

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Sept. 12, 2024

The Winder shooting has affected all

Area law enforcement and school officials address concerns

By Kim Lewicki

The Wednesday, Sept 4 shooting at Apalachee High School in Winder, GA, the 45th

school shooting in 2024 in the U.S., has students, parents, school officials and law enforcement on guard and preparing for the un-

thinkable. Coupled with threats since the shooting which have been
• See SHOOTING page 7



Extra chairs were brought in to the Community Building from the Civic Center to accommodate the attendees of the public hearing regarding the amortization of STRs in Highlands Thurs., Sept. 5. - Photo by Kim Lewicki

Amortization of STRs hangs in the balance

By Kim Lewicki

The required public hearing regarding amending the Unified Development Ordinance to amortize Short-Term Rentals was held Thurs., Sept. 5 in a packed Community Building.

The 31 speakers represented both sides equally – those for the amortization of STRs and those against amortization each side citing reasons that have mostly been heard before.

However, rhetoric and claims were amplified.

Cathy Hensen, president of the Highlands Neighborhood Coalition (HNC), which is for amortization, was the first to speak and pretty much wrapped up the coalition's point of view.

"STRs are a cancer creeping into our neighborhoods and violating what we believe to be our long-standing zoning laws prohibiting all commercial activity in our

single-family residential neighborhoods," she said.

She said big commercial interests have snuck in and taken advantage of ambiguous language hoping that by the time locals and town officials wake up, the "cancer" would have taken hold and be impossible to move out.

"Realtors, real estate investors and companies like VRBO and Airbnb spend millions of
• See AMORTIZATION page 10

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Highlands Playground misses out on PARTF but has next round in sights

By Kim Lewicki

Even though the new Highlands Playground planned for the Rec Park missed out on the recent Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) and the Accessible Parks Grant distribution late in August, Highlands Commissioners Brian Stiehler and Jeff Weller have not lost hope.

Macon County commissioners and the Highlands Town Board have each promised funds toward the completion that will require \$1.6 million.

"We have \$250,000 from the Town of Highlands, and \$350,000 from Macon County," said Commissioner Stiehler. "With \$325,000 in private donations, to date, that puts us at \$925."

Meanwhile, Highlands Playground is applying for the second round of \$4 million in PARTF grants known as "Accessibility for Parks" that opened in September. Grantees will be announced the

spring of 2025.

Stiehler said fundraising is still going strong with \$5,000 raised in the first three days that the PayPal site went online. Donations can be made through PayPal at highlandspay.net.

"We will get there," he said.

Through the recent round of grants, the Town of Franklin got \$500,000 for its Whitmire Accessible Play Area - part of the \$17.9 million awarded local communities in the state toward park projects and accessibility improvements.

Local governments applied to PARTF to fund land acquisition, and development and renovation of public park and recreation areas. Every year, the Parks and Recreation Authority allocates to municipalities and counties 30% of PARTF's total funding. A maximum of \$500,000 can be awarded to a single project.

• See PLAYGROUND page 11



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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

A recap of the public hearing

I want to express my gratitude to all who participated in the public hearing on STR amortization last Thursday. Your input was invaluable in our understanding of this complex issue. The next crucial step will be the board's decision at the September 19.

After the meeting, I received an email thanking me for changing my position on STRs. My response is that I haven't changed my position. I want to limit and, over time, diminish the number of STRs in R1 and R2. The one difference I have with several board members is how to realize that goal. Instead of an amortization amendment to the current STR ordinance, I believe strict enforcement using available tracking software is the best option. The provision requiring a grandfathered property in R1 and R2 to continue STR operations for 12 months or lose the grandfathered status will, over time, reduce the number of STRs in those zones.

On the other hand, the amortization option will trigger a court battle, the outcome of which will be in doubt. Another possible outcome may be that the NC legislature may



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

pass preemptive legislation limiting towns' ability to regulate STRs in residential zones. This would take away the Town's ability to set its own standards.

Let's address three recurring themes presented at the hearing: Property rights, voting, and STRs as the primary economic driver.

First was the notion that a homeowner has unrestrained property rights to do whatever they want with their property. That may be the case in remote, unincorporated areas, but Highlands has zoning-limited permitted uses in designated zones. Property owners have rights under these zoning ordinances and can appeal issues before the zoning board of adjustment, the Town Board, and the courts. I believe our 50 years of zoning ordinances have shaped the development of Highlands into an attractive and highly desirable community. Folks have options like living in a gated community, a country club, or a zone-free area.

The second theme promoted by some was that they cannot vote in Highlands on town leadership, but they have to pay taxes on the property they own in the town. In that regard, allow me to say that North Carolina law states full-time residency determines whether a property owner can vote in a community.

The third theme was that several speakers put forth the notion that the recent proliferation of STRs has made this town economically successful and that the loss of STRs in R1 and R2 will plunge the Highlands into an economic crisis where shops on Main Street will be boarded up, and no high-end restaurants will exist. That notion is nonsense. Highlands was in a strong economic position long before this recent STR trend. The town had a strong economy well before I arrived here 25 years ago. Highlands has enjoyed a continuously expanding economy along with some dips as the nation's economy has had, like in 2009. Whether we continue to have 200 or fewer STRs in residential districts or not, Highlands will continue to be in a strong economic position. With this beautiful scenery and cool temperatures, people will continue to come to Highlands. STRs did not make this Highlands, and I do not believe they will save it. The permanent and seasonal residents will play a key role in the future of Highlands along with our constant flow of visitors.

Let me make three final points. First, to overcome a shortage of hotel guest rooms, I

• See **MAYOR** page 8

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



Wolfgang's Restaurant & Wine Bistro turns 30!

Wolfgang and Mindy Green with their staff family - many who have been with them for years - will celebrate their 30th year in business on Sunday, Sept. 15.

• WEATHER •

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61°F 57°F	64°F 59°F	63°F 57°F	66°F 54°F
Mostly cloudy and cooler	Cloudy, a couple of t-storms	Cloudy, a shower and t-storm	Mostly cloudy with a shower
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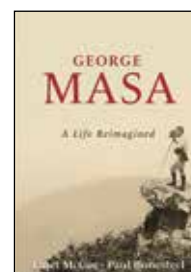
• UPCOMING EVENTS •

'A Life Reimagined: The George Masa Story'

In 1929 the Japanese-born photographer George Masa made his way to Highlands and Cashiers enticed by an offer from Frank Cook, co-owner of the Highlands Inn. The result was almost 100 iconic black-and-white photographs that define our area's history.

Masa, a perfectionist and master of light and shadow, arrived in Asheville in 1915 and his work was soon instrumental in advocating for numerous conservation causes, including the creation of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the location of the Appalachian Trail. At a time when it was difficult for a Japanese immigrant to integrate into American society, Masa had the social and professional skills to work for the Vanderbilts, correspond with the Rockefellers, and collaborate with the White House and National Park officials.

