

# Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Feb. 11, 2016

## Auditor declares Highlands financials are sound

At the Thursday, Jan. 28 Town Board meeting, Joe Haney from the town's auditor, Martin & Starnes, delivered a "clean opinion" concerning Highlands' FY 2014-'15 audit – which means "all is well."

Fund Balance is always used to gauge the health of a municipality because it is the difference between assets and liabilities in a governmental fund. The governmental funds account for the bread-and-butter, typically tax-sup-

ported activities of a government (as opposed to the proprietary funds, which account for self-financing, business-like activities like the town's enterprise funds).

Fund balance is required to be reported in two components—re-

served and unreserved. When a fund balance is reserved, it either means that the resources are in a form that cannot be appropriated and spent (such as inventory) or that the resources are legally lim-

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## Macon County is beginning to plan for FY 2016-'17

County Manager and Commissioners outline individual goals

Over the next few weeks, the Macon County Board of Commissioners will begin the budget planning process striving to craft a \$50 million budget for FY 2016-'17.

From trash services, to the health department, and public safety, commissioners are responsible for considering each department funding and prioritizing needs and addressing concerns.

Looking toward 2016-17, County Manager Derek Roland addressed commissioners outlining his goals and concerns.

"As we look to the coming

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Scout Troop 207 at HUMC Sunday, Feb. 7.

Photo by Bob Sutton

## Scouting in America is 105 years old this week and it's doing great things in town

Last Sunday was Scout Sunday at Highlands United Methodist Church, which commemorated the Boy Scouts of America's 105th birthday.

Scouting in America began

Feb. 8, 1910. As the story goes, in 1909, Chicago publisher W. D. Boyce was visiting London, where he encountered a boy who came to be known as the Unknown Scout. Boyce was lost on a foggy

street when an unknown scout came to his aid, guiding him to his destination. The boy then refused Boyce's tip, explaining that he was a Boy Scout and was merely doing

• See SCOUTING page 3

## Board of Ed, faculty & staff vote yes to longer school days

Due to the geography of Macon County, the public school system is split into three districts, Highlands, Nantahala, and Franklin. And it's the remote mountainous areas of Nantahala and Highlands that prompted the school system to implement special calendars this year that allowed the schools extended school days in order to complete the first semester of school before the Christmas break – before the bulk of snow days hit.

After a full semester of the extended calendars in the Nantahala and Highlands districts, the Macon County Board of Education voted to approve an extended days calendar for the Franklin district and then asked faculty and staff to vote on the

• See BOARD OF ED page 7

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Come hear U.S. Cellular Tower Talk Feb. 18

Allow me to provide a few updates. First, two major topics have changed regarding the sales tax formula, and potential coal ash surcharges. Both were statewide initiatives that hit local pocketbooks.

The legislature eventually increased state sales tax revenues by including services, such as auto repair, into the sales tax formula. What Highlands nets in sales tax revenue for the general fund will remain pretty much unchanged. If the tourist economy remains heathy, we could see modest growth in revenue. The increased sales tax revenue from professional services will go to the state for redistribution. Macon County and Highlands are not on the redistribution list.

Highlands and other municipalities with electric departments, have been headed toward a showdown with Duke Energy over proposed coal ash cleanup surcharges. We had refused to enter an agreement with Duke and believed the next step was a confrontation before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Unexpected circumstances can suddenly change an issue's direction.

The NC Supreme Court ruled re-



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

cently that the state law mandating Duke to clean up all its coal ash pits is illegal. So, the town is now on the sidelines tracking the appeals and proposals now afloat after the ruling. I would be surprised if this issue is resolved anytime soon. Coal ash fees may be a long way off, if ever.

At the January Mayor's Coffee I planned on having a summit on trash and litter in the community. Unfortunately, Mother Nature littered the plateau with over a foot of snow, so the coffee was cancelled. The February Mayor's Coffee will be Friday, the 26, at the Hudson Library. It starts at 11. Join us in doing some trash talking.

Let me provide a law enforcement update. In recent weeks officers have established probable cause, and charges were issued relating to a number of breaking and entering cases. Police devoted many hours in developing these cases that will now be adjudicated by the courts.

Before the February Town Board meeting there will be a special community meeting at 6:30 pm at the Highlands Conference Center. Representatives of US Cellular will be there to present their proposed design for a cell tower. The 80-foot tower would be located behind the fire department. The Town Board and I encourage everyone to attend the meeting to ask questions and express views. This is a major project, and community input is important prior to a decision.

I swam and sunned at Highlands Beach this past weekend. It was over 90 degrees and the water was 82. I hope you have visited our enclosed pool. Even if you don't swim, just sunning in a lounge chair while reading a book from the Hudson Li-

• See MAYOR page 3

## • MILESTONE •



### Highlander to run Boston Marathon for cancer research ... again

Thanks so much for your support last year. Together we raised \$7,630 (our best year so far!) towards the Dana-Farber Marathon Challenge grand total of over \$5.4 million. This year I am hoping we can raise over \$8,000.

One hundred percent (yes, 100%) of this magnificent sum will support the Claudia Adams Barr Program in Innovative Basic Cancer Research at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

On April 18th 2016, I will again join over 550 other Dana-Farber runners in an effort to raise more funds in the critical fight against cancer in the 120th Boston Marathon! It will be my 16th Boston.

Running 26.2 miles is hard. Training for the marathon during the winter months is hard (especially in the mountains of North Carolina!). But none of this compares with the fight that those with cancer endure each and every day.

I'm so grateful for your continued support, and I hope you will help again.

You can donate online at: <http://www.runDFMC.org/2016/briane> or you can contact me at [brian@brianebler.com](mailto:brian@brianebler.com) to receive a donation form.

Thanks!  
Brian Egler

## • HS SPORTS •

**Jan. 28**  
**Girls Varsity Basketball**  
Nantahala 69 - Highlands 41

Top scorers were Whitney Billingsley with 28 points and Madison Lloyd with 8 points.  
**Boys Varsity Basketball**  
Highlands 77 - Nantahala 74  
Top Scorers were Johnny Lupoli with 22 points and Dylan Vinson with 15 points.

**Jan. 29**  
**Girls Varsity Basketball**  
Rosman 58 - Highlands 49  
Top scorers were Whitney

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### Highlands Newspaper

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## ...SCOUTING continued from page 1

his daily good turn. Interested in the Boy Scouts, Boyce met with staff at the Boy Scouts Headquarters in London. Upon his return to the U.S., Boyce incorporated the Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910.

On Sunday, Feb. 7, Highlands Troop 207 with scouts of various ages assisted with the worship service and parishioners learned that scouting is a pretty big deal in Highlands.

Scoutmasters Mike Murphy, Tim Mosely and Robbie Forrester introduced the scouts and explained exactly what the organization does in Highlands.

The Cub Scout Pack currently has 19 Cubs and seven registered leaders. Since there isn't a pack in Cashiers, the pack consists of boys from both Highlands and Cashiers.

Starting in June of 2015, Cub Scouts started their new advancement program. They now have a number of Adventures to complete to earn their rank.

One of the best parts of the new program is that the Cub Scouts now use the Boy Scout Oath and Law, in place of the Cub Scout Promise and Law of the Pack.

The Boy Scout Troop currently has nine scouts and eight registered leaders.

Of the nine scouts, five are Life Scouts, which is one step away from Eagle.

In 2015, Carter Potts, Taylor Schmitt, and Christian Trevathan earned Eagle Scout. Their Eagle projects involved projects that have not only saved taxpayers money but helped beautify Highlands.

