

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Sept. 26, 2024

Highlands pulls the trigger on amortization

Says it's not likely State legislature will move on the issue

By Kim Lewicki

The 4-1 vote at Thursday's Town Board meeting to amortize Short-term Rentals wasn't a sur-

prise - Commissioners John Dotson, Amy Patterson, Eric Pierson and Brian Stiehler have been pushing for amortization since 2021.

What was a surprise was hearing what Commissioners Patterson and Stiehler - the only two

• See **AMORTIZATION** page 4

Taxpayers to foot legal battle for amortization

By Kim Lewicki

Prior to taking the vote on amending the Unified Development Ordinance to amortize short-term rentals at Thursday's Town Board meeting, Mayor Pat Taylor asked the board to vote on potential funding of the sure-to-come legal battle.

He said SAVE Highlands, the group who is suing the town in Huff et al vs. Highlands for trying to end STRs back in 2021 has started a GoFundMe page to advance their legal action.

"I suspect there will be other funding initiatives against amortization if the vote goes that way tonight, but I would support a motion at this time that the Town Board won't accept outside funding sources for the town's legal defenses concerning amortization of STRs," he said.

Commissioners Amy Patter-

• See **TAXPAYERS** page 17



Photo by Cynthia Strain

What is hyperphagia?

By Cynthia Strain
B.E.A.R. Task Force

In the cooler days of autumn, bears are focused on finding as much food and gaining as much weight as possible. When the eating is good, a bear can put on two to three pounds a day. By hibernation time many bears will

have added about 4 inches of fat and gained between 20% and 50% of their body weight. For would-be moms, the more fat they put on, the more babies they will have and the better the cubs will thrive.

The quest for calories keeps bears active and foraging up to

• See **HYPERPHAGIA** page 11

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Highlands School's Coach Lamb gets Region 8 DSA Award

Brett Lamb, a 1987 graduate of Highlands School, has dedicated his career to nurturing young athletes and advancing sports education and it's all come to fruition with the DSA award.

After high school, Lamb played collegiate basketball at Lees-McRae College, where his passion for the sport flourished. He went on to earn a degree in Health and Physical Education from Western Carolina University. At Western Carolina, he served as an Assistant Men's Basketball Coach, playing a pivotal role in the team's success as the 1996 Southern Conference Champions and their notable appearance in the North Carolina Athletic Directors Association (NCAA) Tournament.

Lamb's commitment to athletics and education led him to Macon County Schools, where he has devoted 27 years to shaping the futures of young students and athletes. His tenure includes seven years at Cullasaja School and 20 years at Highlands School.

Throughout his career, he has coached a diverse range of sports including cross country, track, baseball, soccer, and basketball. His exceptional coaching in basketball is highlighted by nine conference championships and nine Coach of the Year awards.

Beyond his coaching achievements, Lamb has served as the Athletic Director for both middle and high schools, significantly

• See **LAMB** page 16



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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

The future without STRs

In a 4 to 1 vote, the Town Board decided to move forward with the amortization amendment to the current STR ordinance. While I advocated for a more cautious approach to reducing STRs in R1 and R2 by stricter enforcement of the grandfathering provision, I will support the board's decision.

Nevertheless, that decision will put the town in uncharted and possibly stormy waters in the coming months. The board's consensus was to decide what was best for the community, regardless of possible legal opposition. The four commissioners voting for amortization believe the town has a legally defensible position.

I expect litigation from those who advocate STRs in residential areas, and I won't be surprised if the state legislature intervenes with a preemptive law in the forthcoming long session. In the meantime, those property owners who have been grandfathered will be able to continue their STR operations for the next three years.

During the Town Board's final review of the STR amortization amendment, I was



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

impressed with statements made by Commissioners Patterson and Stiehler. After listening to both sides of the argument at the public hearing, and as Commissioner Stiehler noted that he had read all the email statements, both commissioners made articulate statements as to why they would vote for amortization. After listening to them I realized that they passionately and sincerely believed their vote would be in the best interest of the future of Highlands.

Some will still contend that amortization will have a disastrous impact on the community. Time will tell. But I suspect it may have the reverse effect. Some Realtors worry about declining home sales because of amortization, but potential buyers may want to live in a community where STRs have not proliferated in neighborhoods. They may like the certainty of living in a community with zoning codes that allow for a variety of uses but in specific, designated areas.

Let me again address an issue I have always supported: the construction of more hotels in Highlands within business zones. Several folks sent me emails expressing their exasperation with me for stating a Motel 6 in Highlands would be fine with me. To be specific, I mean that I would like to see hotels and motels in or near the town. Visitors need lodging options that currently do not exist. Even with amortization, STR options would be available in commercial zones and outside the town limits in the township.

Highlands used to have lower-cost lodging options when we had the Hampton Inn and Mitchells Motel. Both these facilities have been converted to other uses. Hampton Inn, aka Highlands Inn and now the Trailborn Inn, have recently had its facilities upgraded and now is more upscale. Mitchell's Hotel was purchased by OEL, and it is now being used as an employee housing facility and, therefore, is no longer available for public accommodations.

