

Highlands Newspaper

NC 106 will be closed Sun., Sept. 22 from 9p to 7a Mon., Sept. 23.

FREE Every Thursday

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Word on amortization of STRs expected

By Kim Lewicki

The long-awaited vote on whether to amortize short-term rentals will be taken tonight at the September Town Board meeting in the Community Building at 7

p.m. The process begins with a vote on whether to amend the verbiage in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that currently allows STRs in R1 and R2 in ex-

istence prior to Sept. 15, 2022, to verbiage that would end all STRs in R1 and R2 through amortization as of Sept. 15, 2027.

As per state statute, any
• See **AMORTIZATION** page 16

HS Project gets hard fought OK from BOC

BOE member Wilkes holds commissioners to task; Shearl says 'good luck' funding the soccer field renovation

By Kristin Fox

After two years of ups and downs, meetings and studies, the Highlands School project got the go ahead from the Macon County Board of Commissioners at last week's regular monthly meeting. Commissioners voted 4-1 to move forward with the expansion and renovation of Highlands School at a cost of \$7,983,983 which keeps the project on track for a completion date of fall 2025.

Commissioner Josh Young voted no.

Though Commissioner Higdon's has voted against the Highlands Project in the past, since he left the meeting early - prior to the vote - his vote counted as a "yes."

• See **HS PROJECT** page 17



From left are HFR Chief Ryan Gearhart and HFR Asst. Chief Robbie Forrester lowering the flag to half mast on Sept. 11 at a ceremony honoring those who lost their lives in the 2001 terrorist attacks. By Brian O'Shea

Highlands honors 9/11 victims

By Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News
Highlands police and fire de-

partments held a flag ceremony on Sept. 11 at the new fire station to
• See **9/11** page 4

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The following was intended as a letter-to-the-editor but it ended up being much more. What started as an Episcopal Church of the Incarnation mission, evolved into something life-changing for Highlander Jane Chalker. Haiti has been her passion and a second home for decades. She offers the following first-hand knowledge about the people and their love of pets, including dogs.

Why eating dogs just isn't something Haitians would do

By Jane Chalker

This is my first ever letter-to-the-editor of a newspaper. Since the stories of Haitians eating neighbors' pets have surfaced, many have asked me if this could be true. I have been called by a friend the "Highlands' Haitian expert" so, I felt compelled to answer.

My first visit to Haiti was in January 2002. Since then, I have traveled there more than 50 times - visiting six times one year taking youth groups from many churches and universities - my longest stay was a month.

My visits have been in the Central Plateau considered the poorest part of Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere. I stay in the village Cange. Dr Paul Farmer began Partners in

Health (Zanmi LaSante in Creole) in Cange. I have a house in Cange.

Regarding the recent focus on Haitians in Springfield, OH, I was recently asked about animals and pets in Haiti.

First, goats, chickens, fish, and small black pigs are the usual

• See **HAITI** page 10



This pet came to church and slept near the altar at the feet of the pastor during the Sunday morning service.

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Tonight's worksession and board agendas

The Highlands Town Board of Commissioners will meet tonight Thursday, Sept. 19. At 6 p.m., there will be a board workshop followed by the official monthly meeting at 7 p.m. Both meetings will be at the Highlands Community Center next to the ballfield. The meetings can be accessed remotely by a link on the town website.

The 6 p.m. workshop agenda includes three items. First, the board will immediately go into a closed session to consult with the town attorney about the handling of the Huff lawsuit against the town. Last year, both parties to the suit agreed to a court-ordered stay of the suit. This agreement ends at the beginning of October, and the suit may move forward.

After the closed session, the open public session will address two items. The town has received several requests from area facilities for our sewer plant to receive sludge from their small sewer package plants. Currently, this sludge is trucked a substantial distance for disposal. If the board grants permission, these entities would dispose of their sludge into our sewer plant. Since they have treated the sludge



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

in accordance with state standards at their package plants, our plant operators would know exactly what was entering our system.

Prohibitions of septic companies depositing their waste in the plant would continue.

The town can consider accepting sludge because we now have a new, very efficient belt press for processing sludge quickly. These agreements to process sludge would net the town about \$40,000 a year. The board will have to weigh the

benefits of such a program against potential problems.

The board will also review a proposed NCDOT crosswalk at Hickory Street and North 4th Street near the ballfield. Since North 4th is US 64, NCDOT would oversee the project by designing and painting the actual crosswalk. The town would have to commit to altering the sidewalk curbing to be ADA-compliant for the crosswalk. There may be a couple of other areas where crosswalks could be installed.

On a related matter, in recent weeks, NCDOT has been repainting existing crosswalks in town with specialized, long-lasting paint. The town has also paid NCDOT extra funds to paint town street crossings.

There will be one major item at the 7 p.m. Town Board meeting. That item is the final action on the proposed amendment to amortize short-term rentals in R1 and R2 zoning districts. A public hearing was held on September 5th where speakers on both sides of this issue had the opportunity to address the board. Prior to this final action tonight, and in accordance with state statutes, the town has been taking written comments before and after the public hearing. Our town clerk has sent these comments to our Sunshine List in several batches. She has also made sure the comments are sent to the commissioners.