• Carter Potts installed a new walking bridge at the Highlands Biological Station,

• Taylor Schmitt purchased and installed a play set and playground at the Fidelity-Eckerd Assisted Living Center,

• Christian Trevathan cleared the site and purchase and installed the game playing area in the Kelsey-Hutchison Founders Park and,

• The most recent Eagle project was Remy Adrian's, who installed stairs between the gravel and paved parking lots at the Highlands School New Gym. His project makes the eighth Eagle project completed by the troop in the past four years.

In addition, Carter Potts is the first scout in Troop 207 history to earn the Bronze and Gold "Eagle Palms," which are additional awards that an Eagle Scout can earn after earning Eagle.

Scouts may earn Palms by completing the following requirements:

1. Be active in your troop and patrol for at least three months after becoming an Eagle Scout or after award of last Palm.\*\*

2. Demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your everyday life.

3. Make a satisfactory effort to develop and demonstrate leadership ability.

4. Earn five additional merit badges beyond those required for Eagle or last Palm.

5. Participate in a Scoutmaster conference.

6. Successfully complete your board of review.

Scouts wear the proper combination of Palms for the number of merit badges they earn beyond the rank of Eagle.

The Bronze Palm represents five merit

• See SCOUTING page 5

## ...SPORTS continued from page 2

Billingsley with 17 points and Madison Lloyd with 16 points.

### Boys Varsity Basketball

Highlands 62 - Rosman 64

Top Scorers were Johnny Lupoli with 30 points and Jose Jimenez with 8 points.

Feb. 2

### Girls Varsity Basketball

Highlands 41 - Swain 70

Top Scorers were Whitney Billingsley with 12 points and Grace Crowe with 10 points.

## ...MAYOR continued from page 2

brary, and seeing youngsters and adults having fun, is a great way to pass an afternoon.

If you prefer winter activities, drop by K-H Founders Park and ice skate. We have a great crew operating the rink. It is a very popular community venue. The rink will be open through February.



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## ...SCOUTING continued from page 3

badges, the Gold Palm 10, and the Silver Palm 15.

The Troop has had one scout, Beau Hargrove from Cashiers, attend Philmont High Adventure Base this summer for a 10-day backpacking adventure in Cimmaron, New Mexico.

There are several other service projects the Troop 207 Cubs and Boy Scouts participated in during 2015.

- Scouts placed American Flags at the Highlands Memorial Park Cemetery for Veterans on Memorial Day, July 4th and Veterans Day. Approximately 240 flags were placed each time, and a new plaque was placed at the base of the US Flag Pole to recognize some of the veterans not buried at the cemetery.

- The Cub and Boy Scouts also helped with the Veterans Day Ceremony held at the Kelsey-Hutchison Founders Park by serving as the colorguard and bugler support.

- Scouts led the Tuesday evening Community Table Dinner two times in 2015.

- They assisted with the installation of the new flagpole at the town baseball field which was funded by the

## ...COUNTY continued from page 1

budget year, it is extremely important to stop and take a look at our goals and objectives,” said Roland. “Macon County is in the public service business and after looking today at our performance, I would challenge anyone to show me an organization in this business that does it better. FY 16-17 will be no different.”

Roland's main focus heading into the coming year lies in employee compensation and ensuring that across the board, Macon County Employees are being fairly and adequately compensated for their work to ensure the county continues to provide exceptional service to residents.

“Should it be the pleasure of the board, I would strongly recommend that we take a look at employee compensation in the coming Fiscal Year,” said Roland. “I have said time and time again and I will continue to say that Macon County Employees are the most valuable asset this organization has. Just as we work to make sure our buildings are in good repair and we are keeping up with the latest advancements in technology, I feel it is just as important that we make sure our employees are compensated appropriately.”

Referencing a 2012 employee compensation study completed by contracted agency Springsted, Roland informed commissioners that the county's longest serving employees are experiencing significant pay gaps when compared to neighboring county's such as Jackson County. Roland asked commissioners to allow him to formulate a committee of county employees to look at the issue and develop a plan of action for the county to address the pay inequalities in the upcoming fiscal year.

Between now and the time the county is expected to pass a new budget in June, Roland will meet with department heads and county leaders to itemize and evaluate the needs of the county and develop a budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

However, before County Manager Roland set up meetings with department heads, commissioners offered him direction outlining what they would like to take priority in the upcoming budget cycle.

Highlands' representative on the board Commission-

Highlands American Legion Post.

- On the 4th of July, scouts built and launched water rockets, assisted with the Family Field Games at the town baseball field and led a U.S. Flag Retirement Ceremony at the Kelsey-Hutchison Founders Park.

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is one of the nation's largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations. The BSA provides a program for young people that builds character, trains them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and develops personal fitness.

For over a century, the BSA has helped build the future leaders of this country by combining educational activities and lifelong values with fun. The Boy Scouts of America believes — and, through over a century of experience, knows — that helping youth is a key to building a more conscientious, responsible, and productive society.

The Highlands United Methodist Church sponsors the Cub Scouts who meet at the church.

The Noon Day Rotary club sponsors the Boys Scouts

er Jim Tate expressed his diligence in keeping the state's tax rate as low as possible, which is currently the 4th lowest in North Carolina.

“My first priority would be to ensure that we keep our taxes flat and our millage rate the same as last year without eliminating any of the current services that we offer,” said Commissioner Tate. “If we are able to complete this task and still have some funds available, then there are several ‘projects’ that could use enhancements.”

Tate's directive to Roland included updating the county's emergency communication system, which has had problems with consistency in coverage and availability throughout the county.

“There are still several ‘dead areas’ within the County where radio communication is not available at all and many more areas where service is very limited,” said Tate. “This truly inhibits the abilities of our police and emergency services (fire & EMS), and is something that can be corrected with today's technology, but will take some upgrades to our current system.”

In terms of the county's infrastructure, Tate said he would like to see the school system's capital outlay budget a focus in the upcoming budget, as it has been cut in years past.

“I also feel like that we need to be providing our schools some additional capital for building and grounds maintenance, so I would be in support of increasing our outlay to the school system,” said Tate.

Praising Roland's conservative budget approach the last two years, Commissioner Paul Higdon said his main focus in the coming cycle is to continue that trend by evaluating existing programs and services for efficiency, something he has continually advocated for over the last year.

“My main goal is to continue to adequately fund services and programs while encouraging efficient management and evaluation of both,” said Higdon. “As discussed in open session with other board members, we need to make sure county buildings and educational facilities are properly maintained to extend their useful lives. By identifying needs and associated costs and after careful review,

• See COUNTY page 9

who meet at the Community Building.

Cub Scouts is for boys ages 7 to 11 or 1st to 5th grade. They meet Monday nights at 6:30 p.m. at the church. For more information contact Phil Potts at 828-200-9753

Boy Scouts is for boys ages 11 to 18. They meet at the Community Building Sunday nights 7 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call Mike Murphy at 828-200-0129.

— Kim Lewicki



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**Tuesday:** Made in-house Italian sausage lasagna and a large house salad.  
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**Wednesday:** Chicken or steak pot pie and a large salad.  
*\$20.95 serves four*

**Thursday:** Roasted meatloaf with mashed potatoes, gravy and a large salad.  
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**Friday:** Wild caught fried shrimp, baked potatoes, hush puppies & coleslaw.  
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**Saturday:** In-house smoked bbq, coleslaw, apple and bacon-baked beans, and yeast rolls.  
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## ...BOARD OF ED continued from page 1

issue.

With extended days calendars district-wide, all schools in Macon County add 20 minutes to each school day. That extra 20 minutes amounts to four additional instructional days between August 29 and December 22, allowing the first semester of school to be completed before the holiday break.

