

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 11, Number 51

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

Thurs., Dec. 18, 2014

Thurs., Dec. 18

• The Holiday Program, presented annually by the Highlands-Cashiers Players at the Highlands Performing Arts Center, is Thursday at 7 p.m. There will be a dramatic reading of Truman Capote's touching story, "A Christmas Memory" from his childhood in rural Alabama and a group of area musicians, playing dulcimers, guitars, and fiddle will accompany singers for three songs interspersed in the reading. A reception downstairs in PAC will follow the reading with music by the "Mountain High Dulcimer Club." The program is the Players gift to the community and is free..

Fri., Dec. 19-Thurs., Jan. 1

• Movie at The Playhouse: "Annie." Showtimes are 2, 5, & 8p.5p only on Christmas Day and only 2 & 5p on Mondays.

Sat., Dec 20

• The Highlands Performing Arts Center will screen Live in HD the hit Broadway production Of Mice And Men, filmed on stage by National Theatre Live on Saturday, at 7pm. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047 Adults: \$18 PAC Members: \$15.30

Sun., Dec 21

• The Bolshoi Ballet Live in HD presents The Nutcracker at the Highlands Performing Arts Center on Sunday at 12:55pm. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047 Adults: \$20 PAC Members: \$17 Students: \$10 .

## Williams to fund pool shortfall & more

Thanks to Art and Angela Williams of Old Edwards Hospitality Group recreation options in Highlands have never been better.

Initially, bids to enclose the new pool and renovate the pool house, which the Williams offered

to fund, were nonexistent. Five contractors requested bid packages but chose not to bid on the project for various reasons.

Consequently, it looked like enclosing the pool during the winter and spring of 2015 so it could

open Memorial Day weekend and basically stay open year round was a no go – a disappointment to those looking forward to year-round swimming.

However, between President Obama's and the

• See SHORTFALL page 8

## O'Donnell extends discounted ABC Store lease

Now that the Cashiers ABC Store is open and in full swing, and with its discounted lease agreement in Highlands Plaza set to expire June 30, 2015, the ABC Board has been crunching numbers while considering what to do next.

During late summer and early fall of 2014, when the sale of the Highlands Plaza complex was pending, ABC Board members approached the Town Board to request permission to reallocate funds – all of which are pumped back into the community – and explained that the state would be taking a bigger portion of profits, likely to help with its own bottom line. Those combined factors could and most likely would affect

• See ABC STORE page 4

## The last day for Santa to hear wishes is Saturday, Dec. 20



Santa and Mrs. Claus will be in Santa's hut on the lawn of at the MountainTop Wine Shoppe Saturday Dec. 20, 10a to 4p. A photographer will be available.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

## New bonus pay plan devised for Macon County teachers, schools

By Brittany Raby

Last year a judge ruled the state's attempt to award 25 percent of teachers' performance bo-

nuses as unconstitutional. While school district's across the state, including Macon County, spoke

• See PAY PLAN page 2

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## Forces join to improve Highlands School

By Brittany Raby

Highlands school athletic facilities will soon be getting a complete overhaul, all thanks to a group of dedicated Highlands' residents.

During the December meeting of the board of education, Macon County Schools consultant Terry Bell informed board members that Highlands School would be receiving a considerable donation before the end of the year for much needed upgrades to the school's athletic facilities. While discussing the 2015-'16 capital outlay requests, Bell said the district no longer needed to worry about the \$25,000 listed to resurface Highlands School's track, because part of a donation made by a group of Highlands residents will cover that project, along with much more.

• See FORCES page 4

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Looking ahead to 2015

This is the season, and the mayor will be making a list and checking it twice. So will the Highlands Board of Commissioners. We are entering the budget season after Christmas. It begins with a wish list review at the Town Retreat on February 12. A series of budget workshops will follow, and the season ends in June with the commissioners approving a final budget.



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

If anyone has a suggested project for the town to consider, now is the time to let either the mayor, our commissioners, or the Town Manager know so it might be placed on this review list. Items making the list of projects will be prioritized in the process of funding a new budget.

Now some ideas may not make the list. For instance, if someone requests a helicopter pad at Kelsey-Hutchinson Park for our visitors to fly into, I am confident it won't make the list. Atlanta might be in the airport business, but it is not on the radar for Highlands. On the other hand, public works projects that serve the needs of a broad spectrum of citizens will receive full consideration.

Let me illustrate how the process works by reviewing two recent projects. The Chowan Road repair made the list several years ago. For a number of budget cycles other pressing projects were funded over Chowan. This year it was a top priority and received funding. The new six-inch water line on NC 28 is another example. The project was on the list for almost 10 years before being funded.

There are things already on the list that I believe should be high priorities. One is to expand the system that will provide greater bandwidth options for residents and businesses. This project will benefit almost everyone and will pay dividends for years to come.

Another project that has been on past lists is the improvement of the sidewalk from Town Hall to the stop light at the corner of Maple and US 64. For several years the drainage ditch next to the sidewalk has been causing serious erosion problems when it rains threatening the structural integrity of the sidewalk. Besides, the site looks just plain ugly, espe-

cially in heavy rain. An improved design would also enhance the site distance for traffic. It is time to correct the problem, and a Band-aid approach will not work.

During this budget and planning season, I want the commissioners to review several related policies, such as late fees, that have been in place for several years. They may decide no changes are necessary, but I believe it is good to do periodic assessments. Also, issues such as Advanced HydroPower's applica-

tion to take over the old Highlands hydro-electric plant and resume electric generation should be reviewed.

I will be discussing budget priorities at the Mayor's Coffee the last Friday in January.

**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.**

## Highlands Newspaper<sup>LLC</sup>

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## • LETTERS •

### Where was the Highlands School Band?

The dancers were fun  
And the camels were great,  
And we're glad Steve Hott  
Reserved the date

But no matter how long  
We were willing to wait  
No band appeared  
And we mourn our fate!

Where is our Highlands  
High School Band?  
Without which the  
Parade is almost bland

The excitement is nil  
Without the thrill  
Of the drums that roll  
And the trumpets that trill.

So please bring us back

Our band next year  
So we can make merry  
And yell and cheer.

So eyes will grow bright  
When they hear it coming  
And we can go home  
A tune a' humming!

Sarah Hawkins  
Highlands

### Thanks for being there

Dear Editor,

A heartfelt thanks goes out to all the people of Highlands. During our daughter's recent auto mishap, she met so many helpful and caring people that she fell in love with your city and the beautiful area around it.

A special thank you to George & Gabrielle for rescuing her, opening your home to her and for taking care of her in our absence!

We wish you all a Merry Christmas!!!

Joe & Jeanette Jack  
Tampa, Florida

### ...PAY PLAN continued from page 1

out against the state plan, which involved identifying 25 percent of teachers within a district and awarding bonuses based on being labeled "top-performers," districts are now assisting the state in devising a new plan that is conceptually similar.

During the school board's December meeting in Nantahala, Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin said he and a committee comprised of teachers, principals, and school improvement plan members had drafted a local differentiated pay plan.

After the state's 25 percent plan was struck down, \$10 million which had been budgeted for the program, was left unallocated in the state's budget. The state devised a new method to introduce pay-for-performance bonuses, which would allocate salary increases based on teacher and school performance, but directing local districts to develop local differentiated pay plans.