Yet for all that is known about Masa's career in western North Carolina, there have been many unknowns about his early life and the path that led him to our area. Documentary filmmaker Paul Bonesteel created the 2002 documentary "The Mystery of George Masa," and Janet McCue offered additional insight regarding



Janet McCue



Paul Bonesteel

Masa in "Back of Beyond: A Horace Kephart Biography," the 2019 profile of his friend and collaborator, which was co-authored with George Ellison.

Bonesteel and McCue have continued to research Masa, including translating a cache of newly-found letters, as well as conducting research in Japan. The result is a book and forthcoming documentary "A Life Reimagined: The George Masa Story," that for the first time will provide insight into Masa's formative years. At this event they will discuss this research, read from the book (which will be available), and share footage from the upcoming documentary. Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan (of "The National Parks: America's Best Idea") state that it's "a remarkable achievement in biographical research" that "finally gives that hero of the national park idea his due."

The event is hosted by the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust with co-hosts the Highlands Historical Society and the Cashiers Historical Society. It is sponsored by the Highlands Inn and will be held in their Sequoyah Room on Monday, September 16th from 5:30 until 7:30.

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• OBITUARY •

James 'Jim' Aliff



On August 18, 2024, James "Jim" Aliff, 90, of Highlands, NC passed away.

He was predeceased by his beautiful wife Ann of 60 years; sister, Dee Wheaton; and son-in-law, Dave Hagan.

He grew up in Mabscott, W. Va, and enlisted in the U.S. Navy after high school. He then met and married his wife, Ann, they moved to Palm Beach Gardens, FL, and then Jupiter, FL. He worked for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft as a photographer. He also owned his own business, Jim Aliff Wedding Photography. They were part-time residents of Highlands, but then became full-time residents in 1989.

He was a vital and active man with many hobbies and friends. His greatest love was of old and classic cars. He loved car shows, cruise-ins and fly-byes. He also loved dogs, woodworking, carving, plants, and could do almost anything.

He was a member of Highlands Methodist Joy Club. He and Ann were long-time members of Shortoff Baptist

Church in Highlands. He was a member of the Gem Capital Car Club. He worked at the Highlands Emergency Council every Thursday packing food boxes. He was a member of the Three Amigos Club, along with longtime friends, Will Williams and Dick Goodell of Franklin.

He is survived by his three children, Trina Aliff of Franklin, Cathy Hagan of Sanger, TX, and Bert Aliff (Susan) of Vanleave MS; three grandchildren, Bert Aliff (Desiree) of Vanleave, MS, Alaina Gouin (Adam) of Sanger, TX, Alexis Aliff (Rayanna) of Vanleave, MS; and one great grandchild, Demi Louise of Vanleave, MS.

His family will never stop missing him.

A celebration of life will be at later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to any Wounded Warrior Fund or Appalachian Animal Rescue.

Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com.

...SHOOTING continued from page 1

broadcasted via social media as screenshots to students in Rabun County, Macon County and recently in Highlands everyone is on high alert.

"The recent tragedy in Winder, GA, has created a sense of insecurity among our school family and our community and has shaken all of us," wrote Macon County School Superintendent, Josh Lynch in an email. "This tragedy has resulted in numerous threatening social media posts which have caused concern. And we are closely monitoring the situation and continue to work with local law enforcement to ensure that all necessary precautions are in place at all times.

"Our dedicated team has reviewed and reinforced our safety protocols to protect every member of our school community with enhanced security measures, including additional staff and surveillance, the promise of timely updates to keep everyone informed and the promise of open communication. If you have any concerns or see something suspicious, please report it immediately.

"We will use this tragedy as an opportunity to work with our school administrative teams to revisit processes and procedures surrounding vigilance and access to our school buildings and grounds. We will also communicate with the Macon County Sheriff's Office, Highlands Police Department, Franklin Police Department and the NC Highway Patrol who regularly visit our schools and campuses.

"All of us play a part in taking care of our children and helping them feel safe. Remind yourself, your students, and your family that if and when something doesn't 'feel right' or something seems suspicious, to report it immediately to a school official or to a member of law enforcement. Parents, please revisit the severity and consequences of pranks against school safety with your children," said Lynch.

The Macon County Sheriff's Office was made aware of several threatening screenshots circulating on various social media platforms which detectives, and school resource

officers thoroughly investigated.

"After speaking with law enforcement officials in both Rabun and Gwinnett counties in Georgia, it was determined that threats made on social media were targeted toward Franklin County, GA and to our knowledge, not toward Franklin, NC," said Sheriff Brent Holbrooks.

However, extra precautions were taken to provide extra security at Franklin area schools last week.

Ongoing:

From the Rabun County Sheriff's Office:

In the evening hours of Thursday, Sept. 5, Rabun County Sheriff's Office was made aware of a potential threat against Rabun County High School that was being shared on social media. This particular threat was sent as a screenshot from an anonymous user on a social media platform. After being notified of the potential threat, the Sheriff's Office immediately launched an investigation.

On Friday, Sept. 6, investigators were able to identify and locate a person of interest. After a thorough investigation a 15-year-old juvenile was placed under arrest and charged with Terroristic Threats and Acts, Disrupting Operation of Public School and Dissemination of Information Relating to Terroristic Acts.

From the Macon County Sheriff's Office:

On Friday afternoon, Sept. 6, Franklin High School administration received information that a student made a threat of violence against the school. The student in question was interviewed and charged with the following that evening: one felony count of Communicating a Threat of Mass Violence on Educational Property.

This threat has NO relation to the screenshots that were circulating on social media addressed by the Rabun County Sheriff's Office, said Sheriff Holbrooks.

No further information will be released on the student as they are a juvenile. Franklin High School is NOT con-

• See SHOOTING page 19

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• INVESTING AT 4,118 FT •

Discover your mountain retreat: The allure of Highlands NC real estate

Situated in the heart of the Nantahala National Forest, Highlands offers a unique blend of natural splendor and small-town charm that continues to captivate all who come here. This picturesque mountain town, perched at an elevation of 4,118 feet, presents an irresistible opportunity for those seeking a tranquil retreat or a sound real estate investment.

The Highlands real estate market derives much of its appeal from the breathtaking landscapes that surround it. The area is rich with lush forests, cascading waterfalls, and panoramic mountain vistas that change with each passing season. From vibrant spring blooms to the fiery hues of autumn, nature's beauty is on full display year-round, providing residents with an ever-changing backdrop to their mountain homes.

As a local Realtor, I can tell you that many of our clients fall in love with Highlands the moment they witness the stunning views. It's not uncommon for visitors to become homeowners after experiencing our natural wonders firsthand.

Despite our modest population of around 3,200 year-round residents in the Highlands Township – about 1,200 in the town limits -- Highlands punches above its weight in terms of amenities and culture.