The lack of affordable hotel rooms has become problematic for the town, some visitors, and maybe even some businesses. For instance, when there was a major storm, the town could bring in private electrical crews to help our electric department quickly get the power back online, and these workers would stay at Mitchells or the Hampton. The same is true for crews coming to Highlands to perform upgrades on the electric grid or for other infrastructure projects. Affordable hotel rooms for these workers are no longer available locally, as the closest motels are in

• See MAYOR page 8

• SNAPSHOT •







Photo by Kim Lewicki

They are FALLing!

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

• WEATHER •

Thu, 26-Sep	Fri, 27-Sep	Sat, 28-Sep	Sun, 29-Sep
			
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...AMORTIZATION continued from page 1

commissioners to speak prior to voting -- really think about Highlands and the people who live, work and visit.

Commissioner Patterson said there are residents and visitors -- making no distinction between part-time residents and full-time residents unless the full- or part-time residents own an STR.

When asked after the meeting if she was concerned about them, she said "No, because there are only about 250 of them and they are a minority."

She said the board is determined to amortize STRs because they represent a problem the town is trying to solve.

"If there is a problem, there is a way

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to separate the people who are creating the problem. There are residents on one side and visitors on the other side and the problem is we have a lot of unhappy residents. They feel abandoned, irritated, aggrieved. They have spent the last four years trying to get our attention saying this is a problem in our neighborhoods," she said. "They no long feel a sense of place, a spirit of place and don't have their "happy" anymore because they are living next to a nuisance in their minds that's never going to get any better."

She said everything that Highlands has which both residents and visitors enjoy is solely due to the residents who either gave land to the Highlands Cashiers Land Trust for the enjoyment of everyone into perpetuity or due to financial contributions made by residents to support the nonprofits including The Bascom, The Performing Arts Center, KH Founders Park, the Highlands Biological Foundation and more.

"We have a really long history of Highlands residents making our community," she said, while also saying she considered visitors who rent 30 days or more residents.

She said she read a lot of letters that were accepted as public comment for the

Sept. 5 public hearing on amending the Unified Development Code to amortize STRs.

"And yes, Highlands is nice place they like to visit but it's because the residents have made it that way," she said. "When they visit and then come back to live it's not just because it's beautiful it's because we have a social and cultural and natural environment which makes them want to be part of the community. Community isn't just about where we are, it's made by the people and residents."

She said it's the residents who give time, talent, and money while showing dedication and enthusiasm.

"We wouldn't have any of that if this town didn't have these residents. So, it's the residents who are very valuable," she said.

Patterson went on to question the economic threat of losing STRs -- that Highlands' economy is going to "tank" without them, she said.

"What do we get, \$1.4 million a year in sales tax? I know of someone who gave that much to a nonprofit in town!" she said. "We aren't asking to get rid of visitors from the restaurants on Main Street, or the trails

• See AMORTIZATION page 10

Orchard Session

Erick Baker

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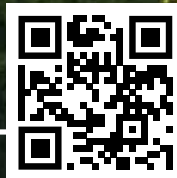
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• LETTERS •

Character and truth matter

Dear Editor

The American Legion Magazine (Aug. 2024) devoted two pages to the "border crisis," stating: "The American Legion stands firm: Secure the borders." Conspicuously missing from the article; Congress DID frame a bipartisan bill addressing well-known border problems but former President Trump instructed his devotees in Congress not to let it pass. Oversight by the American Legion... (?), hardly. They correctly conclude: "This is a national problem requiring bi-partisan solutions and actions by our Congress, president and governors."

The Biden Administration has endlessly (and wrongly) been accused of opening borders to every person on the planet, giving them iPhones, credit cards, transportation to cities of their choice, hotel rooms, food, medical, education, even Social Security. It's claimed "veterans have been pushed aside while illegals get top notch medical care."

Veterans have a right to know whether VA resources are being diverted to illegal immigrants and the American Legion did, emphatically, refute those lies. "Do illegal immigrants receive VA health care (?), No." VA claims agents process claims on behalf of other federal agencies. This includes Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which has a contract with the VA Financial Services Center (FSC) to process medical claims. However, the agency doesn't incur any costs for the claims that come from the ICE program.

According to VA Press Secretary Terrence Hayes, "no resources meant for veterans are used as part of this agreement. FSC provides administrative functions for ICE, using ICE funds, having zero impact on veterans health care or benefits."

I passionately believe that veterans organizations should feel duty-bound to speak to these outrageous lies and, unashamedly, reveal the sources of these lies.

We are but days away from an election that could alter the course of history, determining whether our Republic remains or is unceremoniously tossed upon the ash heap of antiquity alongside other great civilizations that withered and perished from within.

My generation will soon be gone from this earth. We will die comforted by the knowledge our fathers risked their lives preserving freedom around the globe and so that we could live in a world where character and truth matter, and in a country that symbolizes enduring hope and provides an unending haven for all who seek peace and friendship.