"The primary perceived benefit is in allowing students to take the End of Course Tests before Christmas break," said Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin. "By adding 20 minutes to the high school day, we pick up the equivalent of four days of instructional time."

North Carolina law mandates when individual school districts can begin school, leaving little local control for districts. Macon County has petitioned the state for years for more local control of school calendars, especially when western counties have to battle snow days, unlike the eastern portion of the state.

While gaining local calendar control hasn't been successful, being able to add time onto the school days will allow Macon County some say concerning the calendar.

## ...AUDITOR continued from page 1

ited to being used for a particular purpose.

For instance, grant monies from the federal government that may be used only for building schools would be reported as reserved fund balance in the general fund or a broad capital projects fund. Governments also tend to report the nonexpendable portion of their permanent funds—the resources that can be invested but not spent—as reserved fund balance.

With little input on the calendar, the school system has already had to announce make-up days to combat snow that occurred last month.

Monday, February 15 and Monday, March 28 and Friday, April 22 will now be Instructional Days for the school system.

The days were originally designated as teacher work days, but will now be made up after the snow days that the schools had to take in January. Students were out again on Tuesday, which will probably mean the board will vote to schedule April 22 as a make-up day as well.

The Board of Education approved the calendars at the January board meeting. One calendar for a 6-hour calendar day and the other for a 6.3-hour day. Both calendars would have students beginning school on August 29, but the last day of school varies due to the longer school days. The 6-hour day calendar had students in class until June 9, whereas the extended day calendar put the last day for students on May 26.

After the calendars were put to a vote, teachers and district staff voted to implement the 6.3 hour day calendar for next school year.

The portion of fund balance that is not reserved is called unreserved fund balance. It represents resources that can be used for any purpose of the fund they are reported in. Unreserved fund balance in a debt service fund can be used to repay any outstanding debt. Unreserved fund balance in the general fund can be used for any purpose at all.

•See AUDITOR page 12

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# • BIZ/ORG NEWS •

## 2015 was record year for MANNA FoodBank

MANNA FoodBank would like to recognize and thank the Macon County partner agencies and food industry donors for their unwavering dedication to ending hunger for the residents of Macon County. In Macon County, 1 in 6 residents face food insecurity, and 1 in 3 children are living in food-insecure homes.

MANNA FoodBank works with a network of partners – food pantries, soup kitchens, church ministries, homeless shelters, youth programs, and other food support organizations – to get food to residents across 16 Western North Carolina counties. This network of over 250 partners works all year long to meet the needs of their communities by providing healthy food options to residents needing food.

In 2015, the following MANNA partner agencies distributed a grand total of 466,202 pounds of food\* to Macon County families seeking emergency food support: Macon County Care Network, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Trinity Assembly of God, Highlands Emergency Council, International Friendship Center/La Bodega, REACH of Macon County

This year, thanks to these partner agencies, WNC residents facing food insecurity had better access to healthier, fresher food. In Macon County alone, the MANNA partner agency network distributed 81,797 pounds of fresh produce, and 299,323 pounds of food identified as nutritionally dense foods, known internally as Foods to Encourage.

The MANNA Food HelpLine is available Monday – Friday, from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Toll Free: 1-800-820-1109

## Rotarians hear about Haitian Freedom Fish Farm in Haiti



From left: Paul Heckert, Appalachian State University graduate student, Jane Chalker and Rotary Club of Highlands Past President Peter Ray.

On February 2, Peter Ray introduced Jane Chalker and acknowledged the enormous role she has played in spawning humanitarian efforts in Haiti. Paul Heckert then updated the Rotary Club on progress being made on the creation of the Haitian Freedom Fish Farm in Cange, Haiti. It is anticipated that the Fish Farm will improve the economic condition of families in Cange with the development of this sustainable community-driven fish farming cooperative in Lake Peligre. The farm has been established with seven families who helped to build large cages out of PVC pipe and plastic mesh that can hold as many as 500 Tilapia fingerlings. When the fish have matured, the families will give one half of their initial investment back to the program to be used by additional families. Heckert has been providing oversight to the project.

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## ...COUNTY continued from page 5

we may have to increase capital spending to achieve this goal. As we pay down debt, some of these annual savings could fund this approach.”

In addition to maintaining existing services, Higdon told Roland he wants the county’s security as a whole to be evaluated. “Security of public facilities for employees and clients,” Higdon said when asked of additional priorities in the coming budget season. “Hopefully this can be achieved at little or no additional cost. Not related to budget items, I would like to see all gun-free zones removed on county controlled property.”

As the newest commissioner on the board, Gary Shields hopes to become better informed over the next few weeks by working with county employees.

“My main goal is to become a more informed county commissioner by seeking persons and information that will allow me multi-views on topics of county interest,” said Shields. “I would like to see the county focus on specific areas such as maintaining a strong resume that will

welcome newcomers and businesses: education, health care, safety, logistics, environment and workforce preparedness are only a few topics that helps with my decision making. I also want to pursue cell and wireless connectivity for county residents, businesses and rescue departments; to continue volunteering via liaison in numerous (13) county and regional organizations to become better informed of their needs and mission; and to continue serving on the state NCACC educational committee.”

Shields also said it is important to him for the county to maintain a revenue neutral budget while focusing on essential needs for the county.

Beale, a veteran member of the Macon County Board of Commissioners, said that this budget cycle should be approached in the same manner as past years, without raising taxes while still ensuring citizens have access to appropriate services.

“I want to see our county manager develop a budget that continues to improve county services for the citizens of Macon County,” said Commissioner Beale. “As al-

ways, we have to keep in mind that we are in the customer service business.”

Beale’s directive to Roland included focusing on emergency management and developing a plan to handle increased call loads.

“All areas of Emergency Services Call volumes continue to be at an all time high,” said Beale. “We need to plan ahead, knowing this volume will only increase. This includes everything from our Sheriff’s Department to our fire departments as well. While maintaining and improving our essential services like making sure our Sheriff’s Department needs are met to provide the best service and protection possible to all our communities, it’s also crucial for the board to be mindful of the county’s growth and expansion needs. So this year we need to continue working on all areas of economic development.”

Commission Chair Kevin Corbin agreed with Roland’s main focus in the coming year regarding the need to revisit the county employees’ pay plan to ensure the individuals responsible for serving citizens of Macon County are fairly compen-

sated for their work.

“Due to our growing income from sales tax, I think we will be able to look at revisiting the County pay plan,” said Corbin. “We still have employees whose pay is less than similar counties. We should adjust our pay scales accordingly and do the right thing as an employer. I want us to increase our funding to Macon County Schools and I have made that clear to my fellow commissioners and to the County Manager. We did a great job building our schools and getting to the point where our schools are state of the art and the best of any county in the State. However, we have to put money aside to improve them and keep them up to date. You have to do this in your own house; why should the schools be any different? You need to set aside 1-2% of the value of your property each year to maintain it. We have that responsibility to our schools. We need to include some capital improvements on County properties as well, like the Carpenter Building at the Rec Park. It has had little renovation in 40 years and it is time.”