The town center offers a surprising array of gourmet restaurants, art galleries, and boutique shops that rival those found in much larger cities. Highlands provides the best of both worlds; we have access to world-class dining and shopping, but in a setting where everyone knows your name. It's the perfect balance.

This unique combination of small-town friendliness and sophisticated offerings has made Highlands increasingly attractive to



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retirees, second home buyers, and those seeking to escape the hustle and bustle of urban life.

The Highlands real estate market has shown remarkable resilience and growth in recent years. Property values have steadily increased, with the average home sale price rising by 15% over the past year alone. This trend is expected to continue as more people discover the allure of mountain living.

We're seeing a mix of buyers. Some are looking for vacation homes, others for retirement properties, and increasingly, we're

seeing younger professionals who can work remotely choosing Highlands as their new home base.

While Highlands has long been a popular summer destination, the fun doesn't end when the summer comes to a close. Its appeal extends well beyond the warmer months. The town comes alive during the holidays with festive decorations and events, while winter brings opportunities for skiing and snow tubing at nearby slopes. Spring and fall offer ideal conditions for hiking, golfing, and exploring the great outdoors.

As more people seek to reconnect with nature and find respite from the complexities of modern life, Highlands, NC stands out as a beacon of tranquility and natural beauty. Whether you're looking for a permanent residence, a vacation home, or an investment property, this charming mountain town offers a slice of paradise that's becoming increasingly hard to resist.

• *Tricia Cox is Vice President of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Meadows Mountain Realty and is Broker In Charge of their office in Cashiers. She can be reached at 828-526-1717 or tricia@bhhsmmr.com*

...MAYOR continued from page 2

have advocated for more hotel rooms in Highlands instead of STRs. My good friend Pat Allen warned that if we eliminate STRs, a hotel like Motel 6 may be built in Highlands. I welcome a hotel with lower rates coming to Highlands. A Motel 6 or LaQuinta Inn might just be what is needed in our business zones.

Third, I would be in favor of creating STR

corridor zone. For instance, I support amending the current ordinance to permit STRs on US 64, NC 28, and NC 106 for properties currently zoned R1 and R2. If that the residences have a driveway and NCDOT curb that directly accesses these state highways.

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- Macon County EMS
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- REACH of Macon County
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...AMORTIZATION continued from page 1

dollars lobbying state legislators and local government officials like you hiding behind local STR owners even though most are out-of-town investors operating remote assets. Do not be fooled. Do your part. Pass this amend-

ment that Airbnb and their allies will find unfavorable," she said.

The current ordinance that the town enacted September of 2022 has grandfathered STRs in the R1 and R2 zones in existence prior to Sept. 2022. It reads:

Notwithstanding anything in this UDO, short-term rentals in operation as of September 15, 2022 are nonconforming uses in the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts.

The proposed amendment which the Planning Board voted unanimously against reads: Not-

withstanding anything in this UDO, short-term rentals in operation as of September 15, 2022, are nonconforming uses in the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts until September 15, 2027. After September 15, 2027, short-term rentals are not permitted in the R-1 or R-2 zoning districts, and all short-term rentals in those districts must be discontinued.

There were several lawyers in the room, some for and some against the amendment.

Charlie Naborn with the HNC and Derek Allen with Save Highlands, the group against amortization, disagreed on amortization as it applies to STRs.

Naborn said once again that amortization is settled law in NC and may be used by the town to end STRs in R1 and R2 single-residential neighborhoods even though the town's attorney Bob Hagemann has said no other municipality in NC has tried to apply it to home use and suggested the town not pursue the argument.

Naborn said amortization has been considered and upheld in the NC appellate court regarding a construction debris salvage yard, two nonconforming signs, nonconforming billboards, wind-blown signs, non-conforming off premise signs, and a sexually oriented business.

"This proves this is a good and valid law in North Carolina," he said. "Buildings are not taken, just one use. Homeowners have three years to recoup their investment and still make lawful use of their property. They can rent it long-term, they can sell it or they can actually live in it."

Attorney Derek Allen, who said he has dealt extensively with zoning issues and property rights across the state agreed but said only three things have been amortized successfully in NC – a salvage yard, a few sign cases and a strip joint.

"That's it," he said. "The other cases don't make it to the appellate court because amortization is an extremely difficult thing to do under the law of this state."

Allen represents Save Highlands' homeowners which sued the town in 2021 when it decided to ban STRs.

"We sent a letter followed

by a lawsuit and after conferring with attorneys the town withdrew. In 2022, future STRs were banned. The 2021 lawsuit is still out there, but we agreed not to move forward as long as the town was proactive and didn't try to retroactively get rid of STRs that were already in existence. This is the third time now. That lawsuit still stands, but the stay ends on Oct. 1," he said.

He said there are 500 municipalities and 100 counties and not one of has tackled what Highlands is trying to do, which Attorney Hagemann has said numerous times.

"We ask you to vote no," said Allen. "It's a bad idea. It's bad law. It's not going to work in North Carolina"

David Bee, owner of Highlands Vacation Rentals reminded the board that the NC Vacation Rental Act clearly states that a STR is not commercial enterprise and is allowed.

Lila Howland, one of the few year-round residents who is a member of HNC, expanded her hard-core belief that the only reason that Commissioners Amy Patterson and Eric Pierson won their seats in the 2021 election was because they are against STRs which she said happened again in the 2023 election when Commissioners Brian Stiehler and John Dotson won.

"I want to remind you that that voters in the last two elections overwhelmingly supported the candidates who publicly stated their positions on STRs – which was to eliminate them in residential neighborhoods in R1 and R2," she said.

Holly Henry, who manages 12 STRs gave a heart-felt account of her business and took offense to STRs being referred to as a cancer.

"I have 12 properties owned by individual homeowners who aren't doing this to get rich quick. It helps offset the cost of owning a home here in Highlands. I am careful with each and every property – I monitor the garbage, I take care of the house, I set rules and guidelines for them. The problem in Highlands is poor management or no management at all. I do it

• See AMORTIZATION page 15

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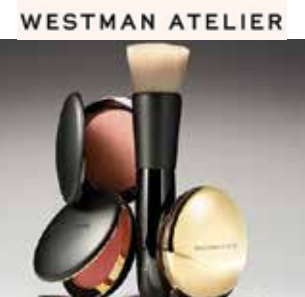
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...PLAYGROUND continued from page 1

and the awardees must match funds at least dollar-for-dollar for the grant amount. This year, the Authority considered 40 grant applications requesting a total of more than \$15.1 million. Of those, 22 projects in NC were funded in full, and one project was awarded partial funding, all totaling over \$9.5 million.

A separate source of funding, the Accessible Parks Grant program, was appropriated \$12.5 million in the 2023 budget to provide matching grants for local parks and recreation projects to benefit people living with disabilities. Some of it was allocated during this past round, but not all of it.

The program allows for either the construction of special facilities or the adaptation of existing facilities to meet the unique needs of persons living with disabilities, enabling them to participate in recreational

and sporting activities, regardless of their abilities. The grant is administered through PARTF and recipients are selected by the Parks and Recreation Authority.