The 7 p.m. board meeting will open with public comments. I request that those who have spoken at the hearing and/or submitted written comments consider not speaking again during the public comment period. On the other hand, if someone feels they have a new point on the issue that needs to be stated, by all means, do so.

Finally, I want to lend my full support to our playground initiative, which is being spearheaded by Commissioners Stiehler and Weller. We are in the middle of seeking private funds for the project. I encourage everyone to donate by going to www.highlandspay.net.

• SNAPSHOT •



Photo by Don DeBat

...and so it finally begins

Last week, surveyors from McGill Associates began documenting Mirror Lake - the first step prior to beginning Phase I of the dredging project set to begin the end of September or beginning of October.

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

• WEATHER •

Thu, 19-Sep	Fri, 20-Sep	Sat, 21-Sep	Sun, 22-Sep
73°F 53°F	73°F 52°F	78°F 52°F	74°F 54°F
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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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and Reception

Sep 28
10 am - 4 pm

Demonstrations by
featured artists

...9/11 continued from page 1



honor the nearly 3,000 people who died in the 2001 terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and Flight 93.

On Sept. 11, 2001, 19 terrorists committed murder-suicide and killed 2,977 people from 90 nations: 2,753 people were killed in New York; 184 people were killed at the Pentagon; and 40 people were killed on Flight 93, according to 911memorial.org.

Highlands Fire & Rescue Chief Ryan Gearhart and Highlands Police Chief Andrea Holland spoke heartfelt words remembering those who died and then lowered the flag to half-mast.

"One of the many reasons we have a ceremony on 9/11 is to remember the ones that lost their lives on that day," said Chief

Gearhart. "343 firemen were killed on that day. They went on shift that morning, not knowing it would be their last."

72 police officers were also killed in the attack.

Gearhart said that lowering a flag to half mast is a symbol of our respect and in remembrance of the fallen.

"When we lower the flag to half mast, it is a symbol of respect for those who have passed away," said Chief Gearhart. "It is usually ordered by the Governor's office as to when we lower and raise the flags."

Members of the Highlands American Legion Post 970 and the community were also present to pay their respects.

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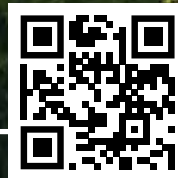
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• LETTERS •

Our children deserve better

Dear Editor,

This is a response to a letter written by David Snell entitled “We must make the world worthy of its children” that ran in the Aug. 8 edition of Highlands Newspaper.

Pablo Casals was a principled man who chose to live in exile to escape Franco’s fascist government in Spain. Casals refused to perform in any country that recognized the legitimacy of the Franco regime including the U.S. However, when JFK requested Casals perform in the White House to honor Governor Marín of Puerto Rico he relented. In his letter accepting the invitation Casals wrote that he knew Kennedy had as his “aim” to “work for peace based on justice, understanding and freedom for all mankind.”

Casals wrote in his autobiography published the year after his 1973 death that we should say to our children:

“Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all of the world there is no other child exactly like you... You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel... You must cherish one another.”

How could a follower of Casals “you are a marvel” child protectionist philosophy support a candidate that would allow for the taking of a child’s life at any point in a pregnancy up to the time of birth? What would Casals say to the candidate that supports puberty blockers and sexual reassignment surgery for children of all ages without consent of the parents? Would Casals condemn the California legislature that refuses to pass a bill making it a felony to solicit or purchase a minor for sex? And what about the Democratic candidate’s support of a Title IX

mandate requiring girls’ locker rooms be opened to boys? This is antithetical to “cherishing one another”.

Last year DHS admitted to Newsweek to “losing” 85,000 unaccompanied children that illegally crossed the border under the watchful eye of the current “Border Czar.” Last week, DHS revised that number to nearly 300,000. In July the leading housing provider for unaccompanied minors to which the government has paid billions, Southwest Key Programs, has been accused in a DOJ lawsuit of committing acts of “severe sexual abuse” on these minors. Neither the “Border Czar” nor Ocasio-Cortez has knelt in the dirt at the border to shed tears for any of these children.

Twelve of the last 16 years Democrats have controlled the White House. Democrats control the media, education, big tech, the arts, nine of the 10 largest cities. Through that control they have brought us censorship, wars, defunding of police, increase in crime, lower test scores, 56% increase in gas, 26% increase in grocery prices, 20% increase in the price of cars, 21% increase in housing prices, boys playing girls’ sports, DEI, labeling parents domestic terrorists, opposition to school choice, flourishing antisemitism, a near record number of both abortions and out of wedlock births. The moral degradation of our society is directly related to Democrat policies. Who is better off today than they were four years ago? Certainly not our targeted children who have been denied a peace based on justice, understanding and freedom.