• See PAY PLAN page 3



# • OBITUARIES •

## Joseph Ronald (Bunkum) Reese

May 26, 1944 - November 26, 2014

Born to Joseph Walter Reese and Lucille Pierson Reese and raised in Highlands, he was known to locals as 'Ronnie' or 'Bunkum' and was loved and respected by everyone he met.

He is survived by his three siblings Martha R. Lamb of Highlands, Dan Q. Reese of Lawrenceville, GA and Louis Reese of Atlantic Beach, FL, his two children Matthew B. Reese and Jennifer A. Reese both of Stanly County, NC, his four grandchildren Kelsey R. Reese, Austin M. Reese, Isabella S. Reese and Lily M. Reese, and two great-grandchildren Audrey E. G. Reese



and Evangeline E. G. Reese.

Known to many where he lived in Stanly County as 'The Quiet Gentle Giant' he had a heart of pure gold and was truly a Kindred Spirit. He never met a stranger and was a generous person. His love for his family and animals and for these mountains he called home meant more to him than anything.

He will forever be dearly remembered and sorely missed. May he fly high with the angels! He wanted no funeral, no memorial, but there was a Celebration of his Life held Sat., December 13 in Locust and there will be another in Highlands in the spring

## Ralph Willard Johnson

Ralph Willard Johnson, 71, of Highlands, NC died Saturday, December 13, 2014. Born in Macon County, he was the son of the late James Charlie and Nellie Henry Johnson.

He was a veteran of the US Army serving during the Vietnam War, and he retired from the Macon County Sheriff's Department as a deputy with 16 years service. He was a member of Blue Ridge Lodge #432 A.F. and A.M.

He liked heavy construction and working at sawmills and loved rebuilding old cars, hunting, fishing, flying airplanes and gem mining.

Mr. Johnson is survived by his wife of 43 years, Marie Clouse Johnson; two



sisters, Shirley Wilson of Highlands and Carol Holcombe of Walhalla, SC; one brother, J. C. Johnson of Highlands, and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, December 17 in the Chapel of Bryant-Grant Funeral Home in Highlands. Rev. Andy Cloer, Rev. Edgar Owens and Harold Neely officiated.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Highlands-Cashiers

Humane Society, PO Box 638, Cashiers, NC 28717.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements. Online condolences may be made at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com).



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## ...PAY PLAN continued from page 2

The state will collect those plans, which are due to officials by January, and then select pilot programs throughout the state to implement on a trial bases. The pilot programs will be funded with the \$10 million that remains unallocated in the state's budget and will help the state determine the next overall action for North Carolina educators.

"What we are hearing from the state, although it is not official, is that there will be no more salary increases for North Carolina teachers unless they are perfor-

mance based," said Dr. Baldwin. "If we don't develop this plan, we don't have a chance at that \$10 million, and a different school district in the state will get it. Our plan may not be selected, but we definitely can't get it if we don't even try."

Although teachers in Macon County spoke out against the 25 percent pay plan as an objection to performance-based salary increases, even though they could have opted-out of the differentiated pay plan, the county elected not to do so.



## ...ABC STORE from page 1

the store's bottom line which would affect profits allocated to the community.

When asked what their plans were for the future, Brenda Pierson, Chairman of the ABC Board said they were weighing their options – considering moving elsewhere or building elsewhere – because although they had enjoyed a discounted lease since moving to the plaza years ago, the lease was set to run out and they were worried about new lease terms from Highlands Plaza's potentially new owners.

However, at the Tuesday, Dec. 16 ABC Board meeting, Mal Phillips, representative for Highlands Plaza owners Margaret O'Donnell and Al Bolt delivered some good news.

"Mal Phillips spoke with the board last night, December 16th, on behalf of Margaret O'Donnell and Al Bolt and informed us that the Highlands ABC Board has been given an opportunity to continue its lease for the ABC Store at a reduced rate for the next eight years," said Pierson. "At this time, no documents have been signed, but they should be completed very soon. Prior to that, we cannot make comment as to the terms."

Since the ABC Store in Cashiers opened, The ABC

**The last Highlands Newspaper issue for 2014 and the first issue for 2015 will be a combination issue dated Dec. 25/Jan. 1.**

**The next issue will be Thurs., Jan. 8**  
**Please have all ads – classified and display – as well as all editorial content emailed no later than the close of business Friday, Dec. 19.**  
**highlandseditor@aol.com**  
**Thank you.**

Store in Highlands has understandably lost revenue but how much that will be over a year's time is hard to say.

"The percentage we lost was bigger when they first opened, probably because people wanted to see what was there, but it has started to level out," said store manager Kevin Vinson. "Still we won't know exactly how much of a percentage we are down until more time has gone by."

The Cashiers ABC Store opened about four months ago, in the height of the fall season, when Cashiers is hopping. The town pretty much closes down during the winter, so it's likely the store's profits will vary considerably throughout the year.

This year Jackson County's ABC Store proceeds – which for the first time include the Cashiers Store – were

## ...FORCES continued from page 1

According to Richard Delany, President and CEO of Old Edwards Hospitality Group, the resort's owners Art and Angela Williams have committed \$150,000 to the community effort to bring the athletic facilities at Highlands School up to par.

"I believe Jeff Weller of Summit Architecture and John Lupoli of Lupoli Construction, are looking at a project total of around \$400,000, however I believe they are both going to throw in some free labor along with Jim Tate of Tate Landscaping, to make it happen for less," said Delany. "I also think they are looking for additional matching funds from other sources."

According to Macon County Commissioner Jim Tate, the renovation plans are in the very preliminary stages but are coming together for the children of Highlands. Through his business, Tate Landscaping Services, Tate has committed an in-kind donation to the project in the amount of about \$35,000.

"The estimation for the total project is around \$400,000 for the complete renovation of the Highlands School track, fences, field, dugouts and field houses," said

\$265,311 in retail sales compared to last year's \$190,000 in retail sales. In the four months Cashiers has been open it tallied \$74,000 in retail sales.

The overall potential loss to the Highlands store is expected to be under 20% in retail sales. This makes the offer to extend the store's discounted lease that much sweeter.

"We are very appreciative for all the generosity that we have been shown by Margaret and Al. They have continually worked with us by making our rent affordable. As a board, we work diligently to keep expenses down. Our thanks to Margaret and Al for making this possible," said Pierson.

– Kim Lewicki

Tate. "Of this, the Williams are donating \$150,000. Highlands Rotary Club will contribute \$8,600. Summit Architecture and Ross Landscape Architecture +/- \$35,000 (in-kind donations), Lupoli Construction +/- \$35,000 (in-kind donation), and Tate Landscaping Services, +/- \$35,000 (in-kind donation)."

Tate noted that other potential income sources will be the school's booster club and other private donors.

"This is just another extraordinary example of the Williams' tremendous support of our town," said Tate. "We are very fortunate to live in such a philanthropic place and to have leaders like the Williams and the other local entities who are offering assistance in making our school a better place for our kids and community."

In order to make sure the project is completed in its entirety, and in the event other private donors are not found, Tate said asking the county for funding is an option.

He said while commissioners have not yet been approached due to the early stages of the project – with the costs and final scopes still being worked out – approaching the board wouldn't happen until January.

"The school administrators, faculty, staff and students are extremely appreciative of the donors who are working together to ensure the Highlands School receives some much needed improvements," said Superintendent Dr. Baldwin. "During these tough economic times, the district has struggled, and these contributions will make a significant impact on the school and the students of Highlands."