This in contrast to those who choose to idolize and support a lying racist xenophobic, climate-change denying, twice-impeached narcissistic conman, convicted felon and tyrant, an unprincipled man who incited an armed attack on his own Capitol in an attempt to overturn an election he knew he'd lost.

This former president has chosen for his running mate a self-described "never Trumper," a man who once believed Trump "unhinged, toxic, cultural heroin," and whose policies range from "immoral to absurd," a man who once opined, "Trump could become America's Hitler."

Donald Trump is unquestionably a threat to our national security, world peace and stability. Every clear-thinking, right-minded, sensible American voter must recognize Donald Trump and J.D. Vance plainly unfit to lead our nation.

David L. Snell
Franklin

• See LETTERS page 8

• OBITUARIES •

Ruth Helen McLarty

Ruth Helen McLarty, 80, of Highlands, NC, passed away September 16, 2024. She was born April 16, 1944, in Alexander County, NC to the late Claude Bunton and Mary Lea Poole Bunton.

Mrs. McLarty was a member of Highlands United Methodist Church where she served in many roles in the Church. She owned and operated a title insurance company and was a founding director of Mountain National Bank of Atlanta, GA; she also served as a director of Decatur-DeKalb YMCA and was on the Board of Visitors at Emory University.

Survivors include her husband of 50 years, Paul McLarty, Jr; two step-children, Timothy Paul McLarty (Jana) and Cari Sue McLarty Johnson (Paul); grandchildren, Garrett Johnson, Bradley Johnson, Jack McLarty and Max McLarty.

A service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Highlands United Methodist Church, PO Box 1959, Highlands, NC 28741.

Online condolences may be made at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com



Beverly 'Bev' Cook Quin

Mrs. Beverly (Bev) Cook Quin of Highlands, NC passed away peacefully in her home, on Saturday, September 21, 2024. She was 86. Bev was born October 20, 1937.

She was the wife of Hilrie Marshall Quin, Jr. who preceded her in death in 2020.

She is survived by her stepchildren, Marshall (Estella) and Amanda Quin, and her grandson, Peter Quin.

A Memorial Service will be held 11 am Saturday, September 28, 2024, at First Presbyterian Church of Highlands with Rev. Emily Wilmarth officiating. A reception will follow the service at the church. The burial will be at Highlands Memorial Park at 10 am prior to the service.

Online condolences can be left at www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home & Crematory is honored to serve the Quin family.



...LETTERS continued from page 7

HF&R comes to the rescue!

Dear Editor,

I want to recognize our Highlands Fire Department, especially for me and my cat Doodlebug.

Last week, Doodle didn't come home and had not by Saturday morning. I asked a friend to come over to see if we could find him and out on my front porch, we heard a very weak meow which we followed up to my new neighbor's house, whom I had never met.

Unbeknownst to them, they let their two Labs out as usual, into their fenced yard as we climbed to find where the meows came from unaware of Doodle.

"Hey!, my cat is 30 feet up in your tree!"
She immediately put her dogs inside. The only thing I could think of was to call the Fire Department that really doesn't do

cat rescues.

I write this at the risk of creating an image of HFD as Animal Rescue, which they are not!

However, they recognized the "dire" situation, came out at once, and rescued a terrified cat who had to be pulled off the limb he had clung to all night and the really super guys, Mat & Clay, so carefully and caring-ly, retrieved by fire ladder, Doodlebug, who then slept for two days afterward (with PTSD I'm sure). I and Doodlebug want to thank them!

Watching the professionalism of their "rescue" I know their expertise in doing their "real" job is in excellent hands for all of us in Highlands.

**Helen Moore
Highlands**

Corporate greed is driving inflation and overpriced foods

Dear Editor,

In recent years, food prices have skyrocketed, and inflation is hitting us all hard. While supply chain disruptions and labor shortages are often blamed, a significant factor that's frequently overlooked is corporate greed.

Major food companies have exploited the pandemic and global instability as cover to raise prices far beyond necessity. Rather than absorbing some of the increased costs, they've passed them entirely onto consumers, inflating prices to protect their profits. According to a report from the Economic Policy Institute, corporate profits accounted for over half of recent price hikes. Food giants like Nestlé, PepsiCo, and Kraft Heinz are raking in record profits while ordinary people struggle to afford groceries. The fact that only a handful of large corporations own the majority of our food products (now known as Big Food) represents a concentration of power that has further implications

for consumer pricing.

Meanwhile, workers in these industries continue to face stagnant wages, widening the gap between the wealthy and the working class. These corporations prioritize shareholders over customers, further fueling economic inequality.

To add insult to injury, US based corporations received major tax breaks under Donald Trump's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in 2017, lowering tax rates from 35% to 21%. This reduces tax revenue that could be used to help support families such as healthcare, education and social services.

It's clear that inflation isn't just the result of global challenges—corporate pricing strategies are a major driver, leaving consumers to bear unnecessarily high costs. We need policymakers to hold these corporations accountable.

**Constance Neely
Scaly Mountain**

...MAYOR continued from page 2

Dillard, Clayton, and Franklin. For some private companies contemplating working for the town, this lack of lodging is a potential deal breaker.