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# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

## Winter Pool Schedule

Through May 26, 2016

### **LAP SWIM – ADULTS ONLY**

**Monday thru Friday**

**7 – 10 am, 6 lanes**

**AND Monday thru Thursday**

**5 – 6 pm, 1 or 2 lanes**

**Sharing pool with water aerobics @ 5:15 on**

**Mondays, Tuesdays, and**

**Thursdays**

### **PUBLIC SWIM**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday**  
**3 – 5 pm**

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday**  
**6 – 8 pm**

**Saturday 11 am – 6 pm**

**Sunday 1 – 5 pm**

### **WATER AEROBICS**

**Monday-Friday**

**10:15 am**

**Monday - Thursday 5:15**

**(Sharing pool for public swim)**

**Saturday 11:15**

**(Sharing pool for public swim)**

**Fee: \$4 per class or**

**\$30 for 12 classes**

### **POOL PARTIES**

**Pool available on**

**Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays**

**6 – 8 pm**

**Fee: \$75 / \$50 deposit required**

**\$50 non-refundable deposit if party is cancelled or a no show less than 2 days before**

**1st Wednesday of the month—**

**Kayak Clinic**

**2nd Wednesday of the month—**

**Youth Night**

**3rd Wednesday of the month—**

**Water Volleyball**

**4th Wednesday of the month—**

**Senior Night**

**6:00 – 7:30 pm**

**Call us about membership fees**

### **ICE SKATING RINK**

**Open Thursday 1-8p**

**Friday & Saturday 1-10p**

## **Ongoing**

• Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team is open to all levels of swimmers ages 6-18. To sign up contact Coach Steve Hott at 828-421-2121.

• Anyone interested in taking Adult, Child and Infant First Aid/CPR/AED certification class needs to contact the Highlands Recreation Department.

## **Last Sundays**

• At The Wellness Center, donation based Sound Healing Concert. Learn

how to use Music to heal your Nervous System and Reduce Your Stress Naturally at 3pm. 468 Dillard Road (828) 526 9698

**Mon. Thurs., Fri., Sat., Sun.**

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

## **Mondays**

• Shortoff Baptist Church non-denominational Men's Meeting at 7 pm first Mondays.

• The Humanist Discussion Group meets every Monday morning from 9:30 to 10:30 in the Meeting Room in the back of Hudson Library.

• High Cardio Zumba Fitness with Certified Instructor Tiffany Austin at 5:25 p.m.

**Mon. & Wed.**

• Zumba with Mary K. Barbour at the Rec Park from noon to 1p. For more information, call 828.342.2498.

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

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class 8:30am-9:30am at the Rec Park.

## **Mating & Dating at the Bio Station!**



Celebrate Valentine's Day early with the Highlands Biological Station! Bring your friends for an entertaining program called "Mating and Dating in the Animal Kingdom: A Gameshow Mash-up." This evening promises to be filled with adult-only hilarity delving into the seductive world of animal courtship rituals. The lengths that animals go to in order to impress a member of the opposite sex are truly awe-inspiring. Roses and chocolates don't stand a chance when compared with the fantastic, and sometimes sleazy, romantic practices among our fellow animals. In this game-show-like program, test your knowledge, trivia and acting abilities with your spouse or significant other. Going stag for Valentine's Day? Not to worry! Friends are also encouraged to come out for the program as long as they are in groups of two. Desserts and drinks will be offered along with a prize for the top couple. Registration is required. Call (828) 526-2623 to register. Join us for the fun and maybe you will go home with some new ideas for your own Valentine's Day celebration!

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.

## **First Tuesdays**

• The monthly family support group for those with family members, friends, or loved ones living with the challenge of mental illness meets at 7 p.m. at Memorial United Methodist Church, 4668 Old Murphy Road, Franklin. Sponsored by the local affiliate of NAMI. For info call 828 369-7385.

## **Tuesdays**

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

• The Beyond the Walls Book discussion group meets at 4 PM at The Ugly Dog Public House. Each week a short story discussed.

## **2nd and 4th Tuesdays**

• OccupyWNC meets at the Jackson County Justice Center. For more information, visit [www.occupywnc.org](http://www.occupywnc.org) or call 828.331.1524

## **Every 3rd Tuesday**

• The Macon County Poultry club in Franklin meets at 7 pm at the Cooperative

extension office on Thomas Heights Road. For more Information call 369-3916.

## **Last Tuesdays**

• At the Wellness Center, donation based Belly Dancing 101 at 6:30 p.m. 468 Dillard Road (828) 526 9698.

## **Tuesday and Thursdays**

• Zumba with Connie at the Rec Park 8:15 a.m. \$5.

• Pickle ball is played from 11:30a to 1p in the gym at the Rec Park.

## **Wednesdays**

• At the Wellness Place at 6:30 p.m., donation based Art of Meditation. 468 Dillard Road (828) 526 9698.

## **1st Wednesdays**

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

## **3rd Wednesdays**

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

## **Thursdays**

• Storytime with Miss Deanna at Hudson Library 10:40 am. Open to the public.

## **PAC Youth Theater to perform Ghosts & Grotesques Feb. 19-21**



**From left: Katy Potts, Destiny Martin and Raina Trent weaving while telling the ghosts stories in Irish Folktales. The girls traveled to the Foxfire Museum to learn to weave.**

The Highlands Performing Arts Center Youth Theater will present their winter production on Friday, Saturday & Sunday, February 19, 20 & 21. Ghosts & Grotesques is a compilation of literature guaranteed to spook and send your imagination on a wild ride. The Tell Tale Heart, Irish Folktales, The Highwayman and The Troll will be performed by students from Blue Ridge School, Highlands School and Home Schooled. Directed by Megan Potts, David Bortel, Technical Director of the Bardo Theater, WCU is the Lighting Designer and will help with all the spooky special effects. Ghosts & Grotesques will be presented to the schools on Friday morning. The evening performances (7:30 pm) and the Sunday matinee (2:30 pm) are open to the public. Adult tickets are \$10 and all students and children are FREE. The PAC Youth Theater program is open to all students in the Highlands, Cashiers, Franklin areas free of charge. Tickets are available online: [highlandspac.org](http://highlandspac.org), at the door or by calling: 828.526.9047, m 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands



# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

• Weight Watchers support group meets every Thursday at 5 pm at Christ Church of the Valley Call Lisa 828-506-3555.

• NAMI Support Group for individuals dealing with mental illness: depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, etc. and the family members of individuals dealing with these challenges 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.

## 3rd Thursdays

• Kidney Smart Classes in Franklin: from 4:30pm-6pm, Angel Medical Center, Video Conference Room, 3rd Floor, 120 Riverview Street, Contact Majestic 828-369-9474

• Kidney Smart Classes in Sylva: from, 7:30am-9am, DaVita Sylva Dialysis Center, 655 Asheville Highway, Contact Sue 828-631-0430

## Fridays

• 99ers Bridge at the Rec Park 9a to noon.

• At the Wellness Center, donation based Pinterest Fridays at 6:30p. : Essential Oils, Appetizers and Crafts Night. 468 Dillard Road (828) 526 9698

## Every 3rd Friday

• Senior Dinners are at noon November through April.

## Saturdays

• At The Wellness Place Donation based 9am Yoga For Dummies at 9 a.m. Fun, Judgement Free Zone, All Levels and All Ages! 468 Dillard Road (828) 526 9698

## Thurs., Feb. 11

• At The Bistro at Main Street Inn, Prime (not your mother's health talks) 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free, fun evening for women that includes health information, dinner and more! Topic: Women's Heart Health: signs and symptoms of heart attack. Pre-registration required. call 828-213-3353.

• Mating & Dating Gameshow. at the Nature Center. Call for reservations. 526-2623.

## Sun., Feb. 13

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4.5-mile hike to Round Mountain near Cashiers on a Forest Service Road, elevation change of 200 ft. from start to finish but with several with ups and downs along the way to a meadow with views of Lake Jocayse in SC. Bring your binoculars. Meet at Cashiers Rec. Park at 10:00 am, drive 12 miles round trip. Call leaders Mike and Susan Kettles, 743-1079, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs please.