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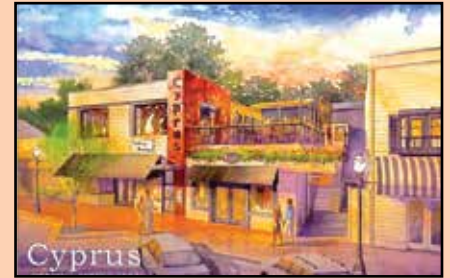
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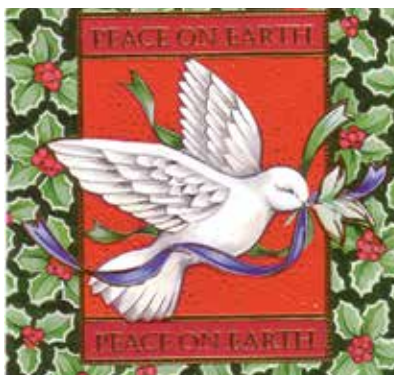


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## ANNUAL HOLIDAY READINGS



**THURSDAY, DEC. 18**

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**Havana is bustling with cars from 1940s and 1950s and the proud owners create parts for their car as no parts are to be had anywhere.**

**By Penny Mawyer**

Center for Life Enrichment's 19 participants met in Miami and headed to Camaguey, Cuba on a charter flight, not really having any idea or preconceived notions of what to expect from our next 12 days in a country so close but yet so far away.

What we did know was that we would be in good hands, CLE arranged our itinerary with Harvard Museum of Natural History and Distant Horizons both organizations are experts on Cuba. They would be our facilitators for our trip through five cities and a vast look into the countryside of Cuba.

It is important to note that we as US citizens may only visit Cuba accompanied by an educational organization i.e. a university, museum, etc. Each and every visit must be approved by the government of the United States. It must be deemed an educational visit ...no frolicking on the gorgeous beaches for US citizens.

Canadians, Europeans and many Russians are free to come and go without any restrictions and it is a good thing for Cuba as tourism is THE only industry which seems to be thriving.

The theme of our visit was "Music, Art and Literature across Cuba" Brian Railsback, who is Dean of the Honors College of Western Carolina University and a board member of Center for Life Enrichment was our groups expert on Ernest Hemingway so each day at cocktail hour Brian educated us on Hemingway's writings while living in Cuba, which was fascinating.

The music and art scenes are plentiful. Every lunch and each dinner we were entertained by a musical group one more accomplished than the next; and some of us felt compelled to dance to their Cuban, Caribbean tunes.

We were also fortunate enough to have intimate visits to artisans' homes and artist co-ops to hear about their art and purchase it to take home. This is the only keepsake US citizens can bring home - no rum, no cigars.

The people of Cuba love Americans and are so hoping that sometime in the future this embargo by our gov-

ernment will be lifted and they will be able to experience some of the prosperity we as US citizens are so blessed to have.

Food is rationed to each citizen, seven eggs a month, three small bread rolls a day, one cup of rice and some soy beans which are exported to Cuba from the US; if a citizen needs or wants any other foods they must find a way to purchase it or barter for it.

Stores barely exist and if they do the shelves are bare.

Russia decided to stop funding Cuba in 1998. On average Cubans lost 20 pounds each and were given bicycles by their government, so the citizens took to riding bikes. Horses and buggies seem to be the mode of transportation besides the Russian tanks which they have retrofitted with extensions to carry 60-80 people to their destinations.

Havana is bustling with cars from 1940s and 1950s and the proud owners create parts for their car as no parts are to be had anywhere.

The expression "Necessity is the Mother of Invention" says it all. The Cubans are overflowing with creativity, ingenuity and tenacity and you know what else? Joy and dance and music and hope.



## CLE's Nov. trip to Cuba marks 2nd foreign trip

*Members  
experience the  
peoples' joy, dance,  
music and hope.*





## Annual 'Resolution Run and Walk' set for Jan. 1

A New Year means a new chapter in your life: new opportunities, new adventures. Want to start 2015 off right? Want to lose some weight? Get back in shape? Resolve to meet at the Town Hall at 9:00 a.m. on January 1 to start it off with a run or a walk.

According to an article in Runners World magazine, there really is something to be said for New Year's Resolutions. "People who make New Year's resolutions are 10 times more likely to achieve their goals than those who don't," according to John C. Norcross, PhD, a University of Scranton professor of psychology who has made a study of so-called "Resolutionaries" and how they follow through. You can't hit a target if you don't have one, as the saying goes.

"For those of us interested in maintaining a lifestyle that revolves around health and fitness, it's a wonderful opportunity to set some new goals, have fun, and meet other like-minded folks," said Highlands Roadrunners Club President Richard Betz. "We welcome everybody in the community to join us, whether they are runners or not."

The Resolution Run has no entry fee and offers no T-shirts or trophies. Those interested in participating simply gather in front of the Town Hall at 210 North Fourth Street on Thursday morning, January 1, at 9:00 a.m. and run a three-mile loop at a relaxed pace around the downtown area of Highlands, returning to the Town Hall. Walking breaks for new runners are encouraged. The run is held "come rain or shine or ice or snow," but

Betz maintains that the weather has been perfect for several years, though a little on the chilly side on some occasions.

"Running is a great way to stay in shape, not only for young people but for old guys like me," Betz says. "Our running club has been successful in attracting and encouraging a pretty broad demographic who want to stay fit and achieve measurable goals." The Club welcomes both men and women, and all age groups are represented, from those in their teens to those in their 70s."

Many members of the Club have run in races from the 5-K distance (3.1 miles) to the marathon (26.2 miles). While racing is not for everyone, even a modest program of running or other regular aerobic activity can produce remarkable results, from controlling weight to improving the condition of heart and circulation to combating depression. And there's an increasing body of evidence that exercise can help prevent Alzheimer's and other age-related diseases as well.

"Many of the runners in our Club are in the best physical condition of their lives, even though they may be in their 50's, 60's, and beyond," Betz said. "In addition to the fun and camaraderie, that's what keeps a lot of us going."

New this year – join the Highlands Road Walkers! Long-time Club member Glenda Bell, a veteran of the Boston Marathon, will be heading up a walking group. The walkers will complete a three-mile loop starting at the same time and place as the runners. Dogs on leashes are welcome to come along.

So join the Roadrunners on January 1 in front of the Town Hall building at 9a sharp to start the New Year.

## WHAT'S FOR DINNER?



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FRI & SAT 7AM TO 9PM, SUNDAYS 8AM TO 6PM

EACH DINNER FEEDS A FAMILY OF FOUR

<b>MON</b>	<b>CHOOSE EITHER:</b> <b>MEXICAN MONDAY: FOUR CHEESE AND</b> <b>FOUR CHICKEN ENCHILADAS, REFRIED</b> <b>BEANS, MONTEREY RICE, HOMEMADE</b> <b>TORTILLA CHIPS, SALSA, SHREDDED</b> <b>LETTUCE, TOMATOES, SOUR CREAM</b>	<b>\$19.95</b> serves 4
	<b>--OR--</b>	
	<b>24 BUFFALO WINGS OR 2 LBS CHICKEN</b> <b>TENDERS AND HAND CUT FRIES</b>	
<b>TUES</b>	<b>IN-HOUSE MADE ITALIAN SAUSAGE</b> <b>LASAGNA WITH A LARGE SALAD</b>	<b>\$19.95</b> serves 4
<b>WED</b>	<b>CHICKEN OR STEAK POT PIE AND A</b> <b>LARGE SALAD</b>	<b>\$19.95</b> serves 4
<b>THURS</b>	<b>ROASTED MEATLOAF WITH MASHED</b> <b>POTATOES, GRAVY AND A LARGE SALAD</b>	<b>\$19.95</b> serves 4
<b>FRI</b>	<b>WILD CAUGHT FRIED SHRIMP, BAKED</b> <b>POTATOES, HUSH PUPPIES, AND</b> <b>COLESLAW</b>	<b>\$22.95</b> serves 4
<b>SAT</b>	<b>IN-HOUSE SMOKED BBQ, COLESLAW,</b> <b>APPLE AND BACON BAKED BEANS, AND</b> <b>YEAST ROLLS</b>	<b>\$19.95</b> serves 4