Chip Miller
Cashiers

• See LETTERS page 8

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...LETTERS continued from page 7

What's this I hear about R1 neighborhoods being threatened with STRs?

Dear Editor,

When and why did I lose the right to live in my home without being harassed and intruded on? I read in the newspapers that some people are threatening the R1 neighborhood my husband and I chose almost 20 years ago. We wanted a retreat without the concern of unfamiliar strangers walking our street and paths. We didn't plan on some neighbors needing to rent out part of their homes in order to afford living here. There are a lot of things I can't afford, but I don't depend on neighbors to make up the difference. We also did not expect to make travel more affordable for people we have never met.

This is not a communist country. This

is not a communist village. One correspondent wrote that there is an "intended jovial, communal, and adventurous spirit" here that shouldn't be eroded. Well, I am not the least bit jovial, communal, or adventurous. I pay my taxes, give generously to local nonprofits, attend concerts, use the grocery stores, the drugstore, the services, the shops and restaurants. But I am a private person, and I don't want random people renting the homes near me for a couple of days before they move on. When we walk our dogs, we only run into dogs we know and these dogs know us. And I am not afraid.

Marsha O'Connor
Highlands

Town could 'buy out' STRs

Dear Editor,

Some homeowners may want to give up their STR status but don't want to give up the income derived from these short-term rentals.

If the town sets up a fund specifically to voluntarily 'buy out' owners (most often when the properties are being sold), eventually they may slowly disappear. A sepa-

rate fund for this purpose can be set up within the town for certain neighborhoods wherein nearby property owners can contribute to voluntarily "buy out" designated adjacent rentals.

Alfred Levy
Franklin, Highlands and Jupiter,
FL

• See LETTERS page 11



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Thank You, Neighbors!

Thank you to every voter, resident, homeowner, neighbor and friend who worked tirelessly with us these last several years to get short-term rentals out of our R-1 and R-2 residential neighborhoods.

In 2021 and 2023, when we encouraged you to elect the four candidates to the Town Board who supported removing short-term rentals from our residential neighborhoods, you did.

When we asked you to show up at Town Board meetings and stand up for our residential neighborhoods, you did!

And most recently, when we asked you to write, speak out, and rise up in favor of a zoning amendment to remove short-term rentals in our residential neighborhoods, you did:

- 125 written letters from residents and homeowners before the Public Hearing supporting amortization.
- 15 pro-amortization speakers at the Public Hearing, along with
- 100 neighbors wearing “Homes not Hotels” stickers.
- 60 written pro-amortization letters AFTER the Public Hearing from residents and property owners.

We are sincerely grateful to all who have worked together to preserve our Highlands community. We are proud to call you neighbor.



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...HAITI continued from page 1

meat for meals – though most Haitians eat only two meals a day – about 10a and 5p – if lucky enough to have two meals. Many children go to school to have their only hot meal of the day.

There are very few free, public education options in Haiti, with most school being tuition-based.

Lake Peligre is a large nearby lake. The USA built a damn on the Artibonite River in the late '50s to

power Port au Prince, the capital. The largest river in Haiti became a source of power, but to the destruction of fertile farmland and agriculture for many families. We helped establish a fish farm with

tilapia on the lake. Haitians love to eat fish. These fish were caught in the lake and are for sale in the market.

On one of several visits, a Highlands youth group was with me. We went to a Saturday market which has everything and anything for sale. The group decided to buy a pig, take it home, and have it the next day not only for their meal, but also to feed neighbors who helped and visited during our visit. I agreed and said only one thing – Do Not Name this Pig because then he will be a pet! Regardless, the pig quickly became “Harry” and went with us to feed the neighborhood - not as a pet!

Once we began a goat project in a remote village where we helped build a church and school, and brought in goats not only to help feed families, but so the family would have a source of income.

Goats usually have two or three kids giving birth in five to six months. Haitian goats are meat goats – not milk goats. The most delicious goat I ate was cooked with vegetables and noodles.

I have seen three kinds of

pets in Haiti. Doves are pets. Someone will have a bird house built in a tree with several doves flying in and out.

The second pet is fish. Dr. Farmer had a fishpond at his house with beautiful koi and he had one built by the hospital and the Episcopal church so every one could enjoy their beauty.

A third pet, important due to the recent stories, is a dog. Most dogs in Haiti look exactly alike – brown, short hair, and skinny. Not only are dogs family pets, but they are extremely important as they guard what little possessions a family might have. This was explained to me when I asked why they care and feed them so diligently when they have so little to eat themselves.

They said they are well cared for and loved because they are not only pets but are valued because they protect the family.

The love and care for pets are family values in Haiti. That is part of the culture. I have seen this as birds, fish, and dogs are cared for and loved.

These values are carried with the people wherever they live.

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...LETTERS continued from page 8

About Haitians, dogs and cats

Dear Editor,

Donald Trump and J.D. Vance are repeating stories about Haitian immigrants eating pets in Springfield, Ohio. The Republican Mayor of the town says there are no credible accounts of this happening. The Republican Governor of Ohio says that this is not true. They are saying these things to make Haitians into monsters who we should fear. This is part of their ongoing campaign to demonize immigrants.

As happens when Trump attacks groups and individuals, now there are

threats directed at people and institutions in the town. Trump is responsible for his rhetoric which incites others over and over.

The Old Testament repeatedly tells us to welcome strangers and Jesus provides a powerful lesson about who is our neighbor in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Trump and Vance claim to be Christians. I only wish their words and actions reflected Jesus' life and teachings.

Al Brady
Highlands

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Fall Home Improvement

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Recommended Flowering Perennials and Annuals

By NC Wildlife Federation

Perennials have a longer lifespan than annuals and will come back year after year. Whether perennial or annual, native pollinator plants set deeper roots so they capture and filter higher amounts of stormwater runoff. This helps reduce flooding during extreme weather events and saves water since these require less watering after being established. Gardeners benefit because these plants are more resilient to drought, climate change and other adverse conditions.

Below is a list of suggested perennials native to North Carolina. Many of the trees listed can be found in all three major regions of North Carolina (Piedmont, coastal, mountain). This list isn't intended to be comprehensive and only highlights a selection of native trees that many nurseries and garden centers are likely to carry.

For a more comprehensive list, see NCWF's suggested North Carolina regional native plant list. You can also pur-

chase NCWF's custom Butterfly Highway seed packets, which include seeds for up to 10 native plants that support pollinators and other wildlife.

To stay informed on pollinators and native plants, habitat restoration resources and what's flying and blooming across North Carolina, sign up for The Butterfly Highway newsletter.

Mountain Pollinator Plants

Herbaceous Plants

(Herbaceous plants are vascular plants that have no persistent woody stems above ground.)

- Asters (*Symphyotrichum* spp.)
- Pipevine (*Aristolochia tomentosa*)
- Virgin's bower (*Clematis virginiana*)
 - Trillium (*Trillium* spp.)
 - Dicentra (*Dicentra cucullaria* or *Dicentra eximia*)
 - Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)
 - Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)
 - Virginia mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*)
 - Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)
 - Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
 - Ironweed (*Vernonia noveboracensis*)
 - Goldenrod spp. (*Solidago* spp.)
 - Late purple aster (*Symphyotrichum patens*)

Trees & Shrubs

- Red maple (*Acer rubrum*)
- American holly (*Ilex opaca*)
- Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*)
- Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
- Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- Maple-leaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*)
- Blue Ridge berry (*Vaccinium pallidum*)
- Oaks (*Quercus* spp.)

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Fall Home Improvement

Consider These Reasons to Get a Home Generator

By Travelers

Power outages can be a major inconvenience. They can also create problems for you, your family and your home as you shift into “emergency mode” to prevent your food from spoiling, to safely navigate your home in the dark, or simply to keep the heat on. Investing in a home generator can help make being without power more bearable – and can even fuel some fun when not being used for an emergency.

Home generators come in a variety of types and sizes, from portable versions to standby and inverter units. Portable generators typically run on gasoline and need to be operated at a safe distance from any structure. Standby generators start automatically when the power goes out and are run on propane or natural gas. Inverter generators have a more complex engine than the other types and are much quieter than their conventional counterparts. Regardless of which type of generator you choose, you will need to follow the manufacturer recommendations for safe operation of the unit.

It's helpful to research this useful home device before you urgently need it, so here are some reasons to consider if you're thinking about purchasing a home generator of your own.

1. We can't control the weather.

Most power outages are weather-related. As the number and severity of extreme weather events rise, so does the

likelihood of a blackout lasting 24 hours or more.

2. You have well water.

Without electricity, your well pump and filtration systems will quickly lose the ability to provide fresh, safe water for drinking, bathing, heating and more to your house.

3. You have a sump pump.

If you rely on a sump pump to keep your basement or crawlspace dry – including all the possessions you keep in those areas – losing power means you also lose protection against water damage in those areas.

4. You work from home.

If you run a business or work out of your home, you know every minute counts. Going without power for even an hour can be a major inconvenience – if not a major risk – to you, your clients and customers.

5. Food spoils quickly.

According to the FDA, perishable food items should be thrown out once your refrigerator has been without power for as little as four hours.¹

Travelers wants to help you protect the things that matter to you. We offer a wide breadth of products so you can be covered at home and on the road.

6. You live in a high-risk or severe climate area.

Some states are more vulnerable to weather-related outages. Others have such severe temperature extremes that power to control air conditioning and heating systems can be essential for comfort and safety. If you live in one of

these areas, your risk to the potentially devastating effects of a power outage increases significantly.

7. Your property is vacant for extended periods of time.

If you are a snowbird, frequent traveler or own a seasonal home, having a generator can protect your property from outage-related emergencies – whether you're in or out of town.

8. Someone in your home relies on an electrically powered medical device.

If you or a loved one requires the assistance of a home medical device that runs on electricity, a power outage can

• See GENERATORS page 14

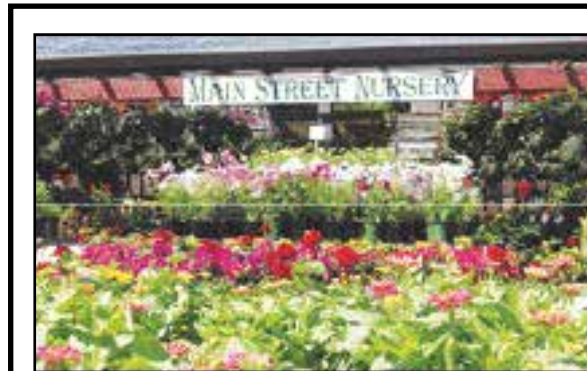


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...GENERATORS continued from page 13

be deadly. A generator can help keep those devices running, but you also will want to check with a healthcare professional for suggestions on how to weather power outages with your particular medical device.²

9. Generators aren't just for emergencies.

Portable generators can be put to use at work or play in, around and away from your home, too:

- Camping.
- Portable power tools.
- Outdoor parties and events.

Whether it's due to storms, falling trees or some other challenge, power outages can bring an assortment of problems for homeowners. A home generator can become one of your go-to remedies for those unexpected situations. Checking out the options before you lose electrical power is one smart way to beat the crowds who'll be racing to scoop up a home generator, for that "next time" outage scenario.

Town Scholarship Fund nets \$49,000

By Kim Lewicki

The Town of Highlands Scholarship Golf Tournament, sponsored by the Bryson Family, was held Monday, Sept., 16 at Cullasaja Club netting a record \$49,000.

With the Brysons paying all expenses, expanding the number of teams to 29 rather than 21, pushing tee sponsors to participate and holding the event in September instead of mid-October, Event Chair, Brian Stiehler said, this year's was a record tournament.

"We are so grateful for the membership and leadership at Cullasaja Club, who allowed us to use their beautiful facility for a one-day tournament and for the Bryson family. We normally generate \$25K but basically doubled proceeds for the scholarship fund this year."

The winning team, with a score of 55, consisted of Joel Sawyer, Jordon Chandler, Ben Baggett and Chip Baggett.

The 2025 tournament will mark the 50th anniversary of the Scholarship Fund which the Cullasaja Club said it would be proud to host. The tentative date for next year's event is September 15th.

The Town Scholarship Fund awards funds to graduating seniors with college or technical school in their sights as well as funds for those continuing college or technical school.

• 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

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.

Fri., Sept. 20

• Highlands School Booster Club BIN-GO! 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

• Greenway monthly workday and lunch at 4118 this Saturday, 9a-noon. We will work then gather for lunch. We will focus on trail maintenance and handrail repairs. Meet at the Rec Park back parking lot.

• 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 Kosiba, 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.

• At The Bascom Clay Symposium, from 4 - 6:45 pm. Keynote by Stephanie Moore, Executive Director The Center for Craft (Asheville) and Reception

• 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.

• At The Bascom Clay Symposium, from 10 am - 4 pm. Demonstrations by featured artists

• At Cashiers Village Green, Blessing of the Animals at 10 a.m.. Leash dogs. Bring blanket and chair. Rain or shine.

• At Highlands School - Fall Festival 5-8

p.m.

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

• At PAC, GRAMMY nominee and multiple IBMA Award recipient Darren Nicholson is set to perform Saturday, along with his band and a special guest Six-time IBMA Banjo Player of the Year Kristin Scott Benson. Tickets for Darren Nicholson Band at Highlands Performing Arts Center are on sale now.

Sun., Sept. 29

• Highlands Dems Cookout at Mountain Laurel Club at 5:30 p.m. Dinner provided. BYOB. Meet candidates. Suggested donation \$47. RSVP remmettsmith@gmail.com

Tues., Oct. 1

• The Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC second Women in Business event, scheduled for Tuesday, from 5-6:30pm at the Highlands Wine Shoppe. For more information or to RSVP, please contact the Highlands Chamber of Commerce at 828-526-5841 or email businessservices@highlandschamber.org.

Fri., Oct. 4

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

Sat., Oct. 5

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

Sun., Oct. 6

• The Highlands Biological Station presents Highlands on the Half-Shell Sunday at 4p.m. feature jambalaya, gumbo, and oysters as the Highlands Biological Station's Valentine Meadow transforms into a vibrant haven of flavors and camaraderie. Tickets are available for \$150 per person. Space is limited, so be sure to register soon at www.highlandsbiological.org.

Thurs., Oct. 10

• Pisgah Legal Services' 14th Annual Justice Forum. Reception 5:30pm; Forum at 7pm. Tickets to the reception are \$125/person and include food and drink. Advance registration is required at www.pisgahlegal.org/justiceforum. In Highlands, the free livestreaming of the event will be at PAC. Questions? Email Leslie@pisgah-legal.org

• OEI's The Orchard Sessions with Erick Baker. Light bites, a cash bar 6-8 p.m. \$40. Book Online: <https://www.simpletix.com/e/erick-baker-orchard-sessions-at-the-farm-tickets-149415>.

Fri., Oct. 11

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

• OEI's Chef Dinners at The Farm. GREAT BRITAIN CELEBRITY CHEF PHIL VICKERY. Book Online at OldEdwardsHospitality.com/ChefDinners

Sat., Oct. 12

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

Sat., Oct. 19

• Saturdays on Pine features a variety of

popular, regional bands and musicians at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park 6-8:30 p.m. – Thirsty Horses

Tues., Oct. 22

• HCH's Dinner with Doc - Surgical services options at HCH such as general surgery, hand surgery and colonoscopies - James Osborne, MD, 6-7p in Whiteside Cafeteria. For more information, call 828-526-1345. Attendance is limited to 50 people. A buffet-style dinner will be provided.

Fri., Nov. 8

• OEI's Chef Dinners at The Farm. FARM HARVEST DINNER & BARN DANCE. Book Online at OldEdwardsHospitality.com/ChefDinners

Sat., Nov. 9

• OEI's Chef Dinners at HALF-MILE FARM. JAZZ SUPPER. Book Online at OldEdwardsHospitality.com/ChefDinners

Tues., Nov. 12

• HCH Dinner with Doc - Chronic pain management options - Eric Roslonski, DO, with Comprehensive Pain Consultants, 6-7p in Whiteside Cafeteria. For more information, call 828-526-1345. Attendance is limited to 50 people. A buffet-style dinner will be provided.

Nov. 14-16

• Highlands Food & Wine Festival.

Tues., Nov. 26

• Community Thanksgiving Dinner at the Highlands Civic Center/Rec Park at 6 p.m.

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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



visithighlandsnc.com

...AMORTIZATION continued from page 1

amendment to the UDO must first be sent to the Planning Board. At its July meeting, in a unanimous 7-0 vote, the Planning Board voted not to amend the UDO verbiage to amortize STRs.

The next step was a required Public Hearing on the issue which was held Sept. 5 at which 31 people spoke -- half for amortization and half against.

Prior to the Public Hearing and until 7p September 19, the Town Board accepted and continues to accept letters from the public to be entered into the record.

As of press time, Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen has emailed six batches of letters -- from both sides with many, many a simple "I agree" due to an email blast from Highlands Neighborhood Coalition (HNC) member James Worrell in which he encourages folks both with HNC or those agreeing with HNC to respond with those two words.

Now, in response, on Tuesday SAVE Highlands sent out an email blast requesting the same response from its members and those who agree with them.

There are duplicate, triplicate and quadruplicate emails (letters) from the same "writers" associated with the HNC as well as SAVE Highlands.

Town Clerk Shaheen said she is aware of the duplicates but a tally of the "letters"

-- those for amortization and those against amortization -- has not been requested from her.

"I asked if it was needed and it is not, so I'm not doing a tally," she said. "I'm just sending out all of the emails I receive."

Tonight, at the Town Board meeting, commissioners are holding a workshop prior to the 7p meeting to discuss issues, most of which will be put on the agenda of an upcoming Town Board meeting, but there will also be a "Closed Session pursuant to G.S. 143-318(a)(3) to consult with an attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege and to consider and give instructions to an attorney concerning the handling or settlement of Huff et al. v. Town of Highlands."

Huff et al. v. Town of Highlands is a lawsuit that has been "stayed" for years pending the town's and the state's decision regarding STRs. It was levied against the town by SAVE Highlands when the town tried to abruptly stop STRs in 2021.

As explained by Attorney Derek Allen, who is representing SAVE Highlands group in the Huff et al. v. Town of Highlands, the lawsuit is still out there.

"We agreed not to move forward [with the lawsuit] as long as the town was

• See AMORTIZATION page 17

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...HS PROJECT continued from page 1

The money will fund the original scope of the project that includes a four-classroom addition, two PreK classroom renovations, three project labs, media center renovation and outdoor classrooms.

The total also covers the completed work of the middle school renovations including replacement of HVAC, roof, windows and flooring in the existing middle school building. In addition, it covers the cost for the steel design and deep foundation required due to the Geotech studies.

The total package also includes necessary projects added to the scope of the original project including intercom, data, security, middle school fire alarm replacement and an emergency radio booster system.

In May and August, commissioners released funding to Vanoy Construction to

do some of early procurement work for the deep foundations and structural steel along with the continuation of services to finalize the work required for treatment of a buried oil tank. These two allocations helped to keep the project on schedule while the county commissioners and school board explored options for the buried fuel tank.

The total cost also includes dealing with the oil tank; whether it needs to be removed or could be filled with cement and left in the ground. The buried oil tank is located outside the footprint of the existing middle school where the new addition will be constructed.

The level of contamination was not at actionable levels and did not require any notification to the NC Department of

• See HS PROJECT page 19

...AMORTIZATION continued from page 16

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.