So yes, I am in favor of more hotels in Highlands with a range of price options. It would be good for our visitors whether they are here for a destination wedding or here to work.

As for more near-term plans and my wishes for adding hotel rooms in Highlands, there are several possibilities. There is an opportunity for a hotel next to the old Helens Barn site. The Town Board gave the Roberts family the initial go-ahead to build there several years ago; my hope is that they will continue with that plan.

Other areas where I can see possibilities for more hotel rooms would be the property next to the post office and also across the street at the old bank site next to the fire station and maybe even the old Bank of America property. The Old Creek Lodge property, which is several acres, might also be once again developed into a lodging facility. I also hope OEI will consider renovating Mitchell's Motel and once again welcome tourists.

I will happily work with anyone who wants to increase room capacity in the town's commercial zones. More beds would be good for the downtown business.



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been seen with buyer activity staying buoyant as interest rates have been getting lower and lower since the spring. I do not anticipate any significant dips in the mortgage rates from this rate cut nor a significant increase in buyers as their purchasing power has increased over the past several months.

Landmark Realty Group is celebrating a significant milestone this year – proudly serving the Plateau community for 20 years. We are sincerely grateful for your loyalty and support and thank you for being a part of our journey.

- Carol Wilson is a Broker-in-Charge and Director of Operations for Landmark Realty and Landmark Vacation Rentals overseeing 5 offices including 225 Main Street in Highlands. Landmark Vacation Rentals has over 100 short-term rentals in Highlands and around the Plateau and also offers property management services.

Season – the leaves are starting to turn, there's a chill in the air, pumpkins and mums are everywhere. What a beautiful time of year reminding us of the beauty of change. It allows us to reflect upon the memories of summer and start preparing for the winter months. Don't forget to put Hallowe'en on your calendars – this year it's on a Thursday. If you've never been to a Highlands Hallowe'en before, make 2024 the year to start an annual tradition. It's always a memorable event regardless of the weather.

Whatever the weather on October 31, we invite you to stop by our office on Main Street next to the Park on Main to say hello, rest for a while, stop and watch the world go by for a few minutes. You'll never have seen so much candy!

Short-term Rentals – the Highlands Town Board voted 4-1 (as anticipated) to amortize STRs in R1 and R2 as of September 15, 2027, after amending the verbiage in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that currently permits STRs if they were in existence prior to September 15, 2022. That's a big change if it does, indeed, happen.

Election – with the upcoming presidential election on November 5 there is going to be a change in the White House. Will it be Trump for a second term or another 4 years of Democrats? That remains to be seen! Either way, we'll have a new President in January, and the new administration could influence economic policies that affect the real estate market.

Interest rates – also as anticipated, interest rates were cut with the anticipation of more where that came from. I'm not sure how the Fed can predict with such confidence future cuts given the uncertainty of world events – perhaps it was a little premature and optimistic to predict 6-8 additional rate cuts into 2025. We shall see.

Housing market – given that the interest rates have been falling over the past few months, it's unlikely that this recent 0.5% cut will have a major influence on the housing market here or anywhere else in the US because the effects have already

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...AMORTIZATION continued from page 4

that we can't walk on anymore because there are so many visitors. Our residents are just asking for their neighborhoods and their homes back so they can enjoy living in the Highlands they have

helped support all these years."

She went on to say there are plenty of places outside the town limits that can have STRs.

"We are not telling visitors not to come. There are plenty

of places where they can go to short-term rent outside of town. Macon County doesn't care," she said. "It's not unreasonable to have some place at this end of the county where you can live and not be worried about having an STR next to you."

She said there is no place right now that doesn't have an option of not having a STR but Commissioner Jeff Weller who voted "no" to amortization, said that's not true.

"There are a lot of communities in town that actually have regulations and HOAs that prohibit STRs," he said.

But Patterson said HOAs don't really have the enforcement capability that the town has.

"We are the HOA for the town of Highlands. We are basically saying since we have the ability to do zoning let's give these residents who are actually very valuable to our community some place where they feel like they don't have to fight this fight all the time," she said.

Commissioner Stiehler said the town has waited for the state to pass legislation that would possibly supersede the town's ordinance against STRs but it hasn't happened.

"In 2022 we made it so no new STRs could enter the market, which was a win for existing STRs because they didn't have to deal with any new competition, but it wasn't fair to anyone else who owned a home that wasn't

renting. Property rights should be the same for all landowners and that's why I viewed the current ordinance as a fair compromise," he said.

Stiehler said when he was first elected to the Town Board 13 years ago, he thought he would be the "business-friendly" commissioner because that's what he thought was most important.

"I thought business and more property tax income was going to be the way to move Highlands forward. But over the years my perspective on things has changed and evolved. Business is important and always will be but so is the character of our neighborhoods that we call home."

He said having "businesses" in Highlands' neighborhoods is a line he isn't willing to cross.

"Highlands should defend its ordinances. If a town doesn't defend its ordinances because of legal threats, what do we really have? Our ordinance says single-family residential neighborhoods can have no overnight accommodations.