There was \$4 million left over from the Accessibility for Parks grant, which is part of PARTF, so the grant cycle was reopened.

"We've already talked to the Southwest Commission, and they are going to write this grant for us," said Stiehler. "In the meantime, I am going to meet with representatives of organizations who deal with children with disabilities and get their input on our playground design."

Over the last 30 years, PARTF has provided more than \$800 million in improved state parks, local parks, and coastal access. In fact, the Highlands Rec Park and Civic Center was a grant recipient in PARTF's early days.

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Fall Home Improvement

Your Guide to Replacing Home Siding

(StatePoint) Your siding gives your home character and curb appeal while protecting it from the elements. To help you make sensible, stylish decisions, here are some fast facts about three popular varieties of siding.

1. Board and batten. The use of board and batten vertical siding originated hundreds of years ago as a practical solution for covering the spaces between the boards on the exterior of a home or barn. Today, it portrays a rustic farmhouse style and handmade quality, but its strong vertical lines have modern appeal that can enhance many architectural styles, from popular Craftsman to timeless Victorian. The good news? New materials are blending this classic look with the modern engineering of high-performance super polymer vinyl siding to offer the best of both worlds. ProVia's board and batten siding, for example, is low maintenance with a built-in weather barrier so you never have to paint, stain or caulk your home's exterior. It's also available in a range of colors, helping you achieve a one-of-a-kind look for your home.

2. Shake and staggered shingle. Featured in American homebuilding since the 1600s, there are few other cladding options as distinctive and traditional as cedar shake and staggered shingle siding. If you love this look but are concerned about maintaining this kind of siding, you're in luck. These days, certain manufacturers are preserving the authenticity of this look using engineered vinyl materials. The result? Greater durability and far superior moisture resistance.

3. Insulated siding. If you'd like additional protection from extreme temperatures, impacts and even noises for greater peace of mind and comfort, insulated siding may be the right choice for you. Showcasing an authentic cedar woodgrain texture, CedarMAX insulated vinyl siding from ProVia is an example of siding providing a combination of beauty, durability and energy efficiency. It combines rigid foam EPS insulation with the manufacturer's Super Polymer vinyl siding. Not only does the added foam insulation make this one of the most energy-efficient exterior

claddings on the market, it may help reduce outside noise transmission by as much as 39%, according to a study conducted by a third-party test laboratory.

When you begin the process of shopping for house siding, it can feel overwhelming to identify which styles or colors you might want for your home. Get inspired by how other homeowners have styled their siding by visiting provia.com/siding/gallery.

Thankfully, it's possible to make home exterior updates that add to both the beauty and functionality of your home. When replacing home siding, do a little research to get the style and color you want using materials that keep your home, and your household, safe and comfortable.

Moving Away From the All-White Kitchen

(StatePoint) With the all-white kitchen design trend on the decline, you may be wondering how to make updates that appeal to today's sensibilities. The key is infusing color and depth into your space. Here's how:

Consider Earthy Wood Tones

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Fall Home Improvement

Top Reasons to Consider a Steel Roof for Your Home

(StatePoint) Steel is increasingly becoming the go-to material used for residential roofing. According to industry experts, this is because steel offers both a range of design advantages, as well as features that align with sustainable living. Here are some of steel roofing's biggest benefits and why you should consider it for your home:

Durability: Steel roofing is highly durable and can last for 50 years or more with proper maintenance. This longevity means that fewer roofing materials end up in landfills over time compared to shorter-lived roofing materials like asphalt shingles, which typically need replacement every 20-30 years.

Safety: Overall, steel roofing offers enhanced safety benefits due to its fire-resistance, wind-resistance, structural integrity, durability, resistance to pests and mold, and low-maintenance requirements.

Recyclability: Steel has been recycled for over 100 years and is one of the most recyclable materials in the world. As a forerunner of the circular economy, it can be recycled infinitely into new steel products without losing its quality or durability. This reduces the amount of waste generated by roofing projects and conserves natural resources.

Energy Efficiency: Alongside such technological innovations as solar panels and energy-efficient HVAC systems, steel roofing is becoming integral to residential design, par-

ticularly for those looking to reduce their carbon footprint. This is because steel roofing reflects solar radiant heat, reducing cooling costs during hot weather. Many steel roofing products are also coated with reflective finishes that further enhance energy efficiency by reducing heat absorption.

Versatility: Steel roofing comes in a variety of styles, colors and profiles, allowing you to achieve the desired aesthetic for your home. Whether you prefer a traditional look or a modern design, steel roofing can accommodate a wide range of architectural preferences, enhancing the curb appeal and value of the property.

Long-Term Cost Savings: Although the initial investment in steel roofing may be higher than some other roofing materials, its long lifespan and low maintenance requirements make it a cost-effective choice in the long run.

Adaptive and Resilient Design: Amidst the challenges posed by climate change and other environmental factors, responsible home design emphasizes resilience and adaptability. This entails using durable materials such as steel, which can withstand extreme weather events. By embracing innovative approaches from the outset, your home can be fortified to withstand future uncertainties while helping ensure your safety and comfort.

Social Responsibility: As a durable and versatile material, steel plays a vital role in home construction that withstands

the test of time while remaining affordable and accessible. Integrating steel into the design process can contribute to the well-being and prosperity of both individuals and communities, ensuring that the future of housing is socially inclusive and responsible.

To learn more about how steel can benefit your home, visit <https://www.ussteel.com/hgtv-smart-home>.

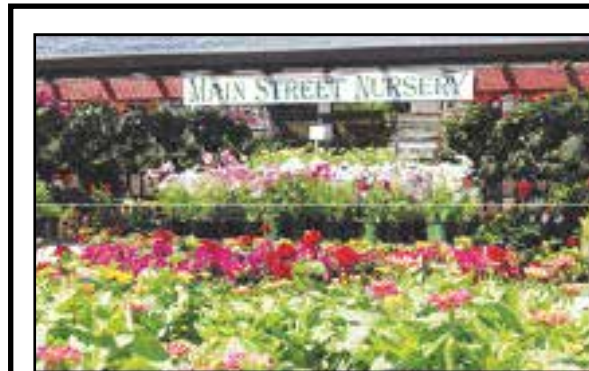
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...KITCHEN continued from page 13

there are many ways to incorporate this look in your kitchen. Options can be as in-

volved as refinishing your kitchen island with a wooden countertop or swapping in wood

cabinet finishes, to as simple as introducing a rolling bar cart into the space. Displaying a few wooden kitchen elements, such as cooking utensils, cutting boards and a napkin

holder, can round out the look.