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**CHOICE OF ITALIAN SAUSAGE, MEATBALLS OR**  
**CRISPY CHICKEN. COMES WITH GARLIC BREAD**  
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**THURSDAY 4:30 TO CLOSE**

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**COOKING FOR HIGHLANDS**

**MON - SAT OPEN AT 7 AM AND SUNDAYS AT 8 AM**

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# ...SHORTFALL continued from page 1

dent and CEO of OEI Richard Delany and town officials, John Lupoli, of Lupoli Construction was talked into at least bidding the project in hopes that an enclosed pool was still a possibility. Swimming could

then continue past Labor Day when the pool typically closes for the season.

The bad news is Lupoli's bid came in way higher than budgeted – \$1,211,259 – but the good news is the Williams have agreed to pay the overage.

The original estimate to enclose the pool and presumably renovate the pool house was around \$750,000

“Luckily we had given the town the \$1.11 million for several projects so the shortfall was not as bad as it could have been,” said Delany. “But Art has generously agreed to kick in another \$275,000 to cover the shortfall so the town does not have

to contribute anything to the pool project – which includes renovating the pool house.”

The original \$1.10 million was supposed to enable the town to cover the pool, renovate the pool house and replace the Rec Park gym floor. Leftover money was going to be spent on renovating Highlands School's track and softball field area.

Obviously, there isn't leftover money.

However, according to Delany, the Williams may be willing to contribute even more money for use at the school.

“We are waiting on numbers for that. We had intended to help the school all along as part of the original gift/donation once we were able to determine what funds were left over from the Rec Park projects,” said Delany.

This is all in addition to the \$100,000 the Williams have recently committed to ball park field house renovation next to the Community Building that also came in higher than expected.

Once that is completed, the Williams have committed to building an ice-rink to the tune of \$150,000-\$200,000 on the baseball field so there will be winter sport options.

• See SHORTFALL page 18



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*Live in HD Series*

**Bolshoi**

*Of Mice and Men*

Captured Live in HD from Broadway

**Saturday, December 20**

**7pm**

Tickets: \$18 Members: \$15.30

*The Nutcracker*

Live in HD from the Bolshoi Ballet

**Sunday, December 21**

**12:55pm**

Adults: \$20  
Members & Students: \$17

Highlands Performing Arts Center 507 Chestnut Street

Tickets available online: [highlandspac.org](http://highlandspac.org) or by calling 828.526.9047



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# • INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

## The Giving House



Jeanne Chambers  
Chambers Realty &  
Vacation Rentals

Some of you may recall a book written by Shel Silverstein (1930-1999) called *The Giving Tree*. It was a book about a boy and his relationship with an apple tree. When he was a little boy, he enjoyed playing with the tree and eating the apples. When he became an adolescent, he wanted money- so the tree suggested he sell her apples. When he became an adult, he wanted a house, so the tree suggested he cut off her branches to build a home. When he became middle aged, he wanted a boat, so the tree suggested he cut her trunk for the lumber to build the boat, which left only a short stump of the once majestic tree. When he became a little old man, he visited the tree stump and said all he wanted was a quiet place to sit and rest. And so he did. The story ended with 'And the tree was happy'.

This is a simple tale (and greatly paraphrased by me- please get a copy for yourself to read the real story), but it made me think- If a boy can have a relationship with an apple tree, what's so different about our relationships with our own homes? Here's the same story line as told from a Realtor:

This is a story about a house. One simple day turned into a very special day because the couple that lived in the house came home from the hospital with a little baby girl to live in the house. The house was happy. As the little girl grew, she played in the yard and in the small four rooms of the house. The little girl even 'played house' in her house. The little girl loved her house, and the house loved her.

Years passed. The little girl had grown into a teenager. She was home less and less, and even when she was home, she wasn't really interested in the house so much. The house begged her to play house, skip down the hallway, and run around outside in the yard, but the girl shrugged her shoulders and said, "I'm too big for that now, I have friends and school work, and, and, and." The house thought a few minutes and suggested she bring her friends home to listen to music, watch a movie, have study groups, and, and, and. So the girl did, and the house was happy.

More years passed. The little girl was moving off to college. The house said, "You're moving away? What about me?"

• See **INVESTING** page 21

CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION  
420 Main Street corner of Main and 5th



**Sunday, December 21 Advent 4**

10:30am Lessons and Carols with Rite II in the Nave

**Wednesday, December 24 Christmas Eve**

**5:30pm Family Liturgy Nave**

**10:30pm Christmas music and carols**

**11:00pm Holy Eucharist in Chapel**

**Thursday, December 25 Christmas Day**

**10:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II in the Chapel**



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**Celebrate the Season at  
Highlands United Methodist  
Church**

**Main Street • 526-3376**

**Wednesday, Dec. 24**

**Christmas Eve Worship Service**

**5 pm a Family-Friendly Service**

**Drop-in Communion between 7 & 8pm**

**11pm a Candlelight Service**



# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •



**Highlands Annual Christmas Dinner**

Hudson House at  
Highlands Country Club

11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Christmas Day, December 25

Charity fundraiser to  
benefit local nonprofits.

Mouthwatering, traditional  
Christmas buffet featuring  
turkey, ham, tenderloin,  
all the fixin's and magnificent  
desserts prepared by  
Highlands finest volunteer staff.

Adults \$40  
Children under 12 \$15  
Kids 5 and under eat free.

Seating by reservation only.  
To reserve, call 828-526-9419

**Ongoing**  
• The Cub and Boy Scouts of America have three drop offs for worn and tattered flags. They

properly retire them. Drop offs at Highlands Doors and Windows 2242 Dillard Road, the Highlands Fire Station or Highlands United

Methodist Church office. Contact Phil Potts for more information 828 526-3719

## **Monday**

• Shortoff Baptist Church hosts a non-denominational Men's Meeting the first Monday night of each month at 7 pm and all men are invited to attend.

## **Tuesdays**

• Free Community Table Dinner at the Community Bldg. at 6p.

• Zumba at the Rec Park at 8:05a. \$5.

## **Mon., Wed., Fri.**

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.

• Zumba at the Rec Park at 9:05a. \$5

## **Wednesdays**

• First Baptist Church is happy to present a new season of X-treme Games at the Highlands Rec. Park. The games will be held Wednesday nights from 6 to 7:15 pm. For more information or to pre-register your k - 6th grade child, please call 526-4153.

