

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Feb. 19, 2015

Killing of bear exemplifies need for temperance

Whose fault is it when man and bear can't co-exist?

The way NC Wildlife Officer with the Division of Wildlife Management Mark Ray sees it, it's man's fault.

"We moved in on them,

so we need to educate ourselves and it's up to us (communities) to work together to deter the bears," he said.

The killing of a bear earlier this month at Highlands Falls Country Club stands as a stark

reminder that sometimes man and bear just can't co-exist and although the result was tragic, Ray's open investigation is leaning in the direction of a justified kill.

According to District Biologist with the NC Wildlife Resource

Commission Justin McVay, a mama bear and her two yearlings were apparently denning under a home vacated for the winter and did substantial damage both under the home and inside one of

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Issuance of variance points to lack of 'history' on Zoning B.

The tweaking of commercial projects completed last year were the subject of January's Planning Board and February's Zoning Board meetings.

The Planning Board OK'd the Main Street Nursery greenhouse as well as the other two projects on its agenda: the addition of roll-down garage-type doors on the back bay of Park on Main motel which will keep the winter weather and temperatures out of the parking garage and away from pipes; and a roof linking the pottery barn with the kiln building at The Bascom, which will basically tie the two structures together. A small terrace will also be built behind the two buildings on the Oak Street side without jeopardizing the built-upon percentage.

After the Planning Board review, it was on to the Zoning Board for a variance and Special Use Permits.

At the February Zoning Board meeting, Selwyn Chalker of Main Street Nursery – a complex made up of temporary

structures – requested a variance to use poly-film plastic to cover a temporary greenhouse on the back of the lot. Since plastic as an exterior material isn't allowed, a variance was needed.

The greenhouse will be used to store inventory both pre-season, during the peak season and to protect inventory during the winter. It is set to be 32 feet wide by 70 feet long made of metal framing covered with a two-ply semi-opaque poly-film stretched over the frame.

Placement behind the main shed building will keep it somewhat hidden from Main Street. In addition, the ends of the structure will be wood paneling which will ease the appearance of the structure from First Street and US 64 when traveling into town.

The Zoning Board unanimously approved and issued Special Use Permits for all the projects, but spent most of the meeting deliberating over the issuance of a variance for Chalker's use of an exterior material not

• See VARIANCE page 6

Wintery mix of ice & snow closes schools/businesses



Snow was predicted but it was a mix of numbing temperatures, snow, sleet, and freezing rain Monday and early Tuesday that glazed roads and wires halting "life" in Highlands and Franklin on Tuesday.

Photo by Jim Lewicki

Nuisance ordinance's time has come

By Merritt Shaw

The nuisance ordinance is one step closer to becoming a reality.

The Macon County Plan-

ning Board and the County Commissioners joint meeting planned for Tuesday night to discuss an ordinance that could potentially affect the personal freedom of

all Macon County residents was cancelled due to weather but it is still on the forefront.

The Planning Board was

• See NUISANCE page 2

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Zoning designations aren't changing

A major item of tonight's Highlands Town Board meeting is a public hearing to reconfirm the existing zoning map and ordinances. As I have said before, it is a housekeeping opportunity for the town to dot its record keeping i's and cross its t's in accordance with NC statutes. No changes to the ordinances or the map will be made as a result of the hearing. The process is a public verification of existing ordinances and the current zones.

Since sending a certified notification letter of the hearing to all property owners, many individuals have called Town Hall with questions. Let me respond to some of these recurring questions.

A main question is why was a certified letter sent? Couldn't the town have saved money by sending an announcement in the utility bills? The answer is the town had to follow the letter of NC law that requires a separate, certified letter be sent to owners listed on property deeds. A regular mailing to save costs may have been considered in past times, but it would not have adhered to the exact letter of the law as we are doing now. The Town Board has to follow the NC law even at this high mailing cost. A benefit



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

of the certified mailing was that everyone was notified and has an official record of the zone of their property.

Some folks have asked whether this public hearing has something to do with the recent property revaluations. The answer is no, property taxes will not be changed by this reconfirmation.

Another question asked is whether there is a hidden agenda to rezone property, or change zoning districts. Again the answer is no. Any zoning

request currently under review, such as special use permits and conditional zoning, will not be impacted by this hearing.

A few folks have asked if the hearing tonight is being used to cite, or bring about zoning violations. The zoning regulations will remain the same as presented in the town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

Finally, some have asked if rezoning requests can be made at tonight's hearing. The answer is no, there is a separate process in place to petition for a zoning change.

Also, on tonight's agenda is a formal request for the county to fund the school resource officer at the Highlands School. The town and county have been in discussions concerning the status of the SRO. The position will remain as a town employee, but like the rest of the SRO positions in the county schools, it will be funded by the county.