"We will more than likely be sued, and that lawsuit will cost money. This isn't the first time the

• See AMORTIZATION page 17

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...HYPERPHAGIA continued from page 1

20 hours a day. This annual feeding frenzy called hyperphagia is driven by bears' ticking biological clocks counting down to hibernation, when most bears in colder climates retire for the winter and live off their fat.

Even bears that don't hibernate are biologically driven to gain weight in the fall. In warmer climates many bears don't really hibernate, just take it easier and nap a lot. If there is a dependable supply of human food sources, some bears won't hibernate at all. But they still eat as if they're going to.

Berries, apples and other soft mast crops are at their peak in September and will remain an important bear food while they're available. Blackberries, black cherries, serviceberries, dogwood berries, black gum fruit and mountain ash are examples of favored bear foods.

In addition, hard mast is critical in autumn. That includes acorns, walnuts, hazelnuts and hickory nuts.

This is important to remember when

you set out for a hike. Stay alert, and be sure your dog is on a leash. While an encounter is unlikely, if you do see a bear, keep your distance. Never run; just back away to a safe distance, then leave the area. And NEVER throw food at a bear to distract it. That only trains these intelligent bruins to view humans as a source of food, which could go very badly.

Around the house, people need to be especially careful to avoid having any bear attractants. That would include bird feeders, unsecured garbage, and outdoor refrigerators. Never leave food or food packaging in a vehicle; lock doors and windows to prevent curious bears from entering.

If you have a bear sighting or problem, you may report it at the town's website: www.highlandscnc.org/bearwise. For more information find our B.E.A.R. Task Force brochures at Hudson Library or the Highlands Visitor Center. You can also visit www.bearwise.org.

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Fall Home Improvement

6 reasons hiring an interior designer makes your life so much easier

By Shoko Wanger

For those in the beginning stages of a home renovation, the reasons not to enlist the help of an interior designer can be many. For some, the added cost may seem burdensome or unnecessary; others may worry that hiring a professional will mean handing over creative control of a space that's near and dear to their heart.

But the truth is, while reinventing your space can appear deceptively simple thanks to home makeover shows and Instagram transformations, even the smallest project (like a powder room) requires careful thought, meticulous planning, and a degree of know-how that extends beyond the ability to choose the right lighting or a pretty paint color. In fact, investing in outside expertise can actually save homeowners money on their renovations—not to mention stress, time, and a host of logistical headaches.

“Working with a designer means gaining a teammate—one that'll help you push the envelope a little bit, avoid ex-

pensive mistakes, and get the high-impact result you want,” says Lynne Lawson, an interior designer who works with Decorating Den Interiors, a network of individually owned and operated interior design franchises throughout the U.S. and Canada. Here, Lawson sums up six reasons a designer's guidance can make all the difference.

It keeps costs under control.

Lawson insists that hiring a designer is, in the end, a budget-friendly decision. “It's our responsibility to make sure you're getting the biggest creative bang for your buck,” she says. “Designers are trained on how to approach a project efficiently and cost-effectively, and how to understand what's needed in each type of space.”

She adds that designers know how to source high-quality pieces that will mesh with a client's style and won't need to be replaced in a year or two. “That's what really ends up saving money in the long run.”

It streamlines the design process.

The planning stages of a renovation can be enough to make a homeowner's head spin: Will you need permits to knock down walls? Will removing upstairs flooring affect the downstairs ceiling? When's the right time to pick out paint, flooring, or light fixtures?

“A renovation is a very intricate undertaking, and not all of it is intuitive or obvious,” says Lawson. Knowing how to organize and properly sequence the steps of a project is key, she adds, and an important part of what designers do. Someone who does it every day is going to be able to get their arms around a complex project more easily than someone who does it once in a lifetime.”

A designer's access is unparalleled.

In the world of interior design, Lawson says, it pays to be an insider. “Many of the unique products and materials we include in our designs are only available to the trade,” she explains. Experienced designers, she says, have access to a network of trusted contractors and subcontractors—everyone from window treatment installers, speciality electricians, custom rug manufacturers, and more.

You'll take more risks (in all the right ways).

Looking to make a statement, but feeling unsure of where to start? A designer can help guarantee maximum impact with minimal chance of regret, as well as open a client's eyes to transformative possibilities they'd never



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Fall Home Improvement

considered before. "We like to ask people to take small leaps of faith with us," Lawson says. "They can trust us to achieve a wow-factor without making costly mistakes."

Someone else will sweat the small stuff.

It's one thing to peruse flooring samples and shop for new furniture. It's another to actually place the orders, time the deliveries, and oversee installation. "With Decorating Den, that's all part of what we offer," Lawson says. "Not

only do we do the designing, we take care of the ordering, and we manage tracking, deliveries, and installations. We can handle all of this while our clients are away or at work."

You'll get the result that's right for your space.

Not everything that works for one home will work for another. A designer can help pinpoint exactly which shade of paint will work best with the amount light a room re-

ceives, or which custom sofa, rug, or window treatment you'll need to order for a uniquely-proportioned space.