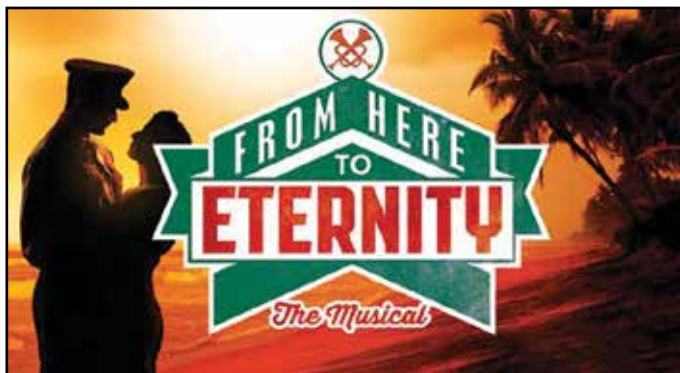
## **1st Wednesdays**

• Family Movies at the Hudson Library at 3:30pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

## **3rd Wednesdays**

• General Audience Movies

## **SpectiCast 'From Here to Eternity: The Musical' at Highlands Playhouse Dec. 30 & 31**



The Highlands Playhouse will be offering another spectacular SpectiCast production, From Here to Eternity: The Musical on December 30 & 31. Showtimes are at 3 PM

If you missed out on our latest special feature, The Vatican Museums, be sure to make some time between Christmas and the New Year to attend one of the showings for this wonderful production. There will be one showing each day December 30 and 31 at 3pm. Call the box office at 828 526-2695 to reserve your tickets today or buy them before one of the shows. And save room for wine, popcorn or our new nachos when you come. The film will last 2 hours and 30 minutes and includes a 15 minute intermission.

## *Christmas Eve Service*

- CANDLE LIGHTING
- CONGREGATIONAL SING
- SPECIAL MESSAGE BY PASTOR GARY

*Wed, Dec 24 @ 5 pm*



3645 Cashiers Road • Highlands, NC 28741  
828-526-4685 ph • www.CBChighlands.com

## **'Of Mice and Men' Live in HD Dec. 20**



The Highlands Performing Arts Center will screen Live in HD the hit Broadway production Of Mice And Men, filmed on stage by National Theatre Live on Saturday, December 20 at 7pm. This landmark revival of Nobel Prize winner John Steinbeck's play is a powerful portrait of the American spirit and a heartbreaking testament to the bonds of friendship. The production was nominated for two Tony Awards®, including Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Play for Chris O'Dowd. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047 Adults: \$18 PAC Members: \$15.30 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands



# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

at Hudson Library at 2pm. Call 828-526-3031 for titles.

## 1st & 3rd Thursdays

• Free local ongoing support group for caregivers. Are you involved with the care of a loved one who is physically or mentally facing challenges? Sponsored by The Counseling and Psychotherapy Center of Highlands and the Highlands United Methodist Church, this group meets at 4 p.m. at Room 203 at the Peggy Crosby Center. Facilitated by Bonnie Gramlich, a licensed professional. Drop in or call for further info, 828.342.0546.

## Thursdays

• Storytimes with Miss Carol at Hudson Library 10:40am. Open to the public.

• Highlands Writers' Group meets every Thursday from 1-3:30 pm at Hudson Library. Writers of all genres welcome. For info call 526-8009 or 526-2295.

• NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) offers a peer support group for individuals that are dealing with depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar, schizophrenia, etc. and the family members or friends of loved ones dealing with these challenges. Join us in a safe,

confidential environment to share concerns and gain insight. Join us for our Weekly Support Group from 7 – 8:15 pm @ 14 West Palmer Street in Franklin NC, email dcwithnami@yahoo.com, Donita (828) 526-9510.

## 2nd Thursdays

• Sapphire Valley Needlepoint Guild meets at the Highlands Rec Park at 10 a.m. Newcomers welcomed.

## Last Fri. of each month

• Weight Watchers support group meets every Thursday at 6pm at the Cashiers Community Center. Questions? Call Lisa 828-506-3555

## Saturdays

• Free wine tastings at Mountain Top Wine Shoppe from 1-3p.

## Sundays

• At Highlands Inn, Sequoyah Room at 4:30 pm. Multi-denominational, Interactive Bible Study and Fellowship. Open to all.

## Thurs., Dec. 18

• This season the Holiday Program, presented annually by the Highlands-Cashiers Players at the Highlands Performing Arts Center, is Thursday at 7 p.m. This season a dramatic reading of Truman Capote's touching story, "A Christmas Memory" from his

childhood in rural Alabama will be featured. Also a group of area musicians, playing dulcimers, guitars, and fiddle will accompany singers for three songs interspersed in the reading. A reception downstairs in PAC will follow the reading with music by the "Mountain High Dulcimer Club." The program is the Players gift to the community and is free..

## Fri., Dec. 19-Thurs., Jan. 1

• Movie at The Playhouse: Annie. Showtimes are 2, 5, & 8p. 5p only on Christmas Day and only 2 & 5p on Mondays.

## Sat., Dec 20

• Holiday Artisan Market in Cafe 460 10a to 4p.

• The Highlands Performing Arts Center will screen Live in HD the hit Broadway production Of Mice And Men, filmed on stage by National Theatre Live on Saturday, at 7pm. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047 Adults: \$18 PAC Members: \$15.30

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy-to-moderate, up and down 3-mile hike to 60 ft. high Yellow Branch Falls, one of the most beautiful rocky waterfalls in western SC. If time allows, a stop can be made at nearby Stump House Tunnel. Meet at Cashiers Rec Park at 9 am, drive 50 miles round trip. Call leaders Mike and Susan Kettles, 828-743-1079, for reservations.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 7-mile hike, elevation change 500 ft., on Chunky Gal Trail, off the Appalachian Trail from Deep Gap in Standing Indian area to Glade Gap on Hwy. US 64. Meet in Franklin at Westgate Plaza at 8:00 a.m., drive 45 miles round trip with car shuttle. Call leader Don O'Neal, 828-596-5723, for reservations.

## Sun., Dec 21

• The Bolshoi Ballet Live in HD presents The Nutcracker at the Highlands Performing Arts Center on Sunday at 12:55pm. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047 Adults: \$20 PAC Members: \$17 Students: \$10

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy-to-moderate 1.5-mile hike in the Standing Indian

area to see the Wasilik Poplar Tree, named for a former Wayah District Ranger, John Wasilik. Second largest Yellow Poplar tree in the U.S with diameter of 8.4 ft., it stood 135 ft. tall before it was topped by Hurricane Opal in 1998. Meet in Franklin at Westgate Plaza at 2 p.m, drive 36 miles round trip. Call leaders Diana/Rudolph, 765-318-9981, for reservations. Visitors, families and children welcome! No dogs please.

## Thurs., Dec. 25

• Annual Christmas Day Dinner Buffet at HCC's Hudson House from 11a to 5p. Call 526-9419 for reservations.

## Sat., Dec 27

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 7-mile hike, elevation change 1300 ft., on the Bradley Fork/Smokemont Loop in Smoky Mts. National Park, with a side trip to Chasteen Creek Cascade, then up and along Richland Ridge back

to Smokemont Campground. Meet at Oconaluftee Visitor Center at 9 am., drive 72 miles round trip from Franklin, 8 miles more from Visitor Center. Call leader Keith Patton, 828-456-8895, for reservations. Hike limited to 15 people.

## Tues. & Wed., Dec. 30 & 31

• The Highlands Playhouse will be offering another spectacular SpectiCast production, From Here to Eternity: The Musical on December 30 & 31. Showtimes are at 3 PM. Call the box office at 828 526-2695 to reserve your tickets

## Thurs., Jan. 1

• Annual Resolution Run and Walk in front of the Town Hall building at 9a sharp.