Embrace Matte Black

Matte black appliances are gaining in popularity for good reason – they can elevate your kitchen into a glamorous foodie oasis, and a place where cooking, eating, and gathering with loved ones brings you joy. It's helpful if those appliances pair form with functionality. When it comes to cooking ranges, check out Verona, which offers professional-style Italian-made appliances that combine artistry with the latest cooking technology innovations. The brand's Ultima Midnight 36-inch Range is fully matte black from cooktop to legs for a sleek look and is available in dual fuel or induction.

Alternatively, the Maestro collection from another Italian brand, Lofra, boasts strong versatile design and the highest technical performance. Both brands are exclusively imported by EuroChef USA. For more information, visit eurochefusa.com.

Incorporate Brass Accents

Brass accents can provide dynamism and depth. Consider adding brass hardware to your fridge and updating your faucet and sink basin in a gold or bronze tone. For your cooking range, get inspired by the models available in Lofra's DolceVita Collection, which can be customized with brass trim, and gold knobs, providing pops of color in unexpected places, and with 30-60-inch models available, can accommodate kitchens of all sizes.

Beyond the trim of your appliances, you can mix these metals into your space by swapping out hardware or displaying your brass cookware on hooks or a rack to offer a rustic and homey feel to an otherwise austere space.



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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

NEW POOL SCHEDULE

Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri. 6am-9:45am, and Saturday 10am-11pm - 6 lanes.

Water Aerobics: 18 y+ Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers.

Adult Swim: 18y+ Mon.-Thurs. 11am-3:30pm, Friday 11am-1:30pm

Public Swim: Mon. thru Thurs. 3:30-7pm, Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday 1-6pm

PICKLE BALL

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

ALL WEEK

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

MOVIES

• Movies at the Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center at PAC on Chestnut Street See adjoining ad.

Thurs., Sept. 12

• At First Presbyterian Church, ArtSpace opening reception from 5-6:30p. Theme: The Harvest. Free and open to the public. 471 Main Street.

Fri.-Sat., Sept. 13-14

• 2024 Native Plant Symposium, Connecting Place, People and Plants. \$150 per person. \$20 per student. On Sept. 13 it will be taking place at the Highlands Biological Station Amphitheatre and on Sept. 14 it will be at the Highlands Community Center.

Thurs., Sept. 12

• The public is invited to a reception for the fall ArtSpace exhibit at First Presbyterian Church, located in the lower level of the Faith and Fellowship building. Meet the local artists and enjoy refreshments 5-6:30. ArtSpace is open Mon.-Thurs. 9-4:30. Call (828) 526-3175 or fpchartspace@gmail.com for info.

Fri., Sept. 13

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

Sat., Sept. 14

• At the Hudson Library in Highlands at 12:30 PM or Albert Carlton – Cashiers Community Library at 3 PM Florida author Tracey Enerson Wood to talk about her new historical fiction novel Katharine, the "Wright

Sister."

• Saturdays on Pine at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park 6-8:30 p.m. – High 5

Sun. Sept. 15

• The Literacy & Learning Center fall fundraising event "Celebration of Education" at Wildcat Cliffs Country Club. Guest Speaker – Shelby Van Pelt, author of Remarkably Bright Creatures. \$175 per person. VIP Patron Packages available. Tickets and more info: www.the-literacyandlearningcenter.org/events/coe

• Fourth Annual Highlands Porchfest on Sunday from 1-6pm. Musicians will be at Stubborn Bull, Ugly Dog, High Dive, Town Square, The Bascom, Highlands Wine Shoppe, Highlands Smokehouse, First Presby. Church, Mountain Life Properties, Art Highlands Gallery, High Country Wine & Provisions, Park on Main, Sotheby's on Main, and Highlander Mountain House.

Mon., Sept. 16

• Town of Highlands HS Scholarship Golf Tournament at the Cullasaja Club capped at 28 teams. \$700 per team (\$175/player). Hole sponsorships are available for \$150. To register, contact event co-Chair, Rebecca Shuler at Town Hall at 526-2118.

• HCLT presents George Masa: A Life Reimagined, An Evening with the Authors, Monday, 5:30 - 7:30pm at Highlands Inn, 420 Main St, in the Sequoia Room. Light refreshments and wine will be provided. FREE. Email hope@hcltnc.org with any questions.

• Cashiers Cares 3rd Annual Golf Tournament at Trillium Club Shotgun start at 10:30a, scramble format. \$200/player, cart lunch and after party with awards, prizes and raffles. sign up on cashierscares.org or contact Pam Kerr, pbk354@gmail.com for info.

Tues., Sept. 17

• National Voter Registration Day at Highlands Civic Center/Rec Park 10a to 2p. Photos will be taken for Voter ID if needed. REMEMBER: if living in Macon County for more than six months as the primary domicile, a NC driver's license is necessary to vote. Driver's

licenses from other states, even if not the primary domicile, will no longer be accepted.

• HCLT presents Satulah-Bratton Sunset & Moonrise Hike, A Walk in Masa's Footsteps at KH Founders Park on Pine St. 6-9 p.m. FREE.

Wed., Sept. 18

• At the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, a fundraiser for Highlands Child Development Center, Sip, Snip and Support at 4 p.m. Flower Arranging Demonstration and Childcare Celebration

• HCH's Dinner with Doc - Colon cancer awareness - Zach Phillips, MD, 6-7p in Whiteside Cafeteria. Online registration is available at www.missionhealth.org/calendar. For more information, call 828-526-1345. Attendance is limited to 50 people. A buffet-style dinner will be provided.

Fri., Sept. 20

• Highlands School Booster Club BINGO! The event will be on Friday at the Highlands Civic Center/Rec Park starting at 6:30 p.m. All proceeds from the event will go to support the Booster Club. Please join us for a fun evening to support the club!

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

Sat., Sept. 21

• Saturdays on Pine at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park 6-8:30 p.m. – The Boomers

Sun., Sept. 22

• OEI's Chef Dinners at The Farm. 6TH ANNUAL OYSTER & SEAFOOD FEST. Book Online at OldEdwardsHospitality.com/ChefDinners

Tues., Sept. 24

• HCLT presents VNS: Pollinator Habitat Conservation in the Mountains of WNC. Join us for our September Village Nature Series in partnership with The Village Green. Programs are free and open to all.

Fri.-Sat., Sept. 27-28

• At The Bascom, the 14th Annual Bascom Clay Symposium highlighting the talents of three animal and figurative clay artists: Christine Kosisiba, Andréa Keys Connell, and Taylor Robenalt.

Thanks to the generosity of Bascom sponsors, the symposium is free to all and welcomes both drop-in visitors and those who wish to participate in the entire event. Artists will offer works for sale not regularly available in The Bascom's retail space.

Fri., Sept. 27

• At Hudson Library at 11AM in the Hudson Library Meeting Room for Community Coffee with the Mayor. The topic will be: "Meet the Emergency Responders of Highlands and Macon County." Representatives from all agencies will talk about their coordinated team approach and take questions.

• HCLT presents, Mushroom Foraging Walk at Edward Baker Preserve, Friday from 3-5 p.m. at the Edward Baker Preserve in Cashiers. Sign-Up: email hope@hcltnc.org. 15 spots available.