"Many clients, prior to working with a designer, have purchased items on their own that aren't right for their home, or just don't fit," Lawson cautions. "Working with a designer can make these sorts of high-impact decisions less daunting."

The benefits of owning a hot tub

The 5 Best Hot Tub Benefits

The benefits from hot tubs can be life-changing, with long-lasting results when included in your regular schedule.

While you may be concerned that you need to spend a lot of time in your hot tub for it to have any significant impact, in reality, you only need to find 30 minutes a day!

This makes natural treatment and support at home not only easily accessible but also easy to fit into any schedule.

Keep reading to discover the hot tub benefits that can do wonders for your health and everyday life.

1. Pain Management

How hydrotherapy and warm water immersion therapies help treat and manage pain has been the focus of many studies throughout the last decade.

Fibromyalgia is a condition that causes pain throughout the entire body, leading to diminished sleep, body fatigue, and negative impacts on mental health.

In this study, researchers discovered that hydrotherapy helped improve the physical symptoms of fibromyalgia,

reducing pain, increasing the quality of participants' sleep, and improving physical functioning.

Hot tubs have also been shown to help treat pain in the lower back, neck, and even headaches.

Pain in the body is often caused by tight muscles that have been flexed for a period of time. This can shorten your range of motion, leaving you stiff and less mobile, and can often result in painful muscle spasms.

The heat of the water will help calm your body, reducing your stress and helping your muscles release some of the tension they've been feeling.

As your body warms, your blood vessels will expand, giving you better circulation and making it easier for your blood to move through your body. This will help oxygenate your muscles more effectively, which is one of the most common culprits of muscle spasms.

Then, when you turn the jets on and lean back under that water, you'll be able to have the knots, and tight muscles massaged, helping them release even further.

When you include this in your everyday routine, you'll

be able to support your muscles in maintaining a more relaxed state long-term, effectively minimizing the risk of chronic pain in the future.

2. Reduced Stress and Anxiety

• See HOT TUB page 14

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...HOT TUB continued from page 13

Hot tubs have provided an easy way to help you release your stress and can help reduce anxiety in as little as 15 minutes!

Incorporating a quiet spa session either at the beginning or end of your day can be a powerful way to lower your stress levels and combat the negative effects they

can have on your body.

The act of heating the body helps naturally release tension, and the increased circulation it causes helps better support our entire body.

When it comes to anxiety, hot tubs help by providing gentle compression around the entire body during use. This compression promotes the release of endorphins in the body, resulting in feelings of comfort and relaxation.

3. Get a Better Night Sleep

As mentioned above, hot tubs help relax our body, and promote feelings of calm and relaxation.

While these aspects play a part in you getting a good night's rest, hot tubs also help with this in other ways.

Body temperature greatly influences your energy and the signals your brain sends to your body.

Hot tubs can help stimulate your body's internal clock. When used at night, they can leave you feeling tired and ready to fall asleep as soon as you crawl into bed.

While you're enjoying your evening soak, the warm water is slowly raising your body's temperature, loosening your muscles, and relaxing your entire body.

Then, when you step out of your spa, the air begins quickly cooling your body. This temperature fluctuation signals to your brain that it's time to sleep, making you feel tired.

4. Improved Recovery

Hot tubs can provide an optimal environment for gently stretching and working out injured muscles, allowing you to rebuild strength while minimizing the risk of re-injury.

Home spas can support recovery in a variety of ways, including:

- Increased blood flow
- Targeted massage
- Buoyancy
- Reduced muscle tension

When you submerge yourself underwater, the weight is lifted off your body, allowing your muscles and joints to rest fully and experience better blood flow through increased circulation.

5. Muscle Relaxation

When people think of hot tubs, often the first thought that comes to mind is the relaxation that comes with being under warm, bubbling water as the jets massage your tired muscles.

Tight muscles pull your body out of alignment, causing pain and often leading to even more tension!

This muscle relaxation helps increase your quality of life and, when maintained through regular hot tub use, can support your body's ability to function at its optimal state!



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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

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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.-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. 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 11 AM 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@hcltc.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 Bag Pipers 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 at the Highlands Biological Station's Valentine Meadow. 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 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@pisgahlegal.org

HS Military History Class needs you

Are you a Veteran or a military family member with a compelling story to tell? We want you to come tell us your story. This year for our high school military history class we are creating a documentary. The focus will be on local veterans and military family members and their experiences with the armed forces.

Veterans can expect to be interviewed on topics ranging from their role or job in the military, their experiences during deployments, and their experiences during training. Family members of veterans can expect to be interviewed on topics including how they managed homelife during a family members deployment, how they supported their family member during their time serving, and how they adjusted to their soldier, sailor, marine, or airman returning home.

We feel it is our responsibility as students to engage our community and encourage our neighbors to learn about the experiences of our hometown heroes. Our intention is to screen this documentary December 8 -14, 2024. If you are interested in participating we have forms available for you to fill out electronically or on paper. If you have any questions or concerns please contact our teacher Mr. Caleb Brown at (828)556-5545 or at his email at caleb.brown@macon.k12.nc.us. Thank you!