The proposed budget schedule of meeting dates will be approved, as well as an appointment made to the ABC Board. The minor amendment to the Duke Energy contract will be revisited. At the last meeting approval of a small contract amendment was tabled. The town staff has now identified and clarified the minor wording change in the amendment.

The town staff will also present a proposal for compact car parking spaces. A request to develop a proposal was made at the last meeting.

Hope to see everyone tonight at 7 pm at the Conference Center. Dress warm.

...NUISANCE continued from page 1

originally charged with exploring a noise ordinance, but as the complaints and investigations continued, the wording was modified to "nuisance ordinance" to cover more than noise.

The purpose of the ordinance is to regulate loud, unnecessary and disturbing noise and possibly actions that occur outside of the city limits of Franklin and Highlands.

Two Macon County residents spoke before the county commissioners at last Tuesday's commission meeting to reiterate the experiences they both live with daily and why they would like an ordinance.

"Know that there are a lot of us out there who greatly need to get a good night's sleep," said Donna Majerus.

She described how she has been treated by her neighbor in a trailer park in the Clarks Chapel community where her neighbor plays loud music and makes noise all hours of the night and who tells police they can't do anything about it because there is no noise ordinance.

"This ordinance is very needed here in Franklin. I have been living next to a gentleman for the last year and a half and it has been a nightmare. The music, two, three, four, five o'clock in the morning is just unbelievable. He goes outside at two in the morning and turns his truck engine on; 15 minutes later he turns it off. Half an hour later he goes back outside and turns the engine back on. He bangs on the back of his truck to get every dog in the neighborhood to start up. It's just unbelievable. This goes on all hours of the day and night. He is a habitual noise person. I have begged, pleaded and asked to have something done, she said."

Commissioner Ronnie Beale said the planning board has come up with an ordinance that would address her problem exactly.

James Wright who lives in the Ellijay community described activity that was more of a physical threat by his neighbors involving gun shots as well as noise.

"I've got bullet holes in my house, bullet holes in my workshop and a window was blown out. The female in this group

runs naked through the woods with a .22 rifle in her hand like a military soldier, shooting up into my property. I have 100 complaints on the petition," he said.

Commission Chair Kevin Corbin said the ordinance would address unlawful use of firearms but the lawful use of firearms will not be hindered.

Highlands has a noise ordinance but Commissioner Jim Tate said he has gotten complaints from those in the county outside town limit.

In the nuisance ordinance, violations would include: the use of horns or signal devices, radios, stereos, sound-producing devices, electronic or mechanical devices, or sound amplification devices, boisterous language, or shouting in a manner such that loud, unnecessary, and disturbing noise as defined would each be in violation.

Exemptions from the nuisance ordinance would include necessary noise from normal, legal operations of any industrial operation, commercial business, non-profit organization, or governmental facility or function. Noise from the normal maintenance and operation of residential and commercial property, agricultural and horticultural operations, any authorized emergency vehicle or public safety vehicle and associated activities conducted from the same. Noise resulting from any military, law enforcement activities, or educational institution of any federal, state, or local government to include military observance and emergency work necessary to preserve and/or restore property to a safe condition following a fire, accident, natural disaster or to restore public utilities. Any bell or chime from a building clock, school, or church, lawful fireworks and noise makers on holidays and at religious ceremonies or any public recreational event or public entertainment activity. And finally noise from firearms while being used in a lawful and safe manner.

The intention of the ordinance is to have something the sheriff's department can enforce. Those in violation will be charged with a Class 3 misdemeanor with fines up to \$500. The ordinance would be in effect 24 hours a day.

Once the joint meeting between the MC Commission and the Planning Board is rescheduled the issue will be discussed and a possible ordinance nailed down.

Coffee with the Mayor, Friday, Feb. 27 at Hudson Library 11a to noon.
Subject: Recreation Director Lester Norris to discuss recreation programming and projects.

Highlands Newspaper

Toll Free FAX: 866-212-8913

Phone: (828) 200-1371

Email:

HighlandsEditor@aol.com

Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki

Reporters: Merritt Shaw

Copy Editor: Glenda Bell

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Letter Policy:

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



• OBITUARY •

Virginia Azilea Moffitt Fugate

Virginia Azilea Moffitt Fugate, age 82, of Cashiers, NC went to be with her Lord Friday, February 13, 2015 at a Gainsville, GA Hospital. She was born in Macon Co., the daughter of the late Finley and Vylene McCall Moffitt. She was married to William "Ned" Fugate who passed away in 2000. She was a homemaker, loving mother and grandmother. She was known as Azzie and was loved by all. She was a Charter Member of Cashiers Church of God and was a volunteer for Highlands-Cashiers Hospital in the beauty shop. Her grandson Kaleb was the light of her life.