• Friday Night Live music on Main Street's Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. - Nitrograss

Sat., Sept. 28

• HUMC's Craft Bazaar from 10a to 2p at the church on Main Street, Highlands. Hot dog lunch, Pumpkin Patch, Homemade jellies, jams and breads, homemade crafts, silent auction, gift baskets and much more. Proceeds will help finance the church's Live Nativity during the Christmas Parade and HUMC's Summer Camp.

• Saturdays on Pine at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park 6-8:30 p.m. – Kayla McKinney

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...AMORTIZATION continued from page 10

right. I am not a cancer," she said.

Lawanna Bales who owns three STRs, three businesses on Main Street and a commercial building said Highlands needs STR renters.

"They support Main Street and they create stability in the housing market. Overall, they are terrific folks who want to experience Highlands who you would be lucky to have as your neighbor," she said.

Bales said the Highlands economy can't depend on just second-homeowners.

"Once the perfect weather arrives the elite, second-home owners arrive -- many of you join the Cabul -- popping up for

a few months and then leave. November comes. The country clubs close, the day-trippers leave, and the business district is then left to be supported by a small number of residents for six months out of the year.

"Fewer vacationers mean less prosperity for everyone in Highlands. You can choose to support the STR rights and business owners who have made this a viable year-round town paying for town infrastructure along the way or reverse the prosperity and shut down this town for a few spoiled second-home owners who want to maintain this mountain all to themselves," she said.

• See **AMORTIZATION** page 16

THE HEIGHT OF HAPPINESS



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Johnny Webb Band

SEPTEMBER 13
Silly Ridge

SEPTEMBER 20
Curtis Blackwell Band

SEPTEMBER 27
Nitrograss

Saturdays on Pine

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park
Pine St.

Featuring a variety of popular, regional bands and musicians

SEPTEMBER 7
Steel Toe Stiletto

SEPTEMBER 14
High 5

SEPTEMBER 21
The Boomers

SEPTEMBER 28
Kayla McKinney



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...AMORTIZATION continued from page 15

A reoccurring theme as uttered by Nancy Nichols and others said visitors aren't long-term supporters of Highlands or Highlands history.

"We are going to lose the basis of the giving of this community if you allow more and more people to have STRs because they won't give," she said.

But Deborah Kirk, who manages several STRs said that's not true.

"My renters contribute to the community by attending functions and contributing to the town," she said.

Jeanne Chambers co-owner of Chambers Realty and Vacation Rentals which has been in business more than 40 years, said the debate is a multi-faceted one involving property owners who resent strangers in the driveway next door, who can't get a reservation at a restaurant because an "evil" person like a tourist or a visitor or a STRer got there first.

"They are the ones who say, 'I am glad I found Highlands when I did and now let's close the gates, but it's also about the restaurant and business owners and their employees, the housecleaners and landscapers and plumbers who are worried about losing business and jobs,'" she said.

"And it's about the person who bought a home for retirement but until then needs to rent it to offset the expense of owning a home in Highlands.

"It really doesn't matter if people who live here or have been here all their lives or just closed on a property last week, they are all due respect and the enjoyment of their property rights," she said.

Property rights were a reoccurring theme for those both for and against amortization.

Those with HNC say they are denied the quiet enjoyment of their homes with disruptive STRs next door, or just the fact that there are strangers in their midst.

But Conner Blackwood who has a home he rents as an STR until he can retire said the town should be very careful about removing rights from those who live and work in Highlands.

"I fought 23 years for all of your freedoms. In the UAE they have alcohol restrictions, in Germany you don't even get a full-size trash can, in Denmark, the cars have to be 20 years old or older. When you restrict freedom it comes with consequences," he said. "I didn't serve to uphold our nation's freedom and then come here to have that revoked. We all need to be careful about what we restrict regarding our personal property."

Blackwood said freedom requires responsibility of renters and homeowners who rent, which is where rude, messy, irresponsible renters come in.

Jim Murphy a recent homeowner on Dog Mountain said his next door STR is a nightmare, advertised as an event venue -- which is illegal -- housing 14 people that generate noise, garbage and overflowing septic problems.

No one in the room thought that was OK, which is where rules, regulations and enforcement come in.

But Freda Bennett and Carol Gable believe no matter how you cut it STRs are unworkable and unmanageable. Both suggested a level playing field -- might as well let everyone have STRs, said Bennett.

Carol Gable said STR owners have extra property rights that she doesn't have at the expense of neighborhoods. "Amortization levels the field," she said.

With only 15 complaints logged with the police over the last two years, some not from STRs, Jennifer Huff with Save Highlands and Jerry Moore, an STR owner, both asked for proof.

"We are told repeatedly that guests cause problems but each time we reach out for complaint statistics there is almost no difference in the types and number of complaints between locals and STR guests," Huff said. "This is a town where tourists who become guests in STRs should be welcomed and appreciated for allowing Highlands to thrive. Locals and tourists can co-exist and get along, we just need to try a little harder."

Moore asked if amortization was legal, logical and would really solve the alleged problems he keeps hearing about.

"If you pass amortization, will courts approve? Can you show harm caused by STRs? If so, is that data significant enough to take away my rights as a property owner? You are going to spend half a million dollars plus and be the first municipality in NC to attempt to ban STRs completely. Are you exceeding your authority? You have a lot of power. Use it responsibly," he said. "Laws should not be passed to benefit the will of a few. You need to look at the big picture."

However, full-timer Alice Nelson said the board should stand on the courage of its convictions.

"Don't let the threat of a lawsuit weaken your courage or tempt you or lead you to take the easy way out and abandon those convictions. The threat of a lawsuit is no small thing, and it's not to be taken lightly, but there comes a time when we have to stand firm whether as individuals or a group and stand up for our beliefs and not allow threats of any kind to intimidate," she said.

Craig Thompson said the town

• See AMORTIZATION page 17

...AMORTIZATION continued from page 16

shouldn't put all STR owners and all STR problems into the same boat.

"Every property owner has property rights. Abandoning STRs is a trespass and a violation of property rights," he said.

Realtor Pat Allen said people's rights and the economy of downtown Highlands is at stake.

"I don't understand the hysteria; what is really happening? Trash and bachelorette events are wrong and should be dealt with between the police and the homeowner, either fine them or shut them down. That makes sense. But for those who have spoken who depend on STRs as a livelihood should be considered and not disregarded due to a few disgruntled people in neighborhoods. That's wrong," she said.

Realtor Pam Nellis said grandfathering of STRs should stand. She said homeowners have agreed to go along with that as a compromise.

"Grandfathering allows a property owner to maintain existing conditions or uses of a property even after zoning laws

or regulations have been implemented. It goes with the land into perpetuity," she said. "Current STRs owners have been told if their home hasn't been rented for more than one year and one day they lose their ability to rent as a STR. That's not grandfathering, that's a compromise by the owners who are willing to do that. And through attrition, the STR numbers are going down and will keep going down because some people who buy STRs don't want to rent them."