Thurs.-Sun., Feb. 19-22

• HCP's "Murder Not Prohibited" at PAC.

Thurs.-Sun., Feb 27-March

• HCP's "Murder Not Prohibited" at PAC.

## 'The Nutcracker' Live in HD Dec. 21



The Bolshoi Ballet Live in HD presents The Nutcracker at the Highlands Performing Arts Center on Sunday, December 21 at 12:55pm. The Nutcracker begins on Christmas Eve, Marie's godfather, Drosselmeyer, gives her a strange toy: a wooden nutcracker carved in the shape of a little man. At midnight, when the celebrations are over, all the toys magically come flying to the rescue of Marie, who is threatened by the Mouse King and his mouse army. Based on E. T. A. Hoffmann's story, The Nutcracker is one of the greatest classics in the world. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org or by calling 828.526.9047 Adults: \$20 PAC Members: \$17 Students: \$10 507 Chestnut Street Highlands

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2014

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2014

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4:30 p.m. Harp Prelude

Candlelight & Communion Service designed for the entire family at 5:00 p.m.

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# • BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •

## Wright retires from Highlands Community Child Development Center

Employees of The Highlands Community Child Development Center (HCCDC) recently honored Bob Wright with a retirement luncheon in appreciation and recognition for his years of service. In

addition, the board of directors presented him with a gift certificate to The Kitchen CarryAway and Catering. After

the first of the year, the board will host an event to recognize Wright's 15 years as a volunteer, board member, treasurer, and business manager for the Center.

In the early days, Wright was instrumental in transforming the Center from what was once known as Presbyterian Day Care to its current status as a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation. Along the

way, he became a familiar face to the children, parents, employees and visitors who pass through the doors at the Center's Church Street location.

"Bob is like one of the family," said Executive Director Pat Hedden. "We will certainly miss his faithfulness and dedication to the Center, but he promises to come back and visit."

The Highlands Community Child Development Center is a 501(c)(3) corporation whose mission is to provide affordable, high-quality preschool child care and early childhood education to promote optimal cognitive, physical, emotional, and social



**Bob Wright and his loyal companion, Sammy**

development in a safe and loving environment to young children and their families regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability, religion, or financial status.

The Center, which is open year-round, is licensed by the state of North Carolina to serve 66 preschool children, ages 3 months to 5 years, whose parents work or attend school in Macon and Jackson Counties.

For more information, contact Pat Hedden at 828-526-8905 or visit the Center at 89 Church Street, Highlands.

## Highlands Community comes through for Eckerd Living Center

The 'Adopt a Tree' project at the Eckerd Living Center has been a huge success!

Thanks to the kind and generous participation of the following:

- Main Lobby -
- Town of Highlands
- Nurses' Station -
- Highlands Rotary Club
- Dining Room -
- Four Seasons Hospice
- Activities Room -
- MountainTop Rotary Club
- Media Room - Highlands Cable Group in Loving Memory of Nona Hornbeak
- Library/Reading Room -
- The Little Flower Shop
- Conference Room -
- Mayor Patrick Taylor & Family in Loving Memory of Berrien Chidsey

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in Cashiers for the  
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**The last paper for 2014 and the first paper of 2015 is a combo issue; Dec. 25/Jan 1.**

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**TUESDAY:** MADE IN-HOUSE ITALIAN SAUSAGE LASAGNA AND A LARGE HOUSE SALAD  
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**THURSDAY:** ROASTED MEATLOAF WITH MASHED POTATOES, GRAVY AND A LARGE SALAD  
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# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

## You don't have to stick it out alone

By Paul Christy  
Highlands United Methodist Church

This year at our church we gave out Advent Devotional books to anyone that wanted them. Normally, I confess that I don't pay much attention to some of the books we hand out for devotions at Christmas and Easter because after all I am a preacher and I have my own devotional books. (I bet you didn't know preachers thought that way!) But this book was different mainly because my wife kept saying to me every morning, "Paul you have to read today's devotion." I would say OK, I will when I have time. But one morning after running, I came in to get ready for work and the page was open and I read it before leaving the house and I was like, wow.

James Moore a retired Methodist preacher from Texas wrote it and I must say that this is one of the best devotional books I have ever read, and I am sorry that it took someone prodding me to get me to read it. I do believe that each day I have been challenged and inspired. Therefore, I want to share one of the stories that Dr. Moore wrote in his devotional.

He told the story of a first-grader who walked into his class room with his shirt pulled up and and was sticking out his stomach. The teacher said, "Johnny, why are you standing there sticking out your stomach?" Johnny said, "Well I had a stomachache this morning and I went to see the nurse and said, if I could just stick it out till noon maybe it would be OK."

I love that story because I think on some level we can all relate to it. How many of us have been told to just stick it out a little while longer or just hang in there things will get better only to find out sometimes that really doesn't work?

One of the most beautiful things about the Christmas story is that God looked at the world and said you don't have to just stick it out anymore. I am going to send my Son to show you a more excellent way to live and to love.

You see when it is all said and done, Christmas is about God loving the world and saying to all of us, "You don't have to stick it out anymore." God came to love this

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 17



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## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

## John 3:16

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Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11  
Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7  
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

### CHAPEL OF SKY VALLEY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999  
Sundays: 10 a.m.: Worship  
Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month  
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer w/Holy Communion

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011  
464 US Hwy 64 east, Cashiers  
Sun.: 9:15a Christian Education at Buck's Coffee Cashiers  
Crossroads; 10:30a Faithful, Family Service w/ Music & Communion.

Mon.: Bible Study & Supper at homes - 6 p.m.

### CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas • 743-5470  
Sun. 10:45am, S.S 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.  
Tues. Guys study 8am, Gals 10am.

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11  
Wednesdays - 7 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685  
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC  
Senior Pastor Gary Hewins  
Sun.: 9:30am: Sunday School  
10:30am: Middle & High School; 10:45am: Child. Program,  
10:45am: Worship Service  
Wed.: 5pm Dinner (\$7 adult, \$2 child), 6pm CBC University

### EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. Bruce Walker • 526-2968  
Sundays: Eucharist Rite I 8a in chapel; Education and choir rehearsal, 9 am, Holy Eucharist Rite II, (sanctuary), 10:30

Wednesday: 10 a.m., Morning Prayer  
Thursdays: Holy Eucharist, (chapel), 10 am  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org  
Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor  
220 Main Street, Highlands NC 28741  
Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am  
Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Prayer Mtg 6:15 pm;  
Choir 5 pm

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors  
526-3175 • fpchighlands.org  
Sun.: Worship: 11 a.m.; School: 9:30  
Mondays: 8 a.m.: Men's Prayer Group & Breakfast  
Wednesdays: Choir: 5:30p

### GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd) • Rev. Carson Gibson  
Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am  
Bible Study: 6 pm

### GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS

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### HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

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

### HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed, Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street  
Sundays: Worship: 11

### HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson  
670 N. 4th Street (next to the Highlands Civic Center)  
Sun.: Morning Worship 10:45 a., Evening Worship, 6:30 p.  
Wednesday: Prayer Service. 6:30 p.

### HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Paul Christy 526-3376  
Sun: School 9:45a.; Worship 9:09, 10:50.; Youth 5:30 p.  
Wed: Supper: 5:15; youth, & adults activities: 6; Handbell rehearsal, 6:15; Choir Rehearsal 7. (nursery provided )

### HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

Chaplain Margaret Howell • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Sun: School and Adult discussion group 9:30 a.m.;  
Worship/Communion: 10:30

HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

### MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah  
Pastor Troy Nicholson, (828) 526-8425  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11, Choir: 6 p.m.  
Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

### MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin  
828-369-9270 or 828-293-5197

### MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church  
Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church,  
4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)  
Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

### OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Parish office (Father Francis): 526-2418  
Mass: Sun: 11 a.m.; Sat. at 4p

### SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

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

### SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore • 526-3212  
Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.  
Wed: Adult Bible Study & Youth: 7 p.m.

### SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11  
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 7

### THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 South, Office: 743-2359  
Rev. Dr. Virginia Monroe  
Oct-May: Sunday Services: Rite I, 8a Rite II, 10:30  
June-Sept: Sunday Services: Rite I, 8a, Rite II, 9:15 & 11a  
Nursery available for Rite II services

Sept 7- Oct 26- Informal Evening Eucharist: 5:30 p.m.

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive • 828-524-6777  
Sunday Worship - 11 a.m. Child Care - 10:30a - 12:30p  
Religious Education - 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.  
Youth 8th - 12th grade meets 2nd Sundays 5 - 7:30p

### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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



# • FIRE REPORT •

## The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries from Dec. 9

**Dec. 9**  
• At 2:52 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Mountain Shadows.

**Dec. 10**  
• At 1:50 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Satulah Falls Lane.

**Dec. 11**  
• At 4:52 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to Blue Valley Road.

**Dec. 12**  
• At 11:44 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to Clubhouse Trail

**Dec. 13**  
• At 3:59 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence o Sagee Woods.

• At 7:05 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Hickory Hill Road.

**Dec. 15**  
• At 6:11 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Queen Mountain Road.

## ...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 16

world and God did that in a very unique and powerful way, through a manger and a babe.

So as you celebrate this special Holy day called Christmas, I simply ask that at some point when you are gathered with family and friends that you pause and stop and thank God for the gift of God's love and grace. We hear the cliché all the time, remember the reason for the season, and I just want us all to remember that the real reason for this time of year is God loving the world enough to want to be a part of our lives.

So when you see injustice, when you see suffering, when you experience separation remember, you don't have to stick it out all alone, God is with you. Merry Christmas and I pray that we as a community, care, share and love one another.

And please don't tell my wife the only reason I read the Advent devotional book was because she kept asking me to, I want her to think I did that on my own. I mean, I am a preacher after all.

## MOUNTAINTOP ROTARY CLUB

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POTATO YEAST ROLLS	\$4.95
HOMEMADE GRAVY	\$12
BEER BRAISED COLLARDS	\$14
BLACK EYED PEAS WITH	
HAM HOCK	\$14

PLUS BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP, PIES,  
CAKES, AND DOZENS OF  
OTHER ITEMS FROM OUR  
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FRIDAY & SATURDAY 7AM TO 9PM  
SUNDAY 8AM TO 6PM

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# • HS SPORTS •

...SHORTFALL from 8

## Varsity Boys Basketball

Zoran Nastasic,  
Colin Weller,  
Cole Drummonds,  
Jose Jimenez,  
Johnny Lupoli  
Jackson Hall  
Evan Williams,  
Brent Amundrud,  
Chris Benton.  
Head Coach:  
Brad Bergman.  
Manager:  
Pablo Aquayoroman

## The week in review

### Middle School Basketball

Tuesday, Dec. 9, the Middle School basketball teams hosted Cullowhee Valley School. Both teams took a loss. The girls' score was 36 to 18. The boys' score was 49 to 32.

### Varsity Basketball

Tuesday, Dec. 9, Highlands' Varsity teams hosted Nantahala.

The girls came out strong outscoring Nantahala in the first half 34 to 14 with Madison Lloyd high scorer ending the first half with 10 of the 34 points.

The girls came out in the second half once again playing impressively with Whitney Billingsley the high scorer with 8 points. The girls went on to win 64 to 28.

The boys played a close game ending the first half with a score of 19 to 15 with Brent Amundrud high scorer with 9 points.

They came out stronger in the second half beating Nantahala 59 to 44 with once again Brent Amundrud high scorer with an impressive 18 points.

The teams traveled to Cherokee on Friday, Dec. 12. The girls lost 30 to 74. The leading scorers were Madison Lloyd with 10 points and Kirstyn Lamb with 9 points. The boys also lost 78 to 48. Leading scorers were Brent Amundrud with 19 points and Johnny Lupoli with 10 points.

On Monday, Dec. 15, the teams traveled to Walhalla. The girls lost 47 to 51. The leading scorers were Kirstyn Lamb with 21 points and Ann Marie Crowe with 8 points.

The boys also lost 47 to 70. Lead scorers were Brent Amundrud with 20 points and Johnny Lupoli with 13 points.

They also agreed to finance all operation costs of the ice rink for five years – staffing, utilities and maintenance. The plans are to install the ice-rink November of 2015 so it can be used until spring.

At the Thursday, Oct. 11 Town Board meeting, commissioners voted unanimously to accept the Williams' offer of the additional \$275,000 which was set to run out Dec. 31, 2014.

The budget for the project is \$1,049,994 for the pool enclosure; \$161,265 to renovate the pool house for a total of \$1,211,259; \$175,000 for the Rec Park's new gym floor. The total contribution by the Williams is \$1,386,259. They also donated \$100,000 for the overage for the baseball field house project.

DynaDome Pool Enclosures will construct the pre-fab glass panels for the retractable enclosure off-site; construction of the enclosure is expected to take 6-7 weeks.

According to Town Manager Bob Frye, barring bad weather or a problem getting materials delivered, Lupoli is confident he can meet the town's deadline and have the project – enclosure and pool house completed in time to open May 31.

Frye said if the town chose to delay the project, it would lose the extra \$275,000 from the Williams as well as risk overall project cost increases.

In other Town Board news, Frye discussed ongoing projects.

The wall on Third Street has been constructed and it is currently being faced with rock to match the wall at the Town Hall complex; the draw-down of Lake Sequoyah has begun, the NC 28 water line work is underway; and the town's consulting legal firm in Washington, D.C. is monitoring the FERC permit request proceedings.

"The Mayor has submitted our 'Notice to Intervene' as has the Federal Dept. of Interior, the USFS and DENR. Our consulting firm says it is likely Advanced HydroPower, Inc. of Clovis, CA, will be granted its notice to proceed but then must clear hurdles of about 18 agencies which is likely several years out," he said.

Commissioner Brian Stiehler was elected Mayor Pro Tempore. He had made a motion to re-elect Mayor Pro Tempore Donnie Calloway, but on Commissioner Amy Patterson's suggestion that each commissioner have a chance at the role, Stiehler was unanimously elected.

Cassie Wilson of Starnes & Associates delivered an abbreviated version of the town's 2013-'14 audit and announced that the town "had a clean report."

– Kim Lewicki

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## ...PAY PLAN continued from page 3

"Macon County could have chosen to opt out of developing a differentiated pay plan, too," said Dr. Baldwin. "While there is a preponderance of research that has found that market-based strategies don't work in education where teamwork is essential for the success of students, NC educational policy makers have made it clear that this is the direction that our state is moving. This means that future NC teacher pay increases will be tied to student performance on standardized tests."

Dr. Baldwin said there is no research

to support performance-based pay increases are effective in education, but since the state plans to enforce it regardless, Macon County wanted to develop a plan in hopes of having some input in the process.