Asked if the board will reveal the outcome of the Closed Session discussion, Mayor Pat Taylor said "it depends on what action is taken, if any. I can't predict what will happen."

Meanwhile, prior to voting on the amendment to the UDO at the Town Board meeting, the board must first recognize that the proposed amendment is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Once that's done, it's presumed the board will vote on the matter. The vote is expected to be 4-1 with Commissioner Jeff Weller the lone vote against amending the UDO and against amortization of

STRs.

Up until this point, Commissioners John Dotson, Amy Patterson, Eric Pierson and Brian Stiehler have pushed for amortization.

Meanwhile, NC Representative Kevin Corbin said NC Senate proposed Bill 667, also known as Regulation of Short-Term Rentals, which would change the way local governments regulate short-term rentals, specifically preventing cities from prohibiting the use of residential properties or accessory dwelling units as short-term rentals as well as prohibiting cities from limiting the number of nights a property can be rented as a short-term rental, has not made it to a vote.

"The bill didn't make it out of Rules for a vote. It is possible we may hear it in November when we are back in session."

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



Take the time to 'see' others

Brent Metcalf
Mission and Direction Pastor
Christ Church of the Valley,
Cashiers

One of my favorite stories in the Bible happens in John chapter 9. Jesus is traveling around with his disciples. At this point in Jesus's life, there would have been a substantial crowd following him. There would have been many people wanting Jesus' time and attention.

Out of the crowd, Jesus notices a blind beggar. We learn from the story that this man was born with this condition. Imagine this man had never seen anything, colors, beauty, friends, or family. It amazes me that Jesus saw this man. He pursues this man; he chooses to converse with him out of everyone he could have talked to that day. Too often in my life, when I see someone begging, I do not engage them; I am too busy, I have formed an opinion of them, and I choose to pass by without interacting. Not Jesus. He sees this man, values him, and engages him in a conversation. This man could not help himself; he had spent his life relying on others to help him; he was forgotten and pushed to the margins of society, yet Jesus gave him attention. Jesus is full of compassion and mercy as he interacts with the man. We can learn a lot from Jesus and how he interacts with people.

In college, I traveled with classmates on a mission trip. During an extended layover in an airport, our professor, who led the trip, challenged us to spend 30 minutes alone and watch people. He wanted us, as we watched people, to try our best to see them the way that Jesus would have seen them: through the lens of compassion, grace, mercy, and love. He wanted us to take notice of their emotions, their frustrations, and their happiness. At first, I admit I didn't know what to think about this assignment, but the more I sat there and watched people, the more I learned. Jesus had this gift of taking notice of the forgotten, the hurting, and the person we wouldn't normally interact with.

Jesus heals this blind beggar; his life is forever changed. There are many lessons that we can learn from this story. First, I believe we can try to take notice of people that we pass by every day. We can be kind and gracious and try to see them the way Jesus would. I understand this is a challenge for us; we are often busy and maybe have our frustrations, and it can be difficult to divert our attention away from ourselves.

One of my friends recently volunteered at our local food pantry, Fishes and Loaves in Cashiers. This was the first time he and his wife had ever served at the local food pantry. As he talked about the experience of serving others through this incredible ministry, he was almost glowing. The reason he was excited is crucial for us to consider. Sure, he had given his time and helped people, which is fantastic, but that isn't why he was glowing. He was glowing because he interacted with people that he usually wouldn't give his time and attention to. He had received a blessing from helping and serving others. I believe we often think that we will help people, but we are the ones

• See SPIRITUALLY page 19

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

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

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

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

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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

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Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Women's 10:30 am

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Sept. 10. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Sept. 10

• At 4:08 a.m., officers received a report of destruction to property on Oak Street where a man hole cover valued at \$2,000 on a sidewalk was damaged.

Sept. 11

• At 8:19 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident in Wright Square.

Sept. 12

• At 9:38 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Spruce Street.

Sept. 15

...HS PROJECT continued from page 17

Environmental Quality. The commissioners and the school board were given three options for treatment of the oil tank – removed and the area treated or left in the ground.

At Tuesday's special called meeting of the commissioners, County Manager Derek Roland said he had received feedback that the levels of contamination from the oil tank do not rise to a level that is unsafe, and the tank would not have to be removed.

The vote to fund the Highlands School addition and renovations came after Vanoy Construction presented a timeline of the project followed by further discussion of the increased costs.

Vanoy Construction provided Information and a timeline initially requested by Commissioner Josh Young hoping to give all players in the project a full comprehensive picture of the project.

Despite Vanoy's presentation, Commissioner Josh Young was still anxious about moving forward with the project due to the increased price tag. Young cast the lone dissenting vote stating he just could not support the project.

"I have little faith in the project," said Young. "We have started a \$40 million high school, the Macon Middle School school track project bottom has blown out and this project's bottom has blown out. I do not feel good about this. I do support this project and want to see it through but I do not think it is equitable."

After the motion was made by Chairman Gary Shields, Commissioner John Shearl opened the discussion with his concern over the need for outdoor classrooms and his concern for the soccer field. The Highlands School project does not include the funding to renovate the soccer field.

"Why do we have to have an outdoor classroom space?" asked Shearl. "What can we do to reduce this price to move this

• At 7:10 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident in the Stubborn Bull parking lot.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Sept. 10.

Sept. 10

• At 10:49 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Falls Drive east.

• At 12:51 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

• At 4:17 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Wyanoak Road.

Sept. 11

• At 9:42 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hummingbird Lane.

• At 10:26 a.m., the dept. was first-

responders to a residence on Sagee Woods.

thing forward. This thing has escalated and just keeps going up and now we are looking at the soccer field in Highlands. You are talking about going out there and digging out 25 feet of muck and filling it and all this other stuff. Where can we come up with additional funding for this?"

Macon County School Board Member Hilary Wilkes, who represents the Highlands district, stood her ground in support of the county funding the money to move the project forward.

"It is your job to fund this project," said Wilkes in her response to Shearl and the board. "We've been working for two and a half years on this project. We have jumped through every hoop you have asked, we have given you a list of what you asked for, and we have checked all the boxes you have asked for. I don't know what else to give you. We've vetted this project with Commissioners Shields and Young and the liaison committee.

"I am not going to sit here and get into the positives of having an outdoor classroom just to have you to say it's an excess, because frankly I don't think our school children are an excess," said Wilkes.

Though he said he was not happy about it, Shearl voted to move forward and fund the Highlands School project though concerned with the cost. In addition, he expressed his concerns about the soccer field.

"I am really concerned about the soccer field and where that funding is coming from," said Shearl. "Because as soon as this project is done, I know I am going to get hammered about money for the soccer field. I just wanted to figure out a way to come up with the funds to move this project forward while considering the soccer field.

"I am going to go with it and good luck with the soccer field," said Shearl. "I'm going to support this because I am a die hard supporter of Highlands School."

responders to a residence on Sagee Woods.

• At 6:31 p.m., the dept. responded to a location on Carolina Way where someone was stuck in an elevator.

• At 8:11 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Harris Drive.

Sept. 12

• At 9:55 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Church Street.

• At 7:49 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Helen's Barn Ave.

Sept. 13

• At 1:17 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cullasaja Drive.

• At 3:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Magnolia Drive.

Sept. 14

• At 9:58 a.m., the dept. responded to a

fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 12:51 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to the parking lot of Dry Falls.

• At 8:27 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Buckberry Road.

Sept. 15

At 8:26 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

Sept. 16

• At 4:42 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Crowe Drive.

• At 9:11 a.m., the dept. assisted a stranded motorist on N. 4th St.

• At 12:21 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Boathouse Lane.

...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 18

who are changed by the experience.

We can take comfort in the fact that Jesus sees us, Jesus pursues us. Wherever we are, whatever is going on in our lives, Jesus sees us. When we can't help ourselves, Jesus is there, full of compassion and mercy. We should take the challenge and interact with someone that we usually don't give our time and attention. We will, like my friend, be the one that leaves blessed and changed.

Philippians 2:3-5"

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus."

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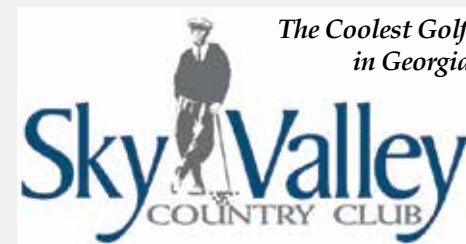
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Photo by Brian O'Shea

Varsity Soccer Team

Front row from left are Aiden Dendy, Elmer Hernandez, Francisco Gooch, Rowen Carnes, Brian Jarquin, Blane Dendy, Stephen Pierson, and Alex Barranco. Back row from left are Jack Sumner, Chase Kenter, Tucker Wilson, Isaiah Vilardo, Connor Hughes, Paolo Mcrae, Finneas Garner, Pierre Damien, Aniah McKim, and Kris Magliocca.

HS MS Boys team finishes 2nd of 7

On Thursday, Sept.12, HS Middle School Swim Teams traveled to Brevard for a 7-team swim meet.

The 6-member boys team finished 2nd and finished 1st in 4 of their 8 events and Emilina Hernandez, the lone girl, finished with two 2nds in her 2 events for 34 pts.

In a sheer numbers game Highlands could not overcome the 21-member MMS team. The Highlands team was the smallest team at the meet.

However, all Highlands swimmers scored in every event they entered.

Ian Batista and Aleks Petric finished 1st in 3 events and 2nd in one, scoring 57 pts each. Justin Powell and Ivan Shchegachov won 2 events. Powell also finished 2nd and 3rd in 2 others, while Shchegachov had a 5th and an 8th place finish for 53 and 45 pts respectively. Asa Garner scored two 6ths for 26 pts. Benji Vines scored a 8th and a 12th for 16 pts.

The Highlands Middle School Swim Teams next meet is at home at the Rec Park pool Friday, Sept. 20 at 5 pm.

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