Tracy Fitzsimmons said amortizing STRs but saying renting 30 days or more is OK won't fix everything.

"Lengthening the stay to 30 days or more will not turn a misbehaving guest into a well-behaved guest - the two don't correlate," she said.

She also questioned how many of those for amortization of STRs found Highlands by staying in an STR.

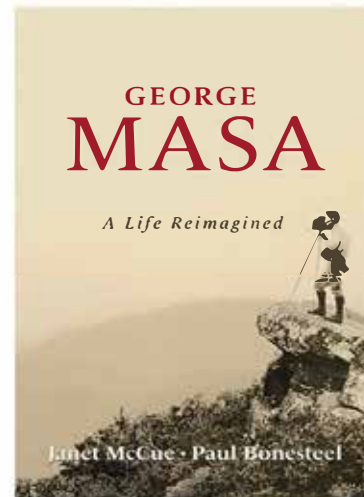
Bill Long with the HNC said Highlands' elections, surveys and letters prove that people don't want STRs.

"We have been told the state legislature

will soon pass a law allowing STRs. We are still waiting for that law. It hasn't happened and it won't happen," he said.

After 90 minutes the public hearing ended. The town will accept letters from

those for or against STRs until they vote on the matter, which could be at the next Town Board meeting, Thursday, Sept. 19 at 7 p.m. in the Community Building.



Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust
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A Night With The Authors Janet McCue and Paul Bonesteel

As they share new information regarding the talented photographer
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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



Reflections on the Prodigal Son

Michael D. Matlock
Rector
Christ Anglican Church

This July, we began a simple Sunday night 6 p.m. contemplative worship service. This past Sunday night I asked one of my parishioners, my dear wife of 33 years, Robin, to offer her spiritual reflections on the very familiar parable that Jesus taught, the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). I am going to share with you some of my take aways from her three points of the younger son's request, the son's return, and the reaction of the Father.

The younger son's request that his father give him the share of property that will belong to him is a rebellion and a choice for a type of voluntary displacement. This younger son would not wait on his father's natural passing so he could receive his share at the natural time. Instead, the younger son takes and goes to a distant country. With his father, the younger son already has all he would need to enjoy his life—food, a home, an occupation, clothing, and love. This child is off because of his own desires and will. He thought I must live "out there" in the land of elsewhere in order to obtain a fulfilled, peaceful and happy life.

This child lives recklessly and eventually finds himself not better fed, but close to starving; not better clothed, but with a dirty, tattered robe and perhaps even no sandals; not better employed, but used up and spent out by his work; not with new friends and community, but aware that there is a lack of concern by others about his welfare; and not more peaceful, but driven to a spiritual and emotional "bottom" with harshness and severity.

Why do we, like this younger son, and Adam and Eve, want what God doesn't give us, or what he hasn't given us yet? When we leave the Father, we become enslaved. We keep trying to find our "true self" in a world of "false love." Why do we sometimes send ourselves where we think we need to be? Is it not because of our sin, our attachments, our addictions, our obsessions, our compulsions, our own limited way of thinking and seeing the world, our past traumas, our damaged selves, our disordered thinking? All of these reasons lead us to distant countries, to turn away from the Father. The mystery of God's love is that we are loved so much that we are free to leave, but we come to understand God loves us so much that we don't want to leave.

As for the younger son's return, he models for us a return of being a child again as Jesus explains, "unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3). Like Nicodemus came to understand, we too have to be born again (John 3:1-21). We have to have that second innocence—since our first innocence is gone. We have to become like the younger son, and when we have found ourselves in a distant country, we have to turn, and then re-turn, and go to the Father we left and be embraced.

Finally, let us consider the Father's reaction to his younger son's return. Perhaps the father is also prodigal. Another meaning of prodigal is "having or giving something on a lavish scale." Isn't the father lavish when he runs filled with compassion toward his son and puts a robe on him - the best robe? And isn't the father lavish when he puts a ring on the younger son's fin-

• See SPIRITUALLY page 22

• 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

CHAPEL OF THE SKY

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

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

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464 U.S. Hwy. 64E, Cashiers, NC
CAC@christanglicancashiers.org • 828-743-1701
Sunday: 9:30a Adult Christian Ed; 10:30a Holy Eucharist;
6p Contemplative Worship with music and prayer thru Oct. 27
Wed: 6p Potluck, Bible Study

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS

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

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

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

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685
3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands, NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins
Sun: Service 10:45am, Children's 10:30am

Wed.: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mon. 4:30pm, Tues.
10am; Men's Bible Study: Wed. & Thurs. 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447
Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

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; Kelley Connelly Asso. Pastor
828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org
Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.
Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m.. Choir: 6p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville, NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson
Sunday: School 9:45a. Worship 11a & 7p. Bible Study 6p
Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed. Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road
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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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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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Kippur.

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(4.5 miles from NC 107)

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

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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

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Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.
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schedules of activities.

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

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

Aug. 25

• At 2:32 p.m., Josimar Sanchez Chavez, 29, of Highlands, was arrested for DUI, Driving left of center and carrying unsealed alcohol in the vehicle when it was stopped on Main Street. He was issued a \$1,500 secured bond.

• At 4:21 p.m., officers were called about a shoplifting incident involving a 65-year-old man at Mountain Fresh Gro-

cery involving concealment of merchandise, larceny after concealment and resisting arrest when a person took two bottles of wine valued at \$250 and fled from law enforcement in a black Land Rover.

Aug. 30

• Mary Frances Wilmoth, 57, of Statesville, NC, was arrested for three counts of Failure to Appear in three counties – Surry, Cabarrus and Forsyth. She was issued a \$115,000 secured bond. Her trial was Sept. 5

Sept. 5

• At 1:30 p.m., officers received a report of damage to personal property at a home on Mt. Lori where a fence was hit with a vehicle.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Sept. 3.

Sept. 3

• At 5:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Hickory Hill Road.

Sept. 5

• At 7:34 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 28 south (Walhalla Road).

• At 12:10 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Ravenel Ridge road.

Sept. 6

• At 1:54 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Magnolia Drive.

Sept. 7

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

• At 4:14 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 28 south (Walhalla Road).

Sept. 8

• At 3:47 p.m., the dept. responded to a vehicle fire on Flat Mountain Road.

Sept. 9

• At 7:53 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Laurel Branch Road.

Sept. 10

• At 6:04 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Buck Creek

...SHOOTING continued from page 7

sidered to be under any type of threat at this time.

“We want to urge parents to speak with their children about how their words matter. In this day and age, we have zero tolerance for any comments made that put any Macon County school’s safety into question,” he said.

Highlands Police Dept.

Due to recent events, an ongoing commitment to ensuring the safety and security of our students, Highlands Police Department has enhanced patrols around local schools. This proactive measure comes as part of our continued efforts to provide a safe and supportive environment for all students and school staff.

Many may have seen officers stationed at key locations at Highlands School and daycare facilities during peak times, including drop-off and pick-up hours. This increased visibility is aimed at deterring potential threats, responding swiftly to any incidents, and fostering a sense of security within our community.

“Our primary goal is to create a safe learning environment for our children,” said Police Chief Andrea Holland. “By increasing our patrols and working closely with school officials, we are reinforcing our commitment to school safety and ensuring that our students, teachers, and parents feel secure.”

The enhanced patrols will include:

- Increased Foot and Vehicle Patrols:
- Collaboration with School Staff:
- Community Engagement: Officers

will be available to interact with students, parents, and school staff, building relationships and trust within the community.

In addition to these measures, the Highlands Police Department encourages parents and guardians to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities or

concerns to local law enforcement immediately. The safety of our children is a shared responsibility, and the community’s active participation is essential.

“We appreciate the support of our community and school partners as we work together to keep our schools safe,” said Chief Holland “By increasing our presence and maintaining open lines of communication, we aim to ensure a secure and positive educational environment for all.”

For more information or to report any concerns, please contact Andrea Holland at 828-482-2249 or 828-526-9431. If you have an emergency, please call 9-1-1.

Area School Administrators

Still, getting threatening social media screenshots has made students nervous.

Highlands School principal Sarah Holbrooks said she and the school as a whole are thankful for the partnership between the school, the Central Office, the Macon County Sheriff’s Office and Highlands PD.

“As a team, we have collaboratively planned and worked hard to minimize the dangers a dangerous world presents on a daily basis. We continuously review these plans and make changes as necessary,” she said. “Highlands School is a wonderful and safe space to work and learn. And, we are very thankful to have a full-time SRO on campus every day.

Jeff Miles, head of The Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School has reached out to quell fears expressed by his students from Macon and Rabun counties and beyond.

“The recent tragedy at Apalachee High School and subsequent online threats to schools in the region have understandably raised concern. While no threats have been directed at our school, we remain vigilant and proactive in protecting our close-knit campus community.

“Our Campus Safety Manager Adam

Casebolt brings extensive experience in law enforcement and campus security. We benefit from strong partnerships and effective communication with local law enforcement agencies, and we are grateful for their care of our school community.

“In continuing our efforts to provide the highest standards of safety, we implemented significant safety technologies, training, and protocols in all divisions beginning last spring,” he said.

Though administration at Summit Charter in Cashiers is unaware of any issues, Head of School Kurt Pusch said maintaining a safe learning environment for our students, staff, and families will always be a priority at Summit.

“We strive to uphold a culture that fosters trust, care and openness where students and parents feel safe reporting and sharing concerns with school staff,” he said.

COREY JAMES GALLERY

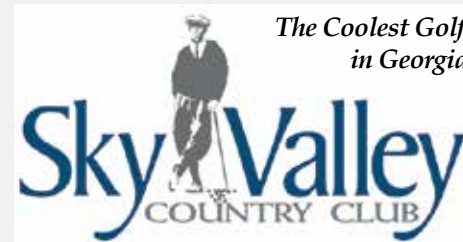
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ORGANIST/PIANIST NEEDED to play for I am Sunday worship services and Wednesday evening choir rehearsals (5:30-7pm) at First Presbyterian Church, Highlands, NC. \$24K annual salary. No administrative duties involved. Our organ is a circa 2004 16-rank 2 manual Wicks pipe organ. For more information, contact Angie Jenkins, Director of Music Ministry @ 828-200-0183. (st. 6/13)

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HIGH COUNTRY PHOTO/KEVIN VINSON: scanning photos, slides & negatives to CD or DVD for easier viewing. Video transfer to DVD. Everything done in house. Leave message at 828-526-5208.

HCHF awards over \$1 million through 17 grants

The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation (HCHF) has announced they have awarded seventeen grants, committing over \$1 million to the community in their 2024 Grant Cycle. HCHF has a strong commitment to funding lasting solutions aimed at the following strategic focus areas: Health, Access to Healthcare, and Behavioral and Mental Health. The grants awarded in the 2024 cycle will help to expand needed services across western North Carolina by supporting a variety of health-related programs and services in the region.

This year's recipients are A.W.A.K.E., Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic, Blue Ridge Health, Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau, Child Medical Collaborative, Clay County Governing Board, Community Care Clinic of Franklin, Life Challenge of WNC, Macon County EMS, Pisgah Legal Services, REACH of Macon County, Southwestern Child Development Commission: Nurse-Family Partnership, Summit Charter School, Together We Can Do Great Things, Vecinos, Western Carolina Medical Society Foundation, and Western

Carolina Pacesetters.

"HCHF is dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of our Highlands, Cashiers, and surrounding communities," said Dr. Barbara Corcoran, HCHF Board Chair. "The 2024 grant awards demonstrate our commitment to supporting and fostering initiatives that continue to improve health throughout our region."

The 17 grant awards focused on supporting a wide range of programs aimed at improving the overall health and well-being of the community. These initiatives include expanding primary care availability, improving access to dental care, providing mental and behavioral health support for youth, conducting medical evaluations for victims of abuse, supporting substance abuse recovery programs, upgrading medical technology in ambulances, offering legal services to survivors of violence and child abuse, establishing partnership programs for expectant mothers, supporting school-based health, increasing access to colorectal cancer screening for underserved

populations, and more.

Since its establishment on February 1, 2019, HCHF has awarded 135 grants, providing over \$10 million to 82 organizations across our communities. These grants have had a substantial and enduring effect on the well-being of our residents, ensuring that all members of our community have greater access to necessary care.

"Our goal is to create a healthier community by investing in innovative solutions to healthcare challenges and supporting organizations that provide critical services to our community," said Charlotte Muir, Executive Director. "We are proud to partner with these organizations and work together to improve the overall health and well-being of people in western NC."

HCHF will be holding an awards ceremony on October 8 at 4 pm at the Village Green in Cashiers to celebrate this year's 17 grantees and the impactful work they are doing in the community. For additional information about the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation, please visit www.HCHHealthFnd.org.

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**...SPIRITUALLY
from page 18**

ger - meaning he trusts his son - still - even after everything the younger son has done? And isn't the father lavish when he gives his younger son sandals? The son is not barefoot any longer - like the hired help or like the enslaved workers.

Through conscious choices, like the younger son, let us too, come to ourselves, and go back to the Father - step by step; let us not hide and stay away. With our empty hands, a humble spirit, a repentant attitude, a mindset to accept the life that God gives, and a desire to love Him with all our hearts and all our soul and all our mind. I invite us to cease taking from God so that we can learn to receive what He gives. I invite us to return from wandering in distant places, so we can be at home with the Father. Let us cease resisting, so God can do for us and love on us how He wants. Let us picture ourselves in the Father's embrace, being transformed and reborn.

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