She is survived by her three sons, Terry Fugate, Kelvin Fugate and Tracy Fugate all of Cashiers, NC; her sister, Willean Stiwwinter of Cashiers, NC; her brothers, Marvin Moffitt and Cleamon Moffitt of Cashiers, NC. Five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews also survive.

She was preceded in death by sisters,

Irene Hughey and Mattie Moffitt and brothers, Junior Moffitt and Eugene Moffitt.

Funeral services were held Sunday, February 15 at the Cashiers Church of God at 2:30 p.m. with Rev. Joey Miller and Rev. Delbert McCall officiating. Pallbearers were Jamie Stiwwinter, Leland Hughey, Cliff Moffitt, Wade Moffitt, Chris Moss and Michael Stiwwinter. Burial was held at Upper Zachary Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 12:00-2:30PM, Sunday, February 15 at Cashiers Church of God, 407 Hwy 107N, Cashiers, NC 28717.

Contributions in Azzie's memory may be made to Cashiers Church of God, PO Box 231, Cashiers, NC 28717.

Online condolences may be made by visiting www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com.

Bryant-Grant Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

...BEARS continued from page 1

the bedrooms.

By law, a homeowner can kill a bear if he feels threatened, is charged by the bear, or if the bear is caught in the act of doing substantial damage.

A caretaker of the residence called the Wildlife Resource Commission when he found evidence of the bear denning under a porch and damage to infrastructure under the house, as well as inside.

According to McVay who investigated the scene, HVAC vents and ducts, electrical wires, and water pipes were broken under the house and the bear (s) had opened the sliding glass door to the main floor of the home and went into a bedroom whose door was open.

The curtains had been torn down, pillows were torn up; there were scratches on the door jamb as well as bear scat.

When McVay arrived on the scene a female bear ran out from under the porch and up to the top of a hill.

Though he didn't see yearlings, the damage under the house had to have been done by small bears, he said.

"It had to be yearlings. The mother couldn't have gotten into the area under the house where the damage was done. Also a footprint was the size of a yearling, not a mama bear," he said.

According to McVay, bears are strong and smart. "They have very dexterous

paws and can open a sliding glass door, a car door, or a levered door handle, but they can't turn a round knob, and that's why they didn't go into any other rooms in the house. They went into the room with the open door," he said. "It looked like a couple of toddlers had been hanging out playing while mom rested."

Under the porch where they were denning he found couch pillows they had dragged out of the house.

"Since the house was empty, there weren't obvious food sources," said McVay. "It looks like the mess was caused by curious yearlings who were playing because usually bears enter houses looking for food."

Wildlife Enforcement Officer Ray said with a problem bear, killing sometimes happens.

Evidently, a bear denned under the house last year and the homeowner was told to put rags soaked in ammonia in and around areas a bear might den. Ray said there is no way of knowing if the bear family denning this year was the same family who denned under the house last year.

McVay also suggests erecting an electric fence around accessible areas conducive for denning.

"It's very effective and inexpensive -- about \$100. You don't have to leave it up

• See BEARS page 5



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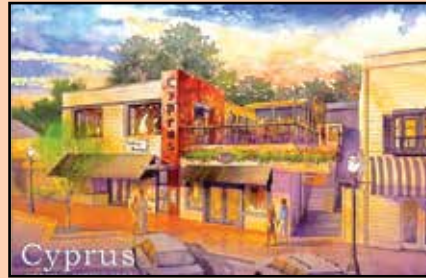
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...BEARS continued from page 3

all year because a bear isn't going to den under an occupied house, just when you aren't there," he said.

Ray said the problem is that bears don't differentiate between one house and another and they think what's allowed at one house is allowed at another. That's why it takes a community to discourage bears, he said.

"They see all houses as the same. All it takes is one or two people who don't take precautions -- those who leave bird-feeders or garbage out -- for the entire community to be in jeopardy."

He said until Highlands gets some kind of regulations in place like Gatlinburg the "bear" problem is only going to get worse.

"More bears and possibly people will get hurt," he said.

Evidently, a catastrophe in Gatlinburg, TN, spurred officials there to put regulations in place. Now all garbage containers -- both residential and commercial including containers for grease -- must be animal resistant and approved by the municipality; and anyone in violation will be fined up to \$500 per offense. Each day that a violation occurs is a separate offense.

Luckily, according to Michael Car-

roway with the NC Division of Wildlife Management, it isn't common for bears to den under people's homes, but obviously, it does happen.