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SEPTEMBER 14
High 5

SEPTEMBER 21
The Boomers

SEPTEMBER 28
Kayla McKinney



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...LAMB continued from page 1

contributing to the development and management of athletic programs. He is also an active member of the NCADA, where he represents Region 8 on the Board of Directors.

Lamb's legacy in sports and education continues to inspire and positively impact the communities he serves.

"I am overwhelmed by the wonderful comments and congratulations on my receiving the Charlie Adams DSA," said Lamb. "To have my name on an award that honors Charlie Adams legacy is very humbling, he stood for so many core values and helped make the NCHSAA one of the best and most respected athletic associations in the country. We work and live in a special place and I am honored to be a part of a great school and community. I could not

come close to doing the job I do as athletic director if it were not for many other people helping and supporting our athletic department, coaches and athletes. So, from the bottom of my heart a huge thank you to all of you, our coaches and athletes. Highlander Pride!"

The Charlie Adams Distinguished Service Award is in honor of the former long-time executive director. The recipient must have a minimum of 10 years experience in education and athletics, still be active in the field and gone above and beyond their expected duties. The recipient must also demonstrate participation in North Carolina Athletic Association (NCHSAA) activities such as hosting events, serving on committees, board member affiliation, student-services and other important commitments.

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...TAXPAYERS continued from page 1

son and Eric Pierson immediately asked "why?"

He said amending the ordinance to amortize STRs is a zoning issue.

"This is a zoning position and the idea that someone would give us money to support this defense puts us in a difficult position," he said.

Pierson reminded the mayor that years ago, the town accepted \$400,000 from property owners to annex property to widen and pave Bowery Road. The mayor said those were contributions for an infrastructure improvement that was in the full broad interest of the public.

Town Attorney Bob Hagemann agreed.

"This is about you deciding what's appropriate concerning the optics," he said. "People can make charitable donations to a local government which are usually tax deductible. But I can see how some would perceive accepting funds to provide for your defense for a particular legal decision, working into a lawsuit."

He said the town doesn't want financial offers to be perceived as influencing what might be a controversial decision where there are winners and losers.

"I can't tell you it's illegal to accept financial contributions in support of the town's decision, but I would encourage you to think of the optics and the perception of that," he said.

Commissioner Brian Stiehler asked if it was necessary to vote prior to seeing how the possibility of contributions panned out.

But the mayor was clear.

"I would like a vote on this tonight - before we vote on amortization - that we will not be accepting outside support," he

said. "We have to be willing to incur the tax obligation if we have to defend this. From an optic standpoint this is what we should do."

Commissioner John Dotson agreed

"I make a move to make a resolution that the town doesn't accept personal funds, outside funds, or private funds to proceed with this action," he said. "What we have is a very divisive scenario at this point and that would just add fuel to the fire," he said.

Commissioner Jeff Weller seconded the motion.

"If we are going to do it, [amortizing] let's own it," he said.

The vote was 4-1 with Commissioner Pierson voting no.

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...AMORTIZATION continued from page 7

town has been involved in a lawsuit and it won't be the last. We have been advised by legal counsel and we understand the legal ramifications of our policy. I can assure you the town isn't going to go bankrupt," he said.

He said courts exist for this very reason.

"They help settle cases where parties disagree on the interpretation of law and I feel we owe it to our residents to at least try

to amortization STRs and get commercial activity out of our residential neighborhoods," he said.

Commissioner Patterson agreed.

"Maybe it goes to court, and we can't do it, but it will never get done if we don't at least try. If we wait for the state legislature, none of us will be on the board. They never get anything done."

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



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It's hard to believe the fun filled summer season has come to a close here in Highlands. Before we know it there will be the rush of Halloween, Thanksgiving, and then full speed ahead for the Holiday season. Here in Highlands the temperature seems to be holding on to the last few minutes of summer, while the leaves slowly change colors and fall to the ground. It's that "in-between" period where the summer residents depart, tourists take a brief pause, and the year round folks take a moment to regroup as we ask ourselves yet again "where did the summer go?"

As a somewhat recent addition to Highlands, one thing I continue to notice throughout the summer season is the strong connection that so many people feel to Highlands. Thousands of people, from all walks of life, of various ages and demographics find themselves drawn to Highlands for many reasons; the weather, the charm, the good restaurants, the shopping, etc. But surely there's more to the destination than just the material or physical attractions. Perhaps people are choosing to spend their vacation, their extended summer stays, and their free time in our town not only because they enjoy the amenities, but they feel like they belong.

In church work belonging is something we often find ourselves talking about. As a Pastor I want to be sensitive to people's experience, I want to be sure they feel connected not only to God but to one another. Fellowship, connection, and inclusion are all vital components to having a fulfilling experience in a place of worship. But belonging is different from inclusion. For people to feel included in a new area or community you just kind of exist, but to experience belonging takes on a whole new posture of love. Theologian John Swinton reminds us that 1

"Belonging should be the goal of all communities," he goes on to share that inclusion is a bit of a low bar, and belonging is the ultimate extension of God's love in the world.

Clearly belonging is something of great value to the citizens of Highlands. From the radical hospitality, to the dynamic smalltown life, and the vibrant social scene, we are all well versed in creating inclusive spaces. I love how we take such pride in sharing our corner of the world with others. But I still wonder, how do we strive to cultivate true belonging, the kind of belonging Jesus often modeled in his ministry on earth, in our daily living? This is a question I continue to ask myself, not only for my congregation, but myself, too. I wonder what might happen if you joined me in reflecting on this. Could this have a ripple effect? Could we raise our bar of belonging for the next tourist season? I guess there's only one way to find out.

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Wed: 6p Potluck, Bible Study

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Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.

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1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.
Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

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3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands. NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins
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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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Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968
5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

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

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

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Sept. 17. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Sept. 17

• At 10:32 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on US 64 west (Franklin Road) at Mirror Lake Road.

Sept. 18

• At 4 p.m., officers received a report of someone obtaining property by false pretenses when someone who wasn't the account holder got money from a bank for \$4,200.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Sept. 10.

Sept. 17

• At 8:19 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

• At 10:02 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

• At 10:22 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible gas leak at a residence on Sequoyah Drive.

• At 4:37 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Sequoyah Woods Drive.

• At 7:05 p.m., the dept. responded to a Co2 alarm at a residence at Highlands Mountain Club.

Sept. 18

• At 9:29 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a tree on a power line on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

• At 7:02 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

Sept. 19

• At 2:41 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 2:42 p.m. the dept. responded to a call of a gas leak at a residence on Dixon Drive.

• At 6:15 p.m. the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Little Scaly Road.

Sept. 20

• At 2:19 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

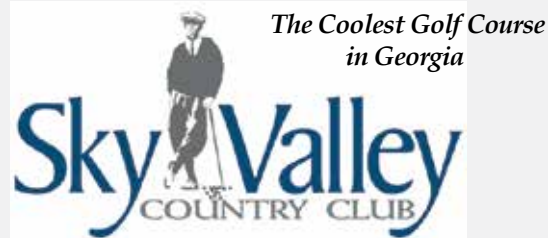
• At 9:01 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of smoke at a residence on Sagee Woods.

Sept. 21

• At 4:43 p.m., the dept. responded to a medical alarm at a residence on Satulah Falls Lane.

• At 7:47 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Maple Way.

• At 7:09 p.m., the dept. helped with a rescue on NC 106 (Dillard Road).



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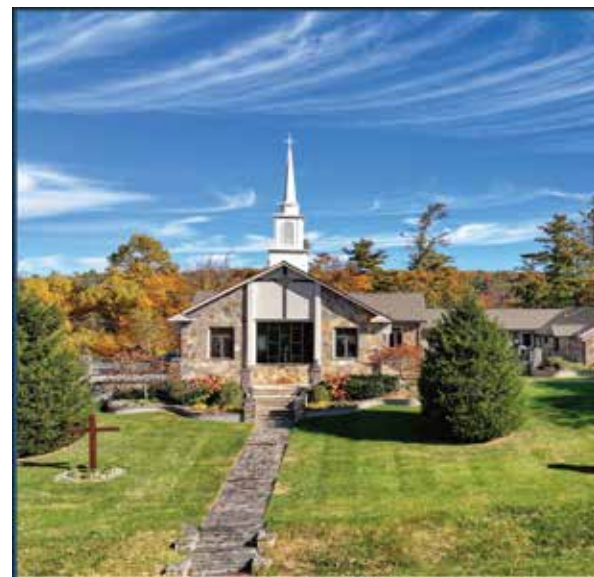
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HS runners do Highlands proud

Saturday the Highlands high school cross country runners competed in a race hosted by Swain County High School at Kituwah Mound which is part of the Cherokee Reservation land. There were 14 high schools competing with 82 boys running and 77 girls.

HS Claire Worley finished 8th overall with a personal best time of 21:35. Francisco Gooch ran a time of 25:32.



Highlands Middle School hosts swim

By Steve Hott

On Friday, Sept. 20, the Highlands Middle School Swim Team hosted a swim meet with six teams from Western NC. The Teams were from Asheville, Brevard, Hendersonville, and Franklin.

The Highlander Boys finished 2nd, the Girls 4th, the combined teams 3rd.

Swimming for Highlands Boys were co-captains Ian Batista, and Justin Powell; and Alex Lopez, Ivan Shchelgachov, Asa Garner, and Benji Vines.

The Girls were represented by Captain Emilina Hernandez and Corena Dearth, Ava Penland and Penelope McRae.

Batista won four events, Powell, Lopez, and Shchelgachov each won two. The Highlanders posted many best times.

The next Middle School Swim Meet will be Thursday, October 3 in Brevard.

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Map landmarks include: Civic Center Rec Park, Historic Village, Martin-Lipscomb Performing Arts Center (PAC), K-H Park, Mtn Fresh Market, Highlands Plaza, and various streets like Hwy 64, Main St, and Spring St.

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