"As you know, the 25 percent plan last year was struck down," said Dr. Baldwin. "Our district chose to opt out of that state-developed plan last year due to the fact that there was no fair, and practical way to implement such an arbitrary plan in our district. This time our district

• See PAY PLAN page 22

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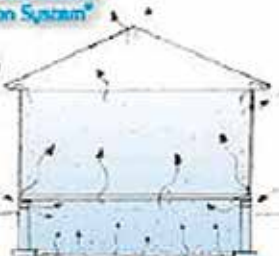
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## • BIZ/ORG NEWS •

### Highlands-Cashiers Hospital will welcome a new president on Dec. 29

Jacqueline F. Ring, RN, FACHE, NEA-BC will join the hospital as President/Chief Nursing Officer (CNO). She steps into the newly combined role created as part of a regional restructuring process at Mission Health's regional member hospitals. The role includes accountability for nursing practice and patient care standards and active participation in the development of operations of the regional network of care, all in support of achieving Mission's BIG(ER) Aim.

Ring is board certified by the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) and is a Certified Nursing Executive, Advanced, by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC). Her career has spanned four decades in North Carolina and Virginia, most recently as Chief Operating Officer/Chief Nursing Officer at Johnston Health in Smithfield, North Carolina. In that role she implemented the fundamental principles of a magnet nursing program, and oversaw a start-up outpatient facility providing surgery, imaging and ancillary services that ultimately converted to a full-service acute care hospital. She previously held leadership positions at Bon Secours St. Francis Medi-

cal Center in Midlothian, Virginia; Southside Community Hospital in Farmville, Virginia; and Chatham Hospital in Siler City, North Carolina. Over the course of her career she worked extensively in pediatrics and women's and infants' services, served as a pediatric nursing instructor, and consulted nationally as a clinical expert in maternal-child services.

Ring replaces outgoing hospital president Craig James, and will report to Kathy Guyette, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, Mission Health's Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services and President, Regional Member Hospitals.

"We are so pleased to welcome Jackie Ring to our community and to the Mission Health family," said Guyette. "Jackie's extensive knowledge of and passion for the important work of small community hospitals make her a natural fit for Highlands-Cashiers, and we are confident of a bright future under her leadership."

In addition to a bachelor of science in nursing degree from UNC-Charlotte, Ring holds a master's in business administration and a master's in healthcare administration from Pfeiffer University, and expects to complete a PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2015.

## ...INVESTING from page 9

The girl answered, "Don't worry, I'll be back. Mom and Dad will still be here. You're still my home, I'll just be living in another place for a while. I'll leave my room just like it is now, and I'll come home when I can." That made the house happy.

Even more years passed. The little girl had kept her promise- well, some of them. She visited a lot at first, but the visits became shorter and shorter. But one day when the girl came to visit, she came with a man, and he proposed one evening sitting in the front porch swing. The house was happy at first, but it knew something was going on when the father turned the little girl's room into an office.

More years passed. The girl continued to visit through the years. First she and her husband came with a dog, then a child of her own, then another child. They had a family of their own, and bought a house miles away just for them. The house asked the girl "Why not stay here? The girl answered, "Well, for one thing, there's not room, and another thing is that we have our own house." The house was sad except for the times when the girl came to visit with her little children. They played in the house just like the girl had done so many years before.

More years passed. The girl's parents had gotten very old and tired. There was talk of them moving away and selling the house. The house was terrified. Later, the girl was visiting, and cleaning the house out after her parents were gone. The house was sad and said, "Please don't let me be empty." The girl listened to the house and made a decision.

The grown up girl and her family added on to the house, making the rooms larger and added another bedroom for their growing family. Her children played in the yard, and ran through the halls, and filled the house with laughter again. And the house was very happy.

As stated at the beginning of this article, this is a simple tale. We all know life doesn't always have a storybook ending. In this tale, the 'house' represents all of the homes you've lived in. Buying and selling homes are some of the biggest commitments you will ever make. Having a Realtor helps you with those decisions, and can make the whole process easier. One of the things we preach is 'Don't let emotions be the driving force when buying and selling' which is pretty much the exact opposite of THIS story. We all know houses can't actually talk, but if you listen, and listen really well, you just may hear one of them say, "Pick me, pick me! I'll make you a nice home."

• Jeannie and Tucker Chambers are owners/Brokers at Chambers Realty and Vacation Rentals located at 401 N. Fifth Street in Highlands. Whether you believe houses can talk or not, Tucker and Jeannie are here year round to listen- to you and your house.

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**THE WINDY GAP BAPTIST CHURCH RELAY FOR LIFE TEAM WILL HAVE A YARD SALE** Friday & Saturday, December 12 & 13 from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. at Hollands Storage Units and Detail Shop on Depot Street in Franklin. There will be some Christmas items, clothes, a solid wood gun cabinet, some exercise equipment, and more. This is a fundraiser for their Relay for Life team.

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**LEAD LINE COOK & DISHWASHER** needed at casual fine dining, up to \$13/hour or salary B.O.E. jasoncancilla2012@gmail.com (st. 6/19)

**CNA, NURSES, CARE-GIVERS** needed for Home Care Agency serving Older Adults in Macon, Jackson and Transylvania counties. Call 828-200-9000. (st. 5/15)

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**LAND FOR SALE IN CLEAR CREEK:** 2.18 acre parcel has road frontage on Mack Wilson Rd. \$17,000. Any reasonable offers will be considered. Call 828-526-2874. (st. 10/23)

**FOR SALE BY OWNER** - 3 building lots in the gated community of Rustic Falls. Macon County tax records value at \$51,000 each. Must sell due to health reasons. Asking \$15,000 each. Call owner at 803-640-6004. (St. 5/1)

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# ...PAY PLAN from page 19

has been given the opportunity to develop a plan that best fits each school in our district. I commend the committee of principals and School Improvement Team chairpersons for developing the plan that will be submitted by our county pending school board approval. They worked hard to come up with a plan that allows each school to reward student achievement and teamwork."

According to the current plan, which stands to be tweaked before being submitted to the state next month, differentiated bonuses for classroom teachers will be distributed to positions that are hard to staff within the district. Those positions include positions that are difficult to staff for high needs schools and specific subject areas including math, science, English II and special education. The proposed plan includes a \$1,500 signing bonus, pending certification, in this high needs areas.

The second portion of the plan proposes that each Macon County school identified as exceeding academic growth by EVAAS would receive a supplement of \$200 per student. Schools identified as meeting academic growth by EVAAS would receive a supplement of \$150 per student.

The School Improvement Team would be responsible for distributing the funds throughout the district, which is one point in debate among school board members. While the state's directive is for local districts to develop a plan for bonuses for teachers, Macon County leaders would like to see the bonuses available for a school as a whole, including custodians, secretaries, and other jobs outside of teachers. School board officials explained that all of those positions are vital in the successful operation of a school.

With uncertainties such as the amount of money available for districts and who the plan can target, the MC Board of Education elected to take the plan under advisement and meet again before the January 15 submission deadline to further consider the plan.



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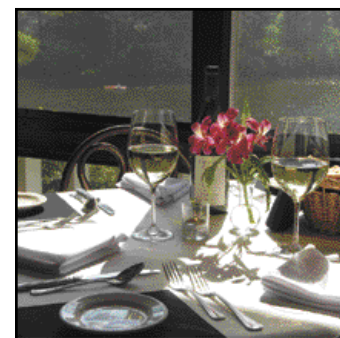
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