• At PAC, Live in HD via satellite, Les Liaisons Dangereuses at 1 p.m. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org, at the door or by calling 828.526.9047 Adults: \$22 PAC Members: \$19 Students: FREE. Highlands Performing Arts Center 507 Chestnut Street

## Thurs., Feb. 18

• Primary Candidates face off at the League of Women Voters Forum in Tartan Hall of the First Presbyterian Church in Franklin at noon.

• Taize at the Holy Family Lutheran Church in Highlands at 5:30 p.m. For more information, call 704-516-7893.

## Fri.-Sun., Feb. 19-21

• At PAC, the PAC Youth Theater will perform Ghosts & Grotesques. Adult tickets are \$10 and all students and children are FREE. The PAC Youth Theater program is open to all students in the Highlands, Cashiers, Franklin areas free of charge. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org, at the door or by calling: 828.526.9047 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands

## Sat., Feb. 20

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 6.5-mile hike, elevation change 1000 ft., to Trimont Ridge on the Bartram Trail from Wallace Branch, coming back by way of logging roads with views to the south of Franklin and north toward Burningtown. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 9:00 am, drive 6-miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs please.

## Thurs., Feb. 21

• US Cellular to make a presentation about its proposed 80-ft. tower at 6:30 p.m. BEFORE the Town Board meeting at the Community Building.

## Sun., Feb. 27

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 6-mile hike, elevation change 520 ft., to Martin Creek Falls on the Bartram Trail from Warwoman Dell near Clayton, GA, passing a couple of waterfalls and interesting formations in the creek bed. Meet at the Smoky Mtn. Visitors Center in Otto at 9 am, drive 35 miles round trip. Call leader Mary Stone, 369-7352, for reservations. Visitors welcome, no dogs please.

• At PAC, National Theatre of London Live in HD at 1 p.m. Call 828-526-9047 for tickets.

## Friday, March 4

• At 5:30 p.m., its the Jackson County Republican Convention and Precinct Meetings.

## At PAC Les Liaisons Dangereuses Live in HD via satellite, Feb. 13



The Highlands Performing Arts Center will present the National Theatre of London's production of Les Liaisons Dangereuses via satellite (on our large theater screen) on Saturday, February 13 at 1pm.

In 1782, Choderlos de Laclos' novel of sex, intrigue and betrayal in pre-revolutionary France scandalized the world. Two hundred years later, Christopher Hampton's irresistible adaptation swept the board, winning the Olivier and Evening Standard Awards for Best Play. Josie Rourke's revival now marks the play's 30-year anniversary.

Former lovers, the Marquise de Merteuil and Vicomte de Valmont compete in games of seduction and revenge. Merteuil incites Valmont to corrupt the innocent Cecile de Volanges before her wedding night but Valmont has targeted the peerlessly virtuous and beautiful Madame de Tourvel. While these merciless aristocrats toy with others' hearts and reputations, their own may prove more fragile than they supposed.

Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org, at the door or by calling 828.526.9047 Adults: \$22 PAC Members: \$19 Students: FREE. Highlands Performing Arts Center 507 Chestnut Street

## Primary Candidates to face off at League of Women Voters Forum Thurs., Feb. 18

On Thursday Feb. 18, the League of Women Voters will sponsor a forum for primary candidates for NC House District 120 and Macon County Board of Commissioners.

Kevin Corbin and Elliott Southworth will face each other in the Republican primary for House District 120. Randy Hogsed is the unopposed Democratic candidate.

Republicans Karl Gillespie and Ron Haven are competing for the Republican candidacy for the District 2 Macon County Board of Commissioners seat. Charlie Leatherman is the unopposed Democratic candidate.

Republicans Greg Boyer, Emmanuel Carrion, and Paul Higdon are competing for the District 3 Board of Commissioners seat. Bobby Kupperts is the Democratic candidate.

All the above mentioned primary candidates have accepted our invitation to this forum.

The forum will be held at noon at Tartan Hall of the First Presbyterian Church in Franklin. Questions will be accepted from the audience, time permitting. League members are encouraged to submit their questions to Susan Ervin at susanervin0213@gmail.com.

...AUDITOR continued from page 7

The General Fund Balance was the subject of the auditor's report. Whereas revenues were about the same from 2014 to 2015 – \$5,921,069 for 2014 and \$5,862,324 for 2015 – the available fund balance in 2015 (cash on hand) decreased by \$1,532,651 when compared to 2014. The reason? There were more expenditures in FY 2014-'15.

In 2014 expenditures amounted to \$4,894,500 but in 2015 they were \$6,719,092 – and Highlands is the better for it. More was spent this year on infrastructure, including the Lake Sequoyah project, capital projects, and recreation including K-H Founders Park, the ball park, the pool and the Rec Center. From 2014 to 2015, Highlands spent

down its unrestricted (available) fund balance to 33% of its General Fund versus its 77% unrestricted Fund Balance in 2014. "We saved it up and this year we spent it," said Mayor Pro Tempore Amy Patterson. "We saved it so we could use it and spend it down to where we want it to be." The 33% available fund balance represents the amount of money it would take to run the town for four months. Local Government Commission policy requires that municipalities and counties maintain a minimum unrestricted fund balance of 8% which is about a month's worth of expenditures. "It is essential that ad valorem tax-levying units, such as municipalities and counties, maintain an adequate amount of fund balance available to meet their cash flow needs during the months in their revenue cycles when outflows exceed inflows. This ensures that the unit can meet current obligations and prevents the unit from experiencing cash flow difficulties," says the Local Government Commission. According to the commission, North Carolina counties (and many municipalities) have historically maintained fund balance available levels well above the 8 percent minimum as a cushion against unexpected

expenditures, emergencies or declines in revenues. Examples would be lagging reimbursements from FEMA after the Blizard of '93 and the Peek's Creek disaster. Across the state, the average fund balance amounts maintained by counties is approximately 21 percent – Macon County ruled it wouldn't go below 25%. With the recession now in the rear view mirror, tax revenue is up. In 2014, ad valorem tax revenue was \$2,606,063 and in 2015 it was \$2,903,100. As noted in the Jan. 14 edition of Highlands Newspaper, room tax proceeds just through November of 2015 were already higher than all of 2014 -- \$288,299 versus \$262,964. According to the audit, other taxes and licenses are up as well. In 2014, proceeds were \$830,477 and in 2015 that rose to \$907,086. Proceeds from the town's enterprise funds – utilities – are up, too – \$2,774,488. According to county and town officials all indications are that the turn in the economy means sales and room tax proceeds will continue to rise which is good for both entities.

– Kim Lewicki



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Balancing Hormones & Health

By Bruce Katz

As with so many of life's high, inside fastballs, it began with a phone call. But I'm getting ahead of the story.

On Christmas Eve I started having head cold symptoms: a runny nose (in my case, a big runny nose) a hacking, wheezing

cough and some fits of serial sneezing. Historically, this is not a big thing for me. Typically, I down a couple of Alka Seltzer Plus or some Dayquil/Nyquil and the next morning, the symptoms are gone.

Not this time.

On Christmas Day, after mass at Our Lady of the Mountains, we

went to the home of good friends in Franklin for a lovely afternoon meal. I was still emptying out but managed to get through the day. The following morning, on Saturday, the symptoms had moved into my chest. This necessitated a

visit to the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital ER, where I received a diagnosis of an upper respiratory infection and/or bronchitis. Dr. Wade prescribed antibiotics, cough suppressants and decongestants. I was still feeling extremely blah, but we kept a commitment with friends in Highlands, who also, bless them, fed us a spectacular turkey dinner.

On Sunday I rested, but when there was no improvement on Monday morning I called Dr. Baker's office and was inserted into an already crowded lineup. He confirmed the diagnosis but sent me across the HCH campus to get a chest x-ray in order to eliminate the presence of pneumonia.

Later that day, I got that phone call I referred to earlier from the nurse at the doctor's office. The x-ray did its job, there was no pneumonia, but it also revealed what she said was "a nodule on the lower part of (my) right lung." The already nasty cold and bronchitis took an immediate back seat. I was told to expect a call from the radiology department at the hospital. My doctor wanted a CT scan performed to see what "that nodule" was all about.

Bang!

Over the next several days of resting and taking my meds to deal with the cold/bronchitis we waited for the test to be scheduled. I alerted my daughters in Asheville and Greenwich immediately. My wife, my amazing, sharing, caring wife, keeping the phone lines fully employed, managed to alert her side of our family along with pretty much the entire rest of the known universe.

The test was scheduled for Friday, January 8, 2016. For the ensuing days between notification



of the existence of "the nodule" and the day of the CT scan, our minds went back and forth between all of the possible destinations that pop up in circumstances like these. Fear of the worst, belief in God to make it all right, prayer,

rationalization, resignation, bravery (real and unreal) all the while hoping that the good doctor was simply moving through the protocols flowing from his training and years of experience so as to just find out what "that nodule" was.

The outpouring of concern from family, friends, neighbors, even strangers, was pretty amazing. I can safely say I don't believe that I've ever been prayed for by so many people. I had to keep reminding myself that so far, all I was dealing with was a cold, a respiratory infection and bronchitis, and a "nodule" that required some explanation.

The day came for the test whether I was ready or not. I'm not a worrier by nature but I'd be painting a pretty dishonest picture if I didn't admit that by the time we arrived at the HCH outpatient desk I was maybe a little concerned. Maybe a little more than a little. OK, a lot more than a little concerned.

The phlebotomist took some of my blood to ensure my nearly 72-year old kidneys had the ability to handle the contrasting agent the radiology technician would be injecting into my vein so as to make the scan readable and clear. I was warned that the dye might make me a bit queasy since I'd eaten a small breakfast that I probably shouldn't have had. It didn't. After a couple of early arrivals in the Radiology department had their pictures taken I was summoned into the CT scan suite. My wife, hiding her concerns well for my benefit, was left to wait. I'm not sure who had it more difficult, her or me.

The test itself was, if

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# Main Street COUNTRY CLUB PROPERTIES Mt. Fresh

Wright Sq. 828-526-2520 | [www.ccphighlandsnc.com](http://www.ccphighlandsnc.com) | [ccp4info@frontier.com](mailto:ccp4info@frontier.com)



Upper level 3BD/3BA is move in ready, good rental history. Great views of the golf course, club lake, and mountains. An opportunity for an entry level condo at Old Edwards Club. Offered at \$499,900.00 unfurnished or \$515,000.00. Furnished. mls #81414.



This cute cabin rests on a pretty  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre only a mile and a half from the city limit of Highlands. Split floor plan with 2BD/2 baths with a freestanding fireplace in the living room. Outdoor living space includes a covered rocking chair deck. Asking \$124,900 MLS # 80305.



This well maintained 2BD/1.5BA home sits on a picturesque 7+ acre lot. The rocking chair front porch looks out over a nearly level front lawn with mature landscaping. Beautiful hardwood floors, a living room that flows to the front porch and a cozy eat-in kitchen. Detached one car garage with workshop. Spacious fields behind the home. Offered at \$350,000. mls #82780



Close to town, end of the road privacy and minimal yard upkeep. This 3BD/2BA home has a screened porch near Millhouse waterfall. New heat and air in 2015, newer roof, porch. Offered at \$295,000. mls #83091.



2BD/2BA starter home off Browns Mountain Road in a quiet little neighborhood. Open floor plan. Large master bedroom with large bath and walk in closet. New wood floors, heat & air, mudroom, wood burning fireplace, water filtration system. Offered at \$185,000. mls #82152.



Tucked away at the end of the road in the peaceful Webbmont community is this cozy 2BD/2BA cottage. Recent upgrades include new wiring, plumbing, heat/air, roof, decks and more. Great location and price! Just 5 minutes to downtown Highlands. Offered at \$179,000. MLS #82712.



Craftsman home on 7 acres close to town. HUGE views from large deck and many windows. Master and second bedroom on main floor. Two bedrooms and bath on upper level. Private setting. Tennis court. Priced to sell at \$599,000. mls #79549.



Close to town, on over 3 acres with a ridgeline view. 3BD/4BA, 3 car garage, plus office, family room, and outdoor living room. Vaulted living room with gallery, and sunken conversation pit with fireplace. 2 additional building sites. Offered at \$995,000. mls #82990



Highlands Cove Views condo with a view! 3BD/3BA, 2 fireplaces. Great designer finishes! A great condo with a view! Offered at \$579,000. mls #76930.



Living room with antique wide plank wood floors and stone wood burning fireplace. The screened porch has fireplace and view of the mountains. Open gourmet kitchen, with breakfast bar. Formal dining room has gas fireplace. Large master suite. Second guest suite on the main. Offered fully furnished for \$1,395,000. MLS #82407.



Lower entry level Highlands Manor Condo in town. Open great room with dining and wood burning fireplace. Screened porch overlooks Mill Creek. The large master bedroom and bath. Wonderful private feel yet steps away from Main Street. Offered at \$335,000 mls #83138



In Blue Valley Falls Estates, this 4BD/3 1/2 bath home has a stream, privacy great room with stone fireplace, open floor plan. Custom kitchen. Large screened outdoor living room with fireplace. Over 2.5 acres and stream. Offered at \$799,900. mls #83089



This house is a must see with huge stone fireplaces, granite kitchen and bathrooms, stainless steel appliances. Waterfall with wheel and pond, boat dock with large screened porch across back. Unspoiled acreage with wonderful privacy and your own lake on 1.25 acres. Offered at \$789,000. mls #82534.



Excellent rental potential for wedding parties and family reunions. Walk to town, Bascom, Mirror Lake. Split floor plan for two family vacations. Flex plumbing. New kitchen appliances. All hardwood flooring. Granite. Stainless. Stack stone fireplace. Outdoor campfire pit. \$349,000. mls #69499.



This 3BD/2 1/2 BA is has Wolf and stainless steel appliances in the kitchen, granite countertops, a new Trane gas furnace, vaulted wood ceilings, fireplace. Open floorplan. Large screened porch and huge decks. Master has private balcony and bath. 2 bedrooms with a bath and family room downstairs. Fenced yard. Offered at \$699,900. mls #83064



4BD/4 1/2BA home features fairway and mountain views. Main floor has 3BD/3 1/2 baths, lower level has a bedroom/family room and bath with a 2 car garage. Huge stone fireplace and open kitchen-dining to the greatroom. Furnishings negotiable. Offered at \$975,000. mls #83045.





Amazing waterfalls and bold streams with 700 feet on Buck Creek and 700 feet on other side of the creek and bordering USFS. Exceptionally built home on 5.48 acres with all the bells and whistles. \$995,000 MLS #82444



Sequoiah Point Way. Homesite on Lake Sequoyah with exceptional views of the lake, privacy, city water and sewer. Great reduced price! \$347,000. MLS# 77522



Great starter house with over 8 acres of very usable land. Could be a wonderful private estate or farm or could be subdivided. MLS #78581 \$298,000



Great Home, in Webbmont area with open floor plan! Master Suite on main level, easy level entry, expansive back deck and private pond. Ideal for those who like to entertain friends and family. Broker Owned MLS#82545 \$485,000



Close to all the amenities of Mountain Top Golf and Lake Club. This wonderful new mountain home was designed by Summerour and built by JT Turner of Savannah GA. Incredible kitchen with massive island. Deck with fireplace and mountain view. \$2,295,000 MLS #68782



Highlands Mountain Club with great mountain view. Spacious 3br/2ba, two bath spacious condo. Enjoy the pool, tennis, and clubhouse. It comes furnished, with dishes and linens, so just move in. \$249,000. MLS #82270



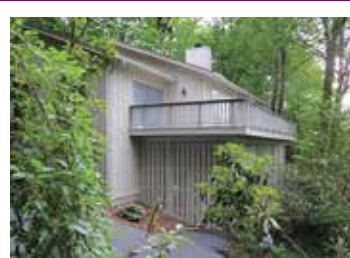
Highlands Falls condo with 3br/3ba and great golf course view, sunroom, stone fireplace, vaulted ceiling. Just reduced to an amazing \$295,000! MLS# 73808



This 2/2 condo has been renovated and is one of the most beautiful units in Highlands Mountain Club. The kitchen is sleek and elegant and the greatroom is spacious but with lots of light from the wall to wall glass doors which lead to the open deck. \$320,000 MLS# 81182



Beautiful pastoral view of the pad-docks and stables plus Shortoff Mountain. Newly remodeled chefs kitchen plus sizable bedrooms and exquisite views and proximity to town make this property a BAR-GAIN! MLS #82080 \$525,000



Best buy in Highlands Falls Country Club! 3br/2ba single unit detached Golf Villa with lake and fairway view. Reduced to \$229,000. MLS# 78712



Highlands Falls Golf Villa has the best view of all with golf, lake and mountains plus an easy walk to all amenities. Golf or Social Membership is available but optional. Easy living, all on one floor with a large kitchen and open greatroom. MLS #78624 \$350,000

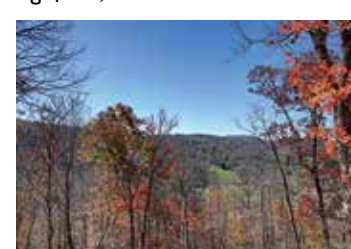


Great in town location, completely remodeled in 2008 on nearly 2 acres. 3BR, 3BA, 2 Half BAs plus an office and 2 car garage. New kitchen, hardwood floors, new custom cabinets with granite countertops, SS appliances, French doors and new baths. MLS #66051 \$697,000

Beautiful pastoral view of the pad-docks and stables plus Shortoff Mountain. Newly remodeled chefs kitchen plus sizable bedrooms and exquisite views and proximity to town make this property a BAR-GAIN! MLS #82080 \$525,000



3 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath home in Highlands Falls Country Club Community. Raised ceilings in the upstairs living areas, a 3 car garage plus golf cart storage and the possibility of a great golf course view make this a fantastic opportunity. A wonderful wrap-around glassed/screened covered porch is perfect for entertaining. \$777,000. MLS #81880



Wonderful home in prestigious Wildcat Cliffs CC. Just a two minute golf cart ride to the club house. Fantastic views from the back porch of Whiteside Mountain and Cullasaja Club golf course. MLS#82872 \$375,000



Immaculate home just a short distance from down town Highlands. Vaulted ceilings, stone fireplace in living room. Lovely porches on upper and lower levels. Hardwood floors throughout, granite counter tops in kitchen and baths. MLS #81406 \$265,000



Just 5 minutes from Downtown Highlands. 3br/2ba with private setting, lots of glass to bring the outdoors in, additional lot included. \$369,000. MLS# 82336



Privacy with some winter view from this 2br/2ba home close to Town. A third room furnished as a den. Split bedroom plan with garage and workshop/studio space. \$339,000. MLS #82099.



Wildwood Forest home with beautiful mature landscaping. Open deck and covered porch. Features 2 master suites. Home is fully furnished, well maintained and would be a great investment opportunity. MLS #81577 \$400,000



The perfect walk to town cottage, minutes from Main Street and Harris Lake. Totally updated with two living areas in this open floorplan. Upscale kitchen, two bedrooms, three baths. \$575,000 MLS #81068



Rocky Knob. A gated lake community. Exceptional mountain view, 3br/2ba with fireplace, vaulted ceilings, covered and open decks and meticulously maintained. \$355,000. MLS #81329



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## • INVESTING AT 4.118 FT. •

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price right? Use our expertise to help you make the right decision the first time. A broker—just like a partner—needs to be honest and trustworthy. A broker should be attentive and stay in touch. The relationship should not end once the transition takes place and

both should have a lasting respect for each other. As Johnny Mathis would croon: “Chances Are” you’ll love your home AND your broker if you are selective in your choice!

I wish you all a lovely and Happy Valentines Day. Enjoy our special and dreamy little town. If you want to discuss any of your real estate wants or desires stop by Pat Allen Realty Group at 295 Dillard Road—across from Highlands Decorating Center. You don’t have to bring roses or chocolates—but if you do—that is perfectly fine!

• Pat Allen is BIC of Pat Allen Realty Group, located at 295 Dillard Road. She is a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist and can be reached by calling the office at 828-526-8784 or her cell at 828-200-9179. Visit on the web at PatAllenRealtyGroup.com. You will also find her blog there that critiques restaurants in the area, as well as the ability to search all properties and the MLS system.

Falling in love is exciting and a romantic relationship results in the release of dopamine—a chemical involved in attention and focus in your brain. The desire to spend every waking hour with that person, and the inability to eat or sleep takes over. Sound familiar? Valentines Day is the perfect time to show your sweetie how you feel—with a night out on the town, flowers, and chocolates, of course!

Falling in love with a home is similar. You picture yourself connected with the home and dreams of making memories there are planted in your brain. You envision nights by the fireplace sipping wine, preparing a tempting meal in your new kitchen, watching the sunset from your new deck, or waking to a beautiful sunrise in glorious golds and reds with a mountain as the backdrop. It is romantic in its own way.

And sometimes our heart impedes our ability to see straight or think correctly and we pick the wrong partner, just like sometimes our judgment is impaired in picking a house. This is where a great broker comes in to play. Is the neighborhood good for resale, is the quality of construction good, and most importantly, is the

## • BUSINESS/ORG. NEWS •

### New faces at Pat Allen RG

Pat Allen is very pleased to announce the association of two new brokers, Deborah and Pat Gleeson, with Pat Allen Realty Group. The Gleesons moved to Highlands full time in 2015 from Atlanta, having lived in California previously.

Deborah has a degree in International Business from

Auburn University and had careers with the Ritz Carlton and Merrill Lynch. She is passionate about real estate and is an excellent home stager. “She really goes the extra mile for her clients”, says Allen, and her hospitality background is a true asset in meeting clients and selling properties.” Deborah

• See BIZ NEWS page 21

### Majestic Ravenel Ridge Beauty!



This stunning majestic beauty in gated Ravenel Ridge features soaring ceilings, FOUR FIREPLACES, an open floor plan and walls of windows that showcase breathtaking views of Whiteside Mountain! A large master suite, boasting mountain views, is on the main level. Numerous sitting areas and a large deck assure a respite for reading and relaxation. Come enjoy the season in one of Highland’s most exclusive neighborhoods! Private, yet close to town.

**Offered for \$2,700,000. MLS82617**

**Highlands Mountain Retreat**



This home is nestled in the rhododendrons and mountain laurels with a spring fed stream, yet within minutes to downtown Highlands.

**Reduced to ONLY \$465,000 • MLS # 82469**

### Renovated In-Town Beauty!



This home is beautifully redone with heart-pine floors, soaring ceilings, 2 stone fireplaces & a HUGE master suite on main with a newly tiled bath. The newly remodeled kitchen is exquisite & a joy in which to cook! Entertain on the large deck with a view of Mirror Lake. The private lower level is perfect for families & friends with 2 bedroom suites, a mini-kitchen, great room, large wine room/studio & a deck leading to a lovely yard & garden area.

**Reduced to ONLY \$549,000! MLS# 81545**

**Picturesque Setting at Highlands Falls**



This home overlooks the golf course and a private, lake with waterfall feature.

Spacious, double decks, too.

**Reduced to ONLY \$629,000 • MLS # 81886**



**Sheryl Wilson**  
Broker  
Cell: 828-337-0706  
Office: 828-526-8784

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# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

## In God We Trusted

By Steve Kerhoulas

**Christ Church of the Valley, Cashiers**

Those familiar with the works of Thomas Paine will remember that his influence sparked the French Revolution. Paine's activism challenged all religious beliefs and especially the value of a society being governed by spiritual principles. Paine, a progressive political radical, said all laws must be secular with no hint of divine influence. Crazy, right? But this is exactly what is taking place in America. Case in point: a local police department not being permitted to include on its vehicles the slogan, "In God We Trust". Which begs the question, "In whom do we trust?"

When the pilgrims were on board the ship and before they disembarked they wrote and signed the Mayflower Compact. In it they explain their mission and purpose for coming to America.

"In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten...having undertaken, for the glory of God, and the advancement of the Christian faith..." Did they say "The advancement of the Christian faith"? Yes, but this is changing. There are those who believe, as Thomas Paine, Christian beliefs have no value as far as determining public law. Three individuals come to mind. The first is Robert Reich, former secretary of labor under Bill Clinton. In his book "Reason: Why Liberals Will Win the Battle for America", says "We've got to stop the Radcons (Christians) before they impose their narrow agenda any further." The second is Robert Audi, a professor of philosophy at Notre Dame, who advocated principles for determining law. The first is something he calls "secular rational". This principle for public policy says we cannot support any law that restricts human behavior unless it is done through secular reason. "There must be a secular rational that is understood to be a secular reason." The third is professor Kathleen Sullivan who says, "The correct baseline theory is not unfettered religious liberty, but rather religious liberty insofar as it is consistent with the establishment of secular, moral order." What these three espouse is the same as Thomas Paine; all public law is to be secular.

In reality some of our most important public laws are based upon the Bible. Such as: Do not murder/ the 6th Commandment; Do not steal/ the 8th; do not bear false witness/ the 9th; No doubt you will think of more! Additionally, we know that families and nations fare well when Scripture molds our attitudes. Ideals, such as respect for authority, parents, being kind, generous, (Christians are the most giving people), marital fidelity, fiscal responsibility, the benefits of working hard etc. are all promoted and taught in the Bible.

Do we really want all laws to be secular? Would you prefer a society based purely on what some powerful leader thinks is right and legal? Hey, hasn't this been done without much success in Russia, China, Viet Nam, North Korea, and in Hitler's Germany? What's wrong with trusting in God? I have an idea-what if the people of God stop being intimidated by political correctness and state boldly that the reason our founding occurred was not because some atheists wanted to create a secular society, but because Christians wanted to create a sacred one. History doesn't lie. If "In God we trust" was wise why not continue?

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

## John 3:16

### BLUEVALLEY 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

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011

464 US Hwy 64 east, Cashiers

9:30a Sunday School; 10:30a Family Service w/ Music

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 a.m.

1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7p.m.

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 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 for Adults, 9 a.m.

Holy Eucharist Rite II, (chapel), 10:30 a.m.

8 a.m., services and Healing services will resume in the spring.

### 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: 8:30a and 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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242 Hwy 107N, 1/4 miles from Crossroads in Cashiers

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

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

### HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville, Nc • 743-2729

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, 6p.

Wednesday: Bible Study, 6:30p; Prayer Mtg., 7:30p.

### 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 );

7pm Intercessory Prayer Ministry

### 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

at St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin

828-524-9463

### 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 Jerry David Hall • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 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. Douglas E. Remer

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 6-Oct 25- 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.

### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am



# • POLICE & FIRE •

**The Highlands Police log entries from Jan. 16. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

**Jan. 16**

• At 9:09 p.m., officers responded to a call from the ice skating rink where a woman said she had received strange messages from an unknown person.

**Jan. 20**

• At 5 p.m., officers responded to a call from a woman at a residence on Cook Road where a person was in possession of meth, marijuana and opium. The case is under investigation.

**Jan. 30**

• At 5 p.m., officers re-

ceived a report about a woman receiving harassing phone calls and text messages.

• At 9:15 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident in the Mountain Fresh parking lot.

**Feb. 1**

• At 2:22 p.m., officers received a call about threats made to a woman.

**Feb. 2**

• At 12:30 p.m., a larceny from the K-H Founders Park restroom was reported. Someone took LED light bulbs valued at \$150.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log from Feb. 3**

**Feb. 3**

• At 8:26 a.m., the dept. responded to a medial alarm at a residence on Stoney Creek Road.

**Feb. 5**

• At 9:05 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to Scaly Fire & Rescue.

**Feb. 6**

• At 5:02 p.m., the dept was first-responders to a residence on Netsi Place.

**Feb. 7**

• At 2:39 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Edwards Creek Road.

• At 3:54 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on NC 106.

**Feb. 8**

• At 9:51 a.m., the dept. investigated the source of smoke at a residence on NC 28 south.

• At 11:33 a.m., the dept. stood by at the hospital for the MAMA helicopter.

## ...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

continued from page 18

Hey, Highlands, what's wrong with a cop car helping us to remember?

One last thing. President Thomas Jefferson sent to Congress a bill asking it to support both a pastor's salary and the building of a church. While in office he also attended church service that were held in the Capitol building. So much for the separation of church and state! God bless America...please!

### Public Information from the Town of Highlands

**There will be a Town Hall meeting at the Community Building at 6:30 p.m., February 18th on the US Cellular tower proposed to be erected behind the fire station. The Town Board meeting will follow at 7 p.m. Any interested citizens are welcome to attend.**

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## Macon County Federal firearms licensee sentenced to 2.5 years in prison for selling firearms to a prohibited person

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — A Macon County federal firearms licensee was sentenced today to a 30-month prison term for selling firearms to a prohibited person, announced Jill Westmoreland Rose, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. Philip Nelson Elliott, 55, of Franklin, N.C., was also ordered by U.S. District Judge Max O. Cogburn, Jr. to serve three years under court supervision following his prison term.

U.S. Attorney Rose is joined in making today's announcement by C.J. Hyman, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Charlotte Field Division.

"Federally-licensed firearms dealers are expected to be one of our first lines of defense to deprive convicted felons from purchasing firearms. Recent events underscore the importance of keeping guns out of the wrong hands. My office will vigorously prosecute gun dealers who put personal gain ahead of public safety," said U.S. Attorney Rose.

"This case is an example of the types of investigations ATF conducts on a daily basis to keep our communities safe. ATF will continue to work with our investigative partners to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals and aggressively seek to bring individuals who provide firearms to criminals to justice," said ATF Special Agent in Charge Hyman.

According to the filed court documents and today's sentencing hearing, Philip Elliott was a federal firearms licensee who operated "Mountain Top Coins, Guns and Ammo" (Mountain Top), a firearms business located in Franklin. Court records show that Philip Elliott's brother, Donald Eugene Elliott, also worