands. Please come out and support her and enjoy the camaraderie. You are also requested to bring either wine or an hors d'oeuvres to share.

Thurs., May 23

• Highlands American Legion Post 370 and Highlands Wreaths across America will put out flags at Highlands Cemetery on Thursday at 4:30pm in observance of Memorial Day. The public is invited to help. Weather permitting.

Fri., May 24

• Hudson Library welcomes Alabama author Terah Shelton Harris on Friday at 12:30 PM for Books & Bites to talk about her new novel "Long After We are Gone." Books will be available for purchase and signing at this free event.

• Friday Night Live in Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. – McClain Family Band.

Sat., May 25

• Saturdays on Pine at KH Founders Park features Southside Station 6-8:30 p.m.

• Highlands American Legion Post 370 will sponsor the annual POPPY DAY. "Poppy" distribution sights will be at Bryson's Food Store and Highlands United Methodist Church. Post 370 legionaries will be manning these locations from 10am until 3pm. Please proudly wear your "Red Poppy" in support of our freedom.

Mon. May 27

• Please join the Highlands American Legion Post 370 for the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at 10 am at Highlands Veterans Plaza (Across the parking lot from the Highlands police department at flagpole)

Thurs., May 30

• OEI's The Orchard Sessions with Highbeams, a trio of brothers and best friends who offer a



Midgard Self Storage is pleased to announce the **Grand Opening** of its newest ground-up 55,000 square foot facility; conveniently located on 17883 Rosman Highway, Sapphire, NC 28774. This latest addition to the Midgard portfolio provides a mix of climate controlled and drive-up unit types for all your storage needs. The site also features 24-hour secure access 7 days a week, U-Haul trucks/trailers and packing supplies.

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Come help us celebrate on **May 23rd at 11am** and see how Midgard changed the Sapphire skyline forever!!

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high-energy performances and rich three-part harmonies. Light bites, a cash bar 6-8 p.m. \$40. Book Online: <https://www.simplenetix.com/e/highbeams-orchard-sessions-at-the-farm-tickets-149352>

Sun., May 31

• Friday Night Live on Main Street's Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. – Byrds & Crows

Sat., June 1

• Kid's Fishing Day at Cliffside Lake from 7:30a to noon for children 15 years and under. Some fishing equipment will be available if needed. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

• Pop-Up Bag Pipers are scheduled from 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

• Saturdays on Pine features High 5 at 6-8:30 p.m. – High 5

Sun., June 2

• The Literacy & Learning Center's spring fundraiser at The Farm at OEI, 336 Arnold Road in Highlands, from 6 - 9 pm. Open Bar. Heavy hors d'oeuvres, dancing. Free shuttle service looping from 200 Main. Tickets are \$150 per person.

Wed., June 5

• Josh Stein, the Democratic candidate for NC Governor, will be in Cashiers (Village Green) at 5 PM. Tickets for the event are \$125 and larger donations are accepted. You may purchase a ticket at www.joshstein.org/cashiers

Thurs., June 6

• Highlands Motoring: "One Lap of the Mountains- Grande"- Driving Tour 8:30am-4pm

Fri., June 7

• Highlands Motoring: "One Lap of the Mountains - Speciale" Driving Tour 9:30am to 4pm. Main Street Parade of Classic Cars 5:30pm to 6:30pm

• Friday Night Live on Main Street's Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. – The Foxfire Boys

Sat., June 8

• Highlands Motoring: "Classics in the Park" Invitational Judged Car Show in the Kelsey-Hutchinson Park 9:30am to 4pm "Celebration Gala" 6pm to 9pm.

• HOT SPRINGS POOLS and Spas will be hosting its first Arts & Crafts Fair in Franklin at 556 Highlands Road, on Saturday from 10a to 3p. Interested crafters, please email khowell@hspools.com to reserve you spot today!

• Saturdays on Pine features Bill Mattocks 6-8:30 p.m.

Sun., June 9

• Highlands Motoring: "High Octane" Social and Car Gathering in Kelsey-Hutchinson Park. 8:30am to 11am.

Fri., June 14

• With CLE, Award-winning Appalachian author Ron Rash will be joining us at High Country Wine and Provisions on Friday from 2-4pm for an exclusive reading and Q&A for his new novel, The Caretaker. Wine and charcuterie will be provided. Books for sale and

signing.

• Friday Night Live in Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. – Spare Parts Bluegrass Band

Sat., June 15

• Low Country Shrimp Boil to benefit KH Founders Park. Doors open at 5. Dinner at 6. \$85 per ticket. Includes dinner, dessert and 3 drinks. Live music Tickets available at www.foundersparkhighlands.org and The Dry Sink on Main Street.

• Saturdays on Pine at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park 6-8:30 p.m. – Back Porch Orchestra

Thurs., June 20

• OEI's The Orchard Sessions with Andrew Wooten. Ear-catching vocals and genuine lyrics. Light bites, a cash bar 6-8 p.m. \$40. www.oldedwardshospitality.com/orchardsessions.

Fri., June 21

• Friday Night Live s on Main Street's Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. – Curtis Blackwell Band

Sat., June 22

• Saturdays on Pine features a variety of popular, regional bands and musicians at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park 6-8:30 p.m. – The HC Oakes Band

Fri., June 28

• Friday Night Live son Main Street's Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. – Johnny Webb Band

• OEI's Chef Dinners at The Farm. Chef to be announced. Book Online at OldEdwardshospitality.com/ChefDinners



Gina Fox and her daughter Cheyenne Fox

Fox benefit is Sat. May 18

There will be a benefit for Nurse Gina Fox on Saturday, May 18 at the Cashiers Community Center beginning at 4 p.m.

Pork plates which include a drink and dessert, are \$10. There will be a cake walk, raffle items, auction with an auctioneer, and family fun.

Gina is Dr. Patti Wheeler's nurse.



HIGHLANDS
NORTH CAROLINA

THE HEIGHT OF HAPPINESS | ELEV. 4118

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

Town Square | 343 Main St.

Showcasing traditional mountain music and local talent

MAY 17
Silly Ridge

MAY 24
McClain Family Band

MAY 31
Byrds & Crows

JUNE 7
The Foxfire Boys

JUNE 14
Spare Parts Bluegrass Band

JUNE 21
Curtis Blackwell Band

JUNE 28
Johnny Webb Band

Saturdays on Pine

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park
Pine St.

Featuring a variety of popular, regional bands and musicians

MAY 18
Continental Divide

MAY 25
Southside Station

JUNE 1
High 5

JUNE 8
Bill Mattocks

JUNE 15
Back Porch Orchestra

JUNE 22
The HC Oakes Band



...FLOODPLAIN continued from page 1

proached by residents seeking more lenient regulations, proposed amendments that would allow fill material to be placed in flood-prone areas by removing key protective measures from the ordinance.

The proposed changes would reduce the flood ordinance to match the state's minimum requirements, to reduce burdens on Macon County citizens.

Coincidentally, it was 10 years ago almost to the day, in May 2013, when Macon County last dove into the very same debate. In 2013, the floodplain fill ordinance was 5 years old and was considered one of the stricter ordinances in the state. It was enacted following severe flooding in 2004, when two 500-year floods were witnessed along tributaries of the Little Tennessee River. The law followed the logic that the flood plain is a natural reservoir for surging storm waters. Macon County is known for its wide Little Tennessee River valley and several major creek bottoms.

Theoretically, whenever it rains the water on the mountainsides is channeled into the valleys making the area more prone to flash floods. Macon County' floodplain ordinance specifically applies to the county's 100-year flood plain, the buffer around rivers that supposedly floods every 100

years. However, Macon County has not been spared flooding more than every 100 years and back in 2013, it was explained that over the past 230 years, Macon County had suffered 10 of those 100-year floods., promoting the need for the ordinance.

The 2013 planning board and county commissioners debated the issue back and forth for a few months, and although the planning board agreed then by a 7-2 vote that an outright ban was too strict, it ultimately decided to leave the ordinance as is, and now, 10 years later, the debate is back.

Macon County Plan Reviewer Joe Allen told commissioners that FEMA allows fill dirt in floodplains, as does the towns of Franklin and Highlands, plus several neighboring counties. While he doesn't think the county should completely reduce current flood plan ordinance requirements, he does agree a compromise is possible that could lessen some restrictions without complete elimination.

Critics of the proposed changes highlighted several potential risks, including increased flood heights and velocities due to obstructions in the floodplain. They stressed the danger this poses not only to individual property owners but also to the broader community, which could face greater public

expenditures for flood protection and relief.

"It is important to remember that the existing Floodplain Ordinance was strengthened in response, to the deadly impacts of Hurricane Francis and Ivan in Macon County in September of 2004," said Jason Love, who works for Mainspring Conservation Trust. "These back-to-back hurricanes led to widespread flooding in the catastrophic re-flood in Peeks Creek, which claimed the lives of five people and destroyed 15 homes. The existing ordinance was crafted based on the input of technically qualified experts and following public hearings, in which there was near unanimous support of the ordinance, from farmers to private property rights advocates, from Democrats to Republicans. The ordinance was crafted to improve safety for life and property during major flood events. It doesn't matter if another flood event at this magnitude strikes Macon County, it's just a matter of when."

Environmental advocates also weighed in, emphasizing the importance of preserving the natural functions of floodplains which include water filtration, wildlife habitat, and flood mitigation. They argued that weakening these regulations contradicts the objectives outlined in the existing ordinance, such as protecting human life, minimizing public expenditure on flood control, and maintaining the natural benefits of

floodplain ecosystems.

"I would like to take this opportunity to partner with our planning board and establish a subcommittee dedicated to addressing this issue. To examine our floodplain ordinance," said Macon County resident Lewis Penland. "Together we can work towards developing solutions that not only address the immediate concerns, raised by our community, but also lay the foundation for a more resilient and sustainable future."

Proponents of the amendment argue that the changes would provide more freedom to property owners and boost local development.

"Whatever the intentions of the floodplain ordinance were then, we know that it's not operating as good as it could," said Macon County resident David Cullpepper. "We know that it's trapping people. We know that landowners are being turned into criminals, for things as simple as putting a driveway in. That's not really fair. It's not just. And we know that."

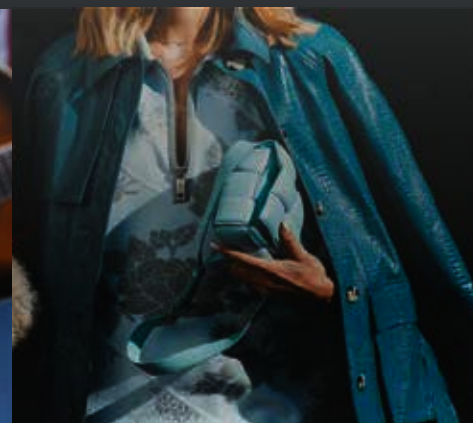
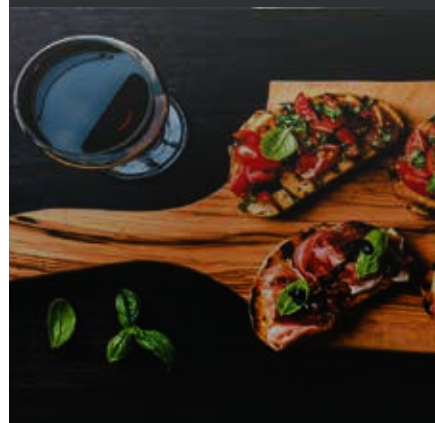
Sarah Johnson spoke during public comment period and asked that Commissioner Josh Young recuse himself from a vote involving the floodplain due to property he recently purchased. "We also respectfully and politely ask that Commissioner Young recuse himself from any

• See FLOODPLAIN page 15

MAY 17 - 19, 2024

HIGH Style

ELEV. 4118



A celebration of Art, Cuisine, Fashion & Music featuring interactive art demonstrations and classes, culinary experiences, a fashion show, musical performances and so much more.

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...LIBRARY continued from page 8

"We are trying to find ways to be responsive to community concerns," she said. "And we want to give parents control over what they want their children to be able to access."

However, after Hardison's presentation, the meeting quickly segued to what has become the focus of the bi-monthly meetings - books some board members feel are inappropriate for children under 18 at the regional public libraries under the Fontana Regional Library (FRL) umbrella and what they claimed was the cancellation of the First Amendment Right of free speech at meetings.

Legally, the public isn't allowed to speak during a public comment segment nor ask questions during the meeting, but public comments in the form of written statements are allowed to be submitted prior to each meeting. Those submissions are read by all members.

According to Hardison, prior to the Pride Display issue three years ago, the public didn't attend their meetings so public comment wasn't an issue.

In addition, unlike at Town Board meetings and at MC Commission meetings, public comment is not a legal requirement of library meetings, but the board allowed comment anyway.

However, because meetings became unruly in the recent past - actually hindering the function of the board - the board agreed to only allow public comment in written form.

Though not a new concept, board member Diann Caitlin spoke out against the rule that the public couldn't speak or ask questions during their meetings.

"It's a public library paid for by taxpayers. It's their library. Why can't they speak?" she asked.

Disregarding Chairman Dyar's warning, and at Caitlin's egging, members of the audience yelled, "Yeah!" and "First Amendment rights!" Other times members of the audience yelled "Noooo" or said "Disgusting" when Caitlin described the content of certain book.

While she held the floor, Caitlin reported on the FRL board meeting and wanted her

comments about that meeting added to the minutes of the current April meeting. On a motion of 4-2 the board agreed to include her comments as long as it was understood that the document represented her sole opinion. Those against the motion felt they should read her 30-page document prior to blindly accepting it into the minutes.

Caitlin also called for transparency during board meetings.

"Citizens would like to know what is going on," she said.

She wants the MC Library Board of Trustee meetings videotaped and accessible on the website like they are for the FRL meetings. This motion also passed 4-2 with those against saying they would likely vote for it when the technology became available.

Caitlin also continues to have concerns about the way books can be challenged and she questioned the recent scrutiny of three books.

According to member Wood Lovell, who with Marsha Moxley, also sits on the Hudson Library Board, three books were challenged by the public.

"We adhered to the Collection Development Policy. One book was moved to the adult section and the other two were borderline so they were kept where they are," said Lovell. "If there is a

book someone objects to, there is a method for deliberation."

Caitlin wanted to bring the titles up again, but Lovell explained that there is a three-year waiting period to reconsider titles.

According to Hardison, forms are available to request a book is reviewed.

"Over the last couple of years there have been requests to ban several books, but the decision not to remove those particular books was not appealed, so the books stayed," she said.

Meanwhile, Hardison said to calm fears of children getting their hands on material their parents may not consider suitable, a Safe Child Policy is being updated by the FRL and should be ready for consideration June 4 at the MC Library Trustees meeting in Franklin.

- Children under 12 must be under supervision in all FRL libraries by a parent/guardian/caregiver;
- If eight and under, children must be within eyesight and under direct supervision by a parent/guardian/caregiver;
- Children ages 9-11 who are attending study groups or in a book club with an adult or tutor do not have to be in the same room with their parents, but parents must be on-site.

In addition, parents can choose to get a "restricted access"

library card for their children which will only allow them to check out material from the children collection not the Young Adult or Adult section.

"We want the community

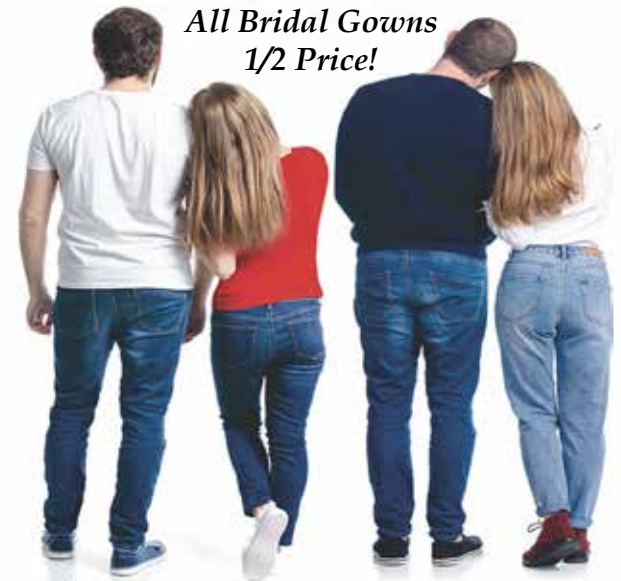
to know we are listening," said Hardison. "We want to give parents the most control over what their children can access, and we feel these policies will provide both choice and control."

You Have Seen the Rest ...

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"Good Plays Well Done"

Presenting two fabulous new plays from the Highlands Cashiers PLAYERS

Always a Bridesmaid

Written by Jones Hope Wooten
Directed by Ricky Siegel

May 9, 10, 11, 12
and May 16, 17, 18, 19

Nightly at 7:30 pm, Sunday Matinees at 2:00 pm
Cabaret Seating \$35

THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT
A NEW PLAY

Written by
Jeremy Kareken,
David Murrell,
& Gordon Farrell

Directed by
Michael Lanzilotta

Aug 22, 23, 24, 25 and
Aug 29, 30, 31, Sept 1

Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands, NC
For tickets go to: www.highlandscashiersplayers.com or call: 828-526-9047



2024

Annual Bear Shadow celebration of music, food and drink - May 11-12.'24



*North Mississippi Allstars
American Aquarium*



*Futurebirds
JJ Grey & Mofro
Grace Bowers*



*White Denim
The Record Company
Black Pumas*

...FLOODPLAIN continued from page 12

decision-making process on this matter and avoid any semblance of impropriety, however perceived. He recently purchased a riverfront property in Otto adjacent to the highway before bringing this matter to the board.”

Commissioner Young said the tracts he purchased along the Georgia Road about 10 years ago have been deed restricted and will never be filed.

“That discussion’s over with. So, there’s no need to worry about that, and no need to worry about me profiting from

this.”

The debate over the floodplain ordinance is far from over, and commissioners suggested forming a sub-committee of local community members, property owners, and experts in the field to work toward developing a compromise to lessen the restrictions without completely eliminating them. There will be public hearings to give the general public the opportunity to address commissioners directly regarding the proposed changes.

Floods have been, and

continue to be, a destructive natural hazard in terms of economic loss to the citizens of North Carolina.

Since 1978, federal flood insurance policyholders in North Carolina have received over \$970 million in claim payments. Though that figure represents many insurance payments, most of the state’s flood-prone properties do not have flood insurance. As of November 2015, only about 30% of buildings located in high-risk floodplain areas in North Carolina had a flood insurance policy.

‘Always a Bridesmaid’ is going strong

The Highlands Cashiers Players’ *Always a Bridesmaid*, continues May 16-19 at the Martin Lipscomb Theater in the Highlands Performing Arts Center. The play, directed by Ricky Siegel,

features four women who make a vow in high school to be in one another’s weddings, and more 30 years later these friends-for-life are still standing up for each other at wedding after wedding - no mat-

ter what.

Performances are nightly at 7:30 except for the Sunday shows, which are 2 pm matinees. For tickets go to highlandscashiersplayers.com, or call 828-526-9047.

...MAYOR continued from page 2

go to the Highlands Pharmacy and sign a petition in support of the bill or contact Senator Corbin’s office. His contact information is online.

I hope to see you at the meeting on Thursday, but if you can’t be there, you can always access the meetings by going to the town website and clicking on the link to the meetings.



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FEASTS**“Champagne and Chopin”**

Wednesday, June 26 – 6 PM

\$150/person – 30 places

Pianist Julie Coucheron – Performs!

Hosts:

Greg and Mary Thompson

**SALONS****“Ransom Wows...Again!”**

with “Rhapsody in Blue”

Friday, June 28 – 5 PM

\$80/person – 22 places

Performing musician: William Ransom

Hosts: Sherri and Steve Ozcomert

**“Festive Feast in Artists’ Home”**

Friday, July 5 – 6 PM

\$150/person – 19 places

Non-performing guest: Scott Yoo Hosts:

Sallie & Pat Taylor

Eric’s Fresh Fish and Wine Market Eric
& Norma Hendrix

**“The Magnificent Ms. Sara!”**

Friday, July 12 – 5 PM

\$80/person – 25 places

Performing musician: Sara Sant’Ambrogio

Hosts: Karen and Jim McArdle

**“Pianist & View Extraordinaire”**

Sunday, July 21 – 7 PM

\$150/person – 15 places

Non-performing guest: Victor Asuncion

Hosts: Judy and Louis Freeman

**“Dynamic Duo, Encore!”**

Friday, July 26 – 5 PM

\$80/person – 25 places

Performing musicians:

Chee-Yun and William Ransom

Hosts: Olivia and Bob Holt

**“Grammy(s) Winner Zuill Bailey”**

Tuesday, July 23 – 7 PM

\$150/person – 12 places

Non-performing guest: Zuill Bailey Hosts:

Alfred Kennedy and Bill Kenny

**“The Viano – Up Close!”**

Friday, August 2 – 5 PM

\$80/person – 25 places

Performing musicians: Viano Quartet

Hosts: Teri Dolci, Sandra Norton,

Michael & Suzette Oleksyk

Join us at this season’s events by calling the HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL office at 828-526-9060 or email us at hccmfnc@gmail.com. These annual Feasts and Salons provide important and vital financial support to the Festival which allows us to bring world-class chamber music to the mountains each year.

...OLYMPICS continued from page 1

OUR 20th YEAR!



**Free Community Yoga in K-H Park
Tuesday May 21 - 6pm**

YOGA HIGHLANDS

MAY

YOGA & PILATES STUDIO

Mon 9am - Yoga Basics
 Mon 6pm - Restorative & Yin Yoga
 Wed 9am - Pilates Mat
 Thursday 10am - Slow Flow Yoga
 Friday 9am - Vital Body Yoga
 Saturday 9:30am - Align & Flow



Visit our Website for Full List of Offerings, Private Sessions, and Upcoming Retreats!

[Register Here](#)

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 460 Carolina Way, one block east of Main St



Left: Highlands School elementary students cheer on athletes at the Spring Games.

- Photos by Brian O'Shea

this experience at our school and many were able to come out and cheer on the athletes, or even help volunteer," said Holbrooks. "As a former Special Education teacher, these amazing athletes hold a special place in my heart. It was re-

ally nice to see our Highlands community come together and support these athletes."

Holbrooks said Highlands School would be happy to host the Special Olympics again. "Aloha!"



Highlands Police Department Detective Tim Broughton carries the torch beginning the Spring Games at Highlands School. Broughton is joined by other HPD officers and Macon County Sheriff's officers.



Athletes from several counties competed at the Spring Games held at Highlands School last Friday.



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- Sclerotherapy
- Vitamin Infusion Therapy
- Vitamin Injections

...PLAYOFFS continued from page 1



Highlands seniors from left are Mac Woods and Olivia Cole on Senior Night.



Highlands Aislyn Wyatt-Luck heads towards Draughn's goal under pressure.

- photos by Brian O'Shea

Highlands ended the season earning second place in conference behind Swain after losing to Swain 9-4 on Thursday, May 9.

They had just come off a 4-game winning streak that ended with a tie with

Murphy on Tues., May 7.

The Lady Highlanders celebrated Senior Night on Wed., May 8 after beating Tri-County 6-0 and recognized Seniors Mac Woods and Olivia Cole.



HS Girls Varsity Soccer Team



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HOT SPRINGS POOLS and Spas

will be hosting its first Arts & Crafts Fair

in Franklin on Saturday, June 8 from 10a to 3p.

Interested crafters, please email khowell@hspools.com to reserve you spot today!



HIGHLANDS
NORTH CAROLINA

THE HEIGHT OF HAPPINESS | ELEV. 4118

Highlands Volunteer Fair

**Are you looking to get involved?
Join us to learn more about volunteer opportunities in Highlands!**

Thursday, June 6
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Highlands Recreation Center
600 North Fourth Street

Light refreshments will be served.

This event is hosted by the
Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC.

For more information:
highlandschamber.org
828-526-5841

visithighlandscnc.com

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



A letter to my imperfect friend

Pastor Randy Lucas
Highlands United
Methodist Church

Dear Imperfect Friend,

I'm sorry it's been so long since my last letter. Sometimes things get in the way of my best intentions. I'm sure you understand. Even though I don't write as often as I should, please know that I think of you often. I've had you on my heart lately so when I got up this morning, I made a commitment to myself to drop you a line. I'm sitting here with my desk cleared off and a freshly brewed cup of coffee sitting to my right (actually I'm kidding about the desk, it's a mess!)

I understand you've had some challenges of late. I don't know all the details about your current situation, but I do know some things about you that might be good for you to remember just now. If there's one thing I've learned through the years, it's that challenges and hard times can really do a number on a person's memory. Let the world come at you a bit too fast, find yourself groping through the wilderness and you can forget things, sometimes even really important things. Maybe that's why you've been on my heart. Perhaps that's why I felt the need to drop you this note today, to remind you of some things you may have forgotten.

I've often marveled at your resilient nature. I mean it! You've navigated treacherous terrain before, made it through and come out on the other side to tell the tale. I've seen you travel through some really dark days of grief. I've often been amazed by your strength and stamina. I've watched you make hard decisions in the past. I remember times when you've been hurt by careless words. Your capacity to extend grace and offer forgiveness has been a true source of inspiration for me. In fact, there are many ways your life serves as an encouragement to me and many others.

Another thing I've learned in my many years of living is how easy it is to get down on myself at times. You know what I mean? Sometimes I can't seem to get out of my own way. And there are times when it feels like I'm constantly walking uphill against the wind. Some days it's one step forward and two steps back. Forgive me for being bold, but I think you have a tendency to beat yourself up from time to time. That's how I know you're one of us! The imperfect ones. We really need to stick together you know!

Though I've learned a good many things from you, there's one particular lesson for which I'm especially grateful. You've taught me the value of paying attention to the simple things. Though I don't always notice as much as I should, thanks to you I find myself being more attentive

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315
Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11
Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298
Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30
Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

CHAPEL OF THE SKY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999
Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship; Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

828-743-1701 • 464 Hwy 64E. Cashiers, NC 28717
www.christanglicancashiers.com
9:30am Sunday School; 10:30am Worship Service. Mon. Night
Bible Study & Dinner, 6pm, call for details.

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470
www.cashiers.church
Sun. 10:45am. S.S. 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.
Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.
Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.
1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.
Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685
3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands, NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins
Sundays: Service 10:45am, Children's 10:30am
Wednesdays: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mondays
4:30pm, Tuesdays 10am; Men's Bible Study: Wednesdays &
Thursdays 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447
Pastor Steve Kerhoulas
Worship: Sun. 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968
5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org
Sunday: Rite I, spoken, 8 am in Chapel, Rite II with Choir 10:30
am in Sanctuary, Wed: Healing Eucharist 12 pm in Chapel,
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

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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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. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

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4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)
Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

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Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone - 526-2418
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SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212
Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.
ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

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Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers
Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from April 30. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

April 30

• At 4:25 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at NC 28 (The Walhalla Road) and Shelby Circle.

May 4

• At 4:58 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on Main and Second streets.

May 11

• At 11:17 p.m., Carlos Arturo Contreras Gaona, 37, of Highlands, was arrested for DUI and driving without insurance when he was pulled over on S. 3rd St. He was issued a written promise. His court date is June 5, 2024.

May 13

• A little after midnight, officers responded to a report of a simple assault at a residence on Wilson Road.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from May 1.

May 8

• At 5:23 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cheney Lane.

• At 8:18 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Buck Creek Road.

May 9

• A little past midnight, the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Blue Valley Road.

• At 5:48 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on VZ Top.

• At 5:50 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Crescent Trail.

• At 7:36 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on the Franklin Road (US 64 west.).

May 10

• At 8:19 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on

N. 4th Street.

May 11

• At 9:17 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Hammond Drive.

• At 9:48 p.m., the dept. was **first-responders to a residence on Dixon Drive.**

• At 10:57 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance at a residence on Worley Road.

May 12

• At 5:28 a.m., the dept. responded to a Co2 alarm at a residence on Whiteside Mountain road.

• At 12:25 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Highlands Plaza.

May 13

• A little past midnight, the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Wilson Road.

May 14

• At 2:57 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Zermatt Circle.

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...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 18

to life's simple pleasures and joys. Sometimes I find myself offering a prayer of thanksgiving for a good cup of coffee in the morning or taking an extra moment to inhale the aroma of fresh bread baking in the oven or basking in the beauty of a brisk mountain morning or enjoying the breeze across my face on a hike. There are so many delightful things I can pass by without noticing, but I'm grateful for the gentle echoes of your sweet voice reminding me to pay attention to God's simple blessings!

I think that's what I mainly want to say to you today. I want you to know you make a difference. I want you to know you've had an impact. I want you to know, you matter. I want you to know I'm really and truly grateful for you. And I'm not the only one!





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CLASSIFIEDS

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HIGHLAND EXCURSION, an Active Tour Company is for sale. Call 864-373-4022 for details. Serious offers only. (st. 4/18)

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

• See CLASSIFIEDS page 22



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...CLASSIFIEDS continued from page 21

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LONG TERM FURNISHED ONE BEDROOM APT. in Highlands, Full Kitchen with Elec. Stove/Oven, full-size fridge, bath, sm deck. Single Adult only, no pets. Private entrance, W/D access, Internet, Hulu TV. Six-month minimum lease, utilities included. \$1,250/mth. 828-482-2613. (st. 5/9)

2 BDRM/2 BATH FURNISHED APT - living room with fireplace, dining area, full kitchen- huge covered porch - W/D - 1.5 miles from Main St. \$3,000 month utilities included - avail. June 1. 561 310-5085. (st. 5/9)

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...ELECTION continued from page 4

Currently, Macon County elects its five-member board from three districts, with uneven opportunities for candidates to run due to staggered terms.

District two, for example, offers potential candidates a chance every two years, while those in districts one and three must wait four years. The resolution argues that a new system with one member from each district and two at-large could provide a fairer platform for all eligible citizens to participate in the electoral process biennially.

However, the move has not been without its detractors. Commissioner Gary Shields expressed reservations about changing a system that has been in place for over four decades, while Commissioner Josh Young highlighted the need for greater public input before any legislative actions are taken.

The proposal aligns with North Carolina's flexible county governance laws, which allow changes through local bills or public referendums. Despite the current legislative initiative, the ultimate decision could still involve a public referendum, offering Macon County residents the final say in how their leaders are chosen.

North Carolina allows the composition of the board to be changed by one of two ways. The method Shearl proposed, to petition state representatives to change the board via a local bill, or the second option, for the board to pass a resolution to call a special referendum on the question of adoption of the alterations. The referendum would be held and conducted by the county Board of Elections.

"Before we print a bill and send it to Raleigh, I feel like it's my duty to at least ask for public involvement," Commissioner Josh Young stated, advocating for a process that ensures broad-based community engagement.

The push for change in Macon County opens up broader questions about representation, fairness, and public participation in local government across North Carolina.

Since 1978, the five-member board in Macon County has been elected from three districts. District one comprises Ellijay, Flats, Highlands, and Sugarfork, with one member elected.

District three includes Burningtown, Cartoogechaye, Cowee, and Nantahala, also electing one member.

District two encompasses Iotla, Mills-hoal, North Franklin, East Franklin, South Franklin, Union, and Smithbridge, electing three members with staggered terms.

North Carolina law requires that "if a county is divided into electoral districts for the purpose of nominating or electing persons to the board of commissioners, the board of commissioners may find as a fact

whether there is substantial inequality of population among districts and if the board finds that there is a substantial inequality of population among the district, it may by resolution redefine the electoral districts."

Because the electoral districts in Macon County are currently split to give two representatives to the Franklin district because of its larger population, eliminating the second representative seat would likely force a redistricting since North Carolina law also states, "redefined electoral districts shall be so drawn that the quotients obtained by dividing the population of each district by the number of commissioners apportioned to the district are as nearly equal as practicable, and each district shall be composed of territory within a continuous boundary."

According to the 2020 census, Macon County had a population of 37,014. For the three electoral districts to be equal, each district line would need to be drawn to include 12,338 residents. As it stands, District one, which includes Highlands, Flats, Sugarfork, and Ellijay is comprised of 7,297. In order to get closer to the "equal" number of residents of 12,000, Highlands would need to add 5,041 residents who have historically been within the Franklin area district.

Expanding that district will further dilute the representation for Highlands residents, who make up over 50% of the county's tax base but would have virtually no representation. Because the law requires that redistricting keep voting districts continuous, District one might include Mills-hoal and a piece of either Cowee, Iotla, or East Franklin, or a combo of any of the three.

District three, which includes Nantahala, Burningtown, Cowee and Cartoogechaye is currently at a population of 6,837 meaning they would have to nearly double their geographical area to reach 12,338, again adding in voters who had historically voted within the Franklin District.

The move would result in the more rural areas of the county such as Nantahala and Burningtown, losing representation and having less of a voice on the county level. To meet the 12,338 that would be needed for even districts, District three would most likely look at adding Smithbridge.

If District two were to lose Mills-hoal to District one and Smithbridge to District three, the population would be 15,700, leaving the remaining District two precincts to be divided to reach 12,338.

The two other seats on the county board of commissioners would then be considered "at large" seats and could have representatives from any area of the county.

The new plan, if passed, could go into effect 2026.

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