"We had another report of a bear denning under an unoccupied house (vacation home) in Asheville this winter. Fortunately, the people were understanding and were willing to leave it alone, since they weren't there anyway. Most bears are looking for a quiet out-of-the-way place to sleep during the winter until it's time for them to wake up and leave which is toward the end of March," he said.

Carroway said after the bear has left the homeowners should make modifications to prevent bears, or other animals, from gaining access to the area under the house.

"In the Highlands case, the bear(s) had damaged the house. The homeowner probably had a legal right to take action to protect his property, but that doesn't mean killing the bear was necessary," he said. "They could have made the necessary modifications to the house to prevent access."

Carroway said there are bears everywhere in western NC and any resident of the area should be aware of the possibility of encountering bears in their neigh-

• See BEARS page 9



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...VARIANCE continued from page 1

allowed by the town.

Straight off, and a few times during the meeting, Chairman Steve Chenoweth said he didn't understand why the Zoning Board had to consider the use of poly-film or why a variance was needed.

"It's like saying 'dairy farms are allowed in town but cows aren't.' If greenhouses are an allowable use, then the materials to make them should be allowed," he said. "I don't know why we are listening to this."

Zoning Director Josh Ward explained the variance procedure and why a variance was necessary – the fact that poly-film was not an external material allowed by the town – and he reminded the board of the four strict criteria required to issue a variance.

The use of poly-film on the greenhouse attached to the Little Flower Shoppe was brought up by member Jack Peay. Later in the meeting, observer Town Board Commissioner John Dotson said that the use of poly-film on the Little Flower Shoppe greenhouse was hotly debated decades ago and as a compromise to its use no retail activity was supposed to take place in the greenhouse.

Ward said that poly-film is being used on some windows in town as well, but use of it on windows was OK but using it as a "siding" material as in a greenhouse was not.

After deliberating for about an hour, the board voted to issue the variance, agreeing the request met all four variance criteria; that an unnecessary hardship would result and Chalker wouldn't be able to make reasonable use of his property if the variance was denied; that the hardship was peculiar to his business; that Chalker didn't do anything to result in the hardship; and the variance issuance was

consistent with the spirit, intent and purpose of the town's Unified Development Ordinance.

Once the room cleared leaving the press, the board and Commissioner John Dotson, the board voted to ask the Town Board to rethink its exterior materials list as it did concerning the request for copper by Cyprus, but this time to possibly add poly-film and glass.

Even during the hearing, members suggested getting the list changed so a variance wouldn't be needed, but decided the months it would take to amend the list would take too long and Chalker wanted the greenhouse up and running as soon as possible.

Vice Chair John Underwood suggested the enclosed pool may be out of compliance since glass isn't on the exterior material list, either – though it's not clear whether the moveable glass panels destined for the pool enclosure are considered windows or walls.

At that point Commissioner Dotson suggested the board shouldn't have issued the variance and furthermore, the board was wrong to assume the use of poly-film as an exterior material hadn't been considered by the Town Board in the past – which it was, he said.

In fact, history points to the town's inclination to downplay "temporary" buildings in the business district though allowances have been made as long as those structures – like the pole barns on the Main Street Nursery property – don't look so 'temporary.'

"So you're saying we shouldn't have issued the variance?" asked Chenoweth, to which Dotson said "Well, yes."

• See VARIANCE page 8



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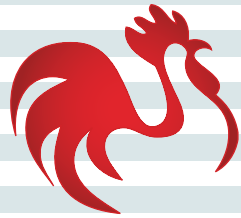
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24 BUFFALO WINGS OR 2 LBS CHICKEN TENDERS AND HAND CUT FRIES
\$19.95 SERVES FOUR.

TUESDAY: MADE IN-HOUSE ITALIAN SAUSAGE LASAGNA AND A LARGE HOUSE SALAD
\$19.95 SERVES FOUR

WEDNESDAY: CHICKEN OR STEAK POT PIE AND A LARGE SALAD
\$19.95 SERVES FOUR

THURSDAY: ROASTED MEATLOAF WITH MASHED POTATOES, GRAVY AND A LARGE SALAD
\$19.95 SERVES FOUR

FRIDAY: WILD CAUGHT FRIED SHRIMP, BAKED POTATOES, HUSH PUPPIES AND COLESLAW
\$22.95 SERVES FOUR

SATURDAY: IN-HOUSE SMOKED BBQ, COLESLAW, APPLE AND BACON BAKED BEANS, AND YEAST ROLLS
\$19.95 SERVES FOUR

WEEKDAY PIZZA SPECIAL:

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BAKED PASTA, WITH GARLIC BREAD AND SALAD FOR 19.95
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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

Ongoing

• Church of the Incarnation and the First Presbyterian Church are collecting food items for the Highlands Emergency Council and the Food Pantry. Drop off boxes are in the Ravenel Room at First Presbyterian and in the downstairs lobby at the Church of the Incarnation. Monetary donations also accepted. Make checks out to Highlands MountainTop Rotary.

• 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

Thurs.-Sun.

• Movies at the Playhouse: Thurs-Sunday, 2, 5 & 8 p.m. Call 526-2685 for weekly movie.

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.

First Tuesdays

• FAMILY and Caregiver Support Group Meets: for Individuals that have a friend, family member or loved one living with mental illness. Learn how peers deal with stress and emotional overload. First Tuesday of Every Month 7-8 pm. Call Ann for more info (828) 369-7385

Tuesdays

• Reading dog "Beebles" will be at Hudson Library every Tuesday at 3:30pm. Please call (828)526-3031 to register.

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

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

Starting Tues., Feb. 24

• 12-week NAMI Program to educate families dealing with mental illness, 6:30 to 8:30p. The course has the dual focus of education, and understanding the experience of living with mental illness. Confidentiality is maintained. Class size is limited and pre-registration required. Contact: Ann 369-7385 or Linda 369-9838

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8:30am-9:30am

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

Thursdays

• Yoga at the Rec Park 8:15 a.m. \$6 per class.

• 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 Support Group Meets: For individuals dealing with mental illness: depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, etc. and the family members of individuals dealing with these challenges. Every Thursday from 7 - 8:15 pm. Call Donita for more info (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.

• Community Coffee with Mayor Pat Taylor from 11a to noon at The Hudson Library.

Sundays

• At the Mountain Laurel Tennis Club at 4:30 pm. Multi-denominational, Interactive Bible Study and Fellowship. **Through March 2**

• Canned food drive at the Eckerd Center. Drop off boxes will be located in the ELC Activities Room, the Lobby Area and the Staff Break Room

Thurs.-Sun., Feb. 19-22

• HCP's "Murder Not Prohibited" at PAC. 6:15 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. Sunday matinees. Come eat, laugh, and test their powers of deduction—all for the bargain price of \$22.85! Tickets are available online, highlandscashiersplayers.org, and at the HCP box office, 526-8084.

Fri., Feb. 20

• The High Mountain Squares will host their "Fifties Dance" this Friday night, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. We will be dancing at

the Macon County Community Building, GA Road (441 South), Franklin NC. Glen Walters from Greer SC be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. Everyone is welcome. For information: 828-371-4946, 828-342-1560, 828-332-0001, or www.highmountainsquares.com

Tues., Feb. 24

• Hudson Library Book Club meeting at the Hudson Library at 10:30a featuring the "Book of the Month." Call 526-3031.

Thurs.-Sun., Feb 27-March

• HCP's "Murder Not Prohibited" at PAC. 6:15 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. Sunday matinees. Come eat, laugh, and test their powers of deduction—all for the bargain price of \$22.85! Tickets are available online, highlandscashiersplayers.org, and at the HCP box office, 526-8084.

Wed., March 4

• Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Day: They can't read or write, but they can multiply! Get your dog or cat fixed – the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society can help. CHHS offers low-cost spay/neuter for pets through our mobile medical/rescue vehicle, the H.E.A.R.T. of North Carolina. Our next spay/neuter day is Wednesday, March 4th. Please note: appointments must be made in advance. Call the shelter at 828-743-5752 to make an appointment or for more information.

...VARIANCE continued from page 6

Members then began discussing alternatives to the plastic, but the point was moot because the variance had already been issued.

Dotson did agree that discussion with the Town Board was necessary at this point, if only to determine the legality of using glass in the pool enclosure.

He also said more discussion and research needed to take place prior to Zoning Board meetings so that the reason rules and regulations are in place is understood and considered by the Zoning Board prior to ruling.

He said this is particularly important due to the lack of consistency on boards and the subsequent lack of collective memory.

"For years I have been suggesting we have a separate file for every commercial piece in town. Pull the file and we're done; with a paper and digital file so there is less of a chance of history being lost."

— Kim Lewicki



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HCP presents 'roaring' murder/dinner theatre

It's the Roaring Twenties, 1925, with Prohibition in full effect, but not at the Highlands Performing Arts Center this weekend. Cal Apone, the big mobster from Chicago, has come to Highlands with his right-hand man, Rightie, and his current girlfriend, Trixie LaTour, to check out Willie Joe Cobb's acclaimed bootleg whiskey at Harry Huckster's Happy Hideaway and make Harry and his wife Daisy Darling an offer they can't refuse.

The Highlands Cashiers Players are presenting a dinner theater the third play of their season and all are invited to join the fun and enjoy a delicious dinner while watching the actors do their stuff in a murder mystery spoof "Murder Not Prohibited." Each table for eight will have the chance to decide "who done it" at the end of the play with the first table to submit the correct name of the murderer and motive winning a prize.

Not only have the actors been rehearsing for weeks, but the dinner coordinators, Bonnie Earman and Barbara Werder, have been equally busy planning a menu, ordering food, recruiting servers and kitchen staff, decorating the reception room with a décor suitable to the times and speakeasy location. An antipasto salad starts the Italian-themed dinner, followed by vegetarian lasagna with a special mild Italian sausage on the side. Dessert is a New York style cheesecake. Wine is available for purchase at the speakeasy bar as well as complimentary non-alcoholic beverages.



ages.

The cast numbers eight (Dean Zuch, Ken Knight, Steve and Michelle Hott, Michael Lanzilotta, David Spivey, Ronnie Spilton, and Virginia Talbot, who also directs the play), but more than 20 volunteers are involved in the dinner planning, preparation, and service. At present the list includes Al Brady, Stan and Donna Cochran, Chris Hess, Gay Kattel, Sarah Knight, Michael Lanzilotta, Alan Mohoney, Jill Montana, Kay Poole, Megan Potts, Vangie Rich, Marsha Shmalo, Ricky Siegel, Dollie Swanson, Tiffani and Raina Trent, Laura Zepeda.

The dinner theater play runs Friday, February 20, through Sunday, February 22, and February 27 through Sunday, March 1, evenings at 6:15 p.m. and Sundays at 1:15. It is the third play for season subscribers. Individual tickets for dinner and play are priced at \$23.50. The subject matter is suitable for older children with student tickets priced at \$10.75. Call the HCP box office for reservations, 526-8084, or reserve online highlandscashiersplayers.org.

...BEARS continued from page 5

neighborhood and take preventative action to deter encounters.

Though a landowner can legally kill wild animals that are in the act of causing property damage or pose an imminent threat to public safety, every person has a different perception of what is an "imminent threat." And it can be very difficult to draw that line from a legal perspective.

An example might be bird feeders. Bird feeders would be considered personal property and bears certainly will cause damage to bird feeders. However the bear is attracted to the food in a bird feeder which could be considered unintentional baiting.

"Each case has to be evaluated separately from an enforcement perspective, but in my opinion killing a bear for getting into a bird feeder is not justifiable since it was the bird feed that attracted the bear to the property in the first place," said Carroway. "The best way we can deal with it is to educate people about living with bears," he said.

Cynthia Strain chairperson of the B.E.A.R. Task Force in Highlands said the killing of a denning bear at a home in Highlands Falls Country Club seems tragic and avoidable.

"But then, it wasn't my house that was trashed. If it was I might feel differently but exclusionary measures should always be taken first and that is always my recommendation," she said.

Strain says there is a lot of prime real estate in the Highlands area which is also prime bear habitat, and bears do not respect private property.

"They roam our mountains looking for food and lodging, and take what they can find. Fight it all you want, but the sooner people accept the fact that it is our responsibility to change our behavior so as to avoid conflicts, the better off we will all be," she said.

Guides to living safely in bear country are available in several locations, including the post office and Town Hall.

— Kim Lewicki

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OR MODERN INTERPRETATIONS:

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BBQ CILANTRO CHICKEN: PULLED CHICKEN, BBQ SAUCE, GRANDE MOZZARELLA, RED & GREEN ONION, FRESH CILANTRO.

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

A warning to the west

By Mark Ford

First Baptist Church of Highlands

For my entry this week, I want to let another voice do the speaking. His name is Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889-1929). Sadhu Sundar Singh was born in Northern India and converted to Christianity in his teens. He sought a distinctly Indian expression of his faith, refusing to adopt a culturally "Western" form of Christianity. He led an itinerant life of voluntary poverty – "sadhu" is a Hindu term for ascetic holy man. He spoke widely in Europe, Asia, and the U.S.

Singh also made frequent trips to Tibet, a closed Buddhist society hostile to Christianity. It was during one of these that he disappeared, never to be seen again. The passage below was recorded in the 1920s, but his warnings concerning the dangers of opulence and materialism on Christianity in the West are still remarkably relevant.

"What homesickness I had in Europe! I felt like a bird in a cage. The whole atmosphere was heavy for me. It was not the physical atmosphere that oppressed me, but the spiritual atmosphere.

"India is more and more seeking the Master's truth. The West is in danger of becoming more and more indifferent. And yet the West owes so many of its blessings to Christianity. At one time the ostrich could fly, but because the ostrich stopped using its wings, it became unable to fly. So are the people of Europe and America—they do not appreciate the faith of their forebears and are fast losing it.

"The West is like Judas Iscariot, who ate with Jesus, only to later deny him. The West ought to fear the fate of Judas, lest it hang itself on the tree of learning. You have so many privileges. We in the East have to give up many things when we become Christians. For you, it is not so. Therefore be careful that you don't lose your only chance for eternal happiness.

"Once, when I was in the Himalayas I was sitting on the bank of a river; I drew out of the river a beautiful, hard, round stone and smashed it. The inside was quite dry. The stone had been lying a long time in the water, but the water had not penetrated the stone. It is just like that with the "Christian" people of the West. They have for centuries been surrounded by Christianity, entirely steeped in its blessings, but the Master's truth has not penetrated them. Materialism and intellectualism have made their hearts hard. So I am not surprised that many people in the West do not understand what Christianity really is.

"In America, for example, one sees a good deal of Christianity, but it does not address the spiritual needs of the people. Just as salty seawater cannot quench thirst, much of American religion cannot satisfy a spiritually thirsty person because it is saturated with materialism.

"Although America is a "Christian" nation and there are many sincere Christians in America, the majority of the people there have no faith. There, where it is so easy to have religion, where religion is offered on every side and no one is persecuted for their belief, life should be peaceful. Instead, there is a mad rush and hustle and bustle after money and comfort and pleasure. In India, many Christians suffer bitter persecution but continue to find happiness in their new faith. Because it is so easy to have faith in America, people do not appreciate what a comfort there is in faith.1

"Given the unease and uncertainty of our times, it may

Proverbs 3:5

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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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: 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

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John 3:16

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

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);

7:00pm Intercessory Prayer Ministry

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

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Sun: School and Adult discussion group 9:30 a.m.;

Worship/Communion: 10:30

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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.

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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

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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.

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

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Market and Sales Statistics

Usually it gets pretty quiet for real estate when the weather gets cold, but thanks in no small part to the Old Edwards Inn and Spa, weekends during November, December and Valentine's Day were packed with shoppers and those looking for a respite from the hustle and bustle of big cities. Thus, we continue to remain busy and productive this winter.

As Realtors, we are often asked about the changes in the real estate market from year to year. I am passing on the statistics over the past 6 years with the 2014 numbers below, thanks to Judy Michaud, Owner/Broker of Meadows Mountain Realty. These were taken from the Highlands-Cashiers MLS as of the end of December for Highlands Township single family residential sale.

Following are the end of December numbers for residential closed sales in 2014 compared to 2013.

There are currently 30 homes in Due Diligence or Pending in Highlands and another 27 in the Ca-



Lynn Kimball
Meadows Mountain Realty

shiers/Glenville/Sapphire/Culowhee (C/G/S/C) market.

The average sales price in 2014 in Highlands was \$613,609 and the median selling price was \$397,500. The list-to-sale ratio has improved to 90.09% and we are so happy to see that number inching northward. The average days on market for the 172 sales is 483. Nine of the sales were either a foreclosure or short sale – this compares with 20 in the same period last year. There have been 10 closings so far in 2015 with an average price of \$557,650 and a median price of \$410,000.

The average days on the market for these 10 sales were 676, which mean that some of our older inventory is finally selling.

In the C/G/S/C market, the average sales price in 2014 was \$542,088 and the median price was \$403,000 with a 91.81% list-to-sale ratio and an average of 360 days on the market for a sold home. In 2013, the average sales price was \$550,632 and the median selling

• See Investing page 13

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 10

not be long before we as a nation may have to seek out the comfort of genuine faith in Christ as our present comforts fade. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there your

heart will be also" (Mt. 7:19-21).

• 1 Sundar Singh, Wisdom of the Sadhu: Teachings of Sundar

Singh, ed. Kim Comer (Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing House, 2000), 182-185.

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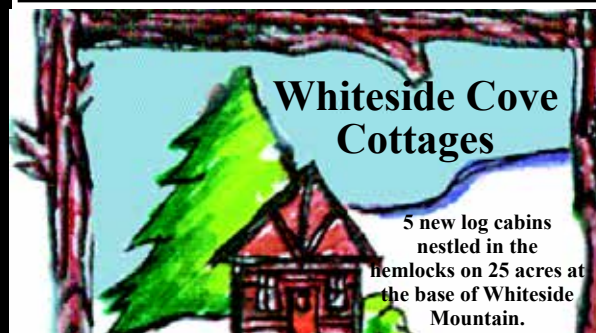
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Changes in the real estate market from year to year

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
# Sales	95	103	77	102	121	156
Days on Market	294	1378	708	587	543	433
Median Price	\$490,500	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$400,000	\$425,000	\$394,500
Average Price	\$676,757	\$688,179	\$679,078	\$572,129	\$565,586	\$570,253
List-to-sale Ratio	89.08%	87.29%	86.52%	86.68%	87.27%	88.13%
Foreclosures/ Short Sales	0	11	8	27	29	20

Residential closed sales in 2014 compared to 2013

	Highlands		Cashiers/Glenville/Sapphire/Culowhee	
	2014	2013	2014	2013
\$300K and Under	63	53	72	67
\$301K - \$500K	46	48	47	42
\$501K - \$750K	27	21	38	36
\$751K - \$1M	19	13	16	20
\$1M - \$2M	12	16	18	22
\$2M and Over	5	5	3	2
TOTALS	172	156	194	189

price was \$385,000 with a list-to-sale ratio of 89.01%, and the days on the market for a sold property was 368. Foreclosures/short sales have dropped off in this market as well, with 14 of the 194 sales in foreclosure or short sale, as compared to 25 in 2013.

There were 28 land sales in Highlands last year, with an average selling price of \$298,798, average days on the market of 368 and a list-to-sale ratio of 77.87%. There are 2 more sales pending and 232 unsold home sites on the market in Highlands. In 2015 there have been 2 sales in Highlands. In the C/G/S/C market there were 144 sales with an average selling price of \$245,504 and 398 days on the market and a list-to-sale ratio of 85.07%. There are currently 20 sales pending and 775 vacant land parcels unsold in the C/G/S/C market. Last month saw 14 vacant land sales close in the C/G/S/C market.

There were 32 condominium sales in Highlands last year with an average sales price of \$383,190, with a 94% list-to-sale ratio and an average of 489 days on the market. This compares to 17 sales in 2013. There are another 5 sales either in due diligence or pending. In the C/G/S/C market last year, there were 44 sales with an average selling price of \$156,471. This compares to 31 total sales in 2013. There are currently 4 condos under contract. There are 54 unsold condo listings in Highlands and 76 unsold condos on the market in C/G/S/C.

The number of foreclosure and short

sales affecting our numbers continues to decrease. There are 13 foreclosure/short sales (6 homes and 7 home sites) available in the Highlands market and 45 foreclosure/short sales in the C/G/S/C market (9 homes, 2 condos and 34 home sites).

Here are the numbers of unsold residential listings in each community by price range. The inventory of unsold properties in both markets is stabilizing. We expect that this trend will continue until our inventory of unsold homes begins to decrease.

The most important factor in selling a property today is to price it "right" in the market over the short term (6 months to a year), which means pricing competitively with other like unsold properties. The most important factor in buying a property today is to look over the long term before prices increase and interest rates rise even higher.

• Lynn Kimball has 41 years of real estate experience, with 30 years serving the Highlands area. Whether you are interested in searching properties or comprehensive information about our area, you are invited to visit her user friendly website at www.signatureproperties-nc.com. Meadows Mountain Realty has two locations, at 41 Church Street in the Old Edwards Inn complex or visit Lynn at 2334 Cashiers Road across from Highlands Falls Country Club. Lynn Kimball can be reached at 828-421-8193 or by email at Lynn@MeadowsMtnRealty.com.

Unsold residential listings in each community by price range

	Highlands	C / G / S / C
\$300K and Under	59	98
\$301K - \$500K	92	135
\$501K - \$750K	77	90
\$751K - \$1M	47	53
\$1M - \$2M	63	79
\$2M and Over	32	34
TOTALS	370	469

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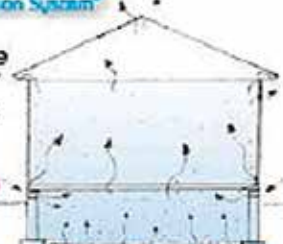
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- Acquire a full working knowledge of all of our listings;
- Assist with preparation/maintenance of all marketing tools;
- Provide an organized, systematized office environment – including team support, filing, answering phones, responding to email, and managing a busy calendar

Your Essential Skills & Characteristics

- Perpetual positive attitude and enthusiasm;
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- Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
- Excellent computer/keyboarding skills;
- Extremely detailed oriented;
- Reliable and dependable;
- Ability to work independently, but are also a team player with a “roll up your sleeves” mentality and a “do whatever it takes” attitude;
- Strong desire to work in a fast-paced environment;
- Ability to learn quickly;
- Marketing and desktop publishing skills a plus

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LOTS/LAND FOR SALE

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FOR SALE BY OWNER

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tract consists of 25.75 acres and a farm house. GA parcel consists of 54 .18 acres, 3 bed/2 bath, full basement, two car garage, 2 barns and 2 outbuildings. Land has pasture, agricultural forestry and 2 creeks. Located in Clear Creek area. \$925,000. For more information contact Fran Wilson at 304-615-3553. (st. 2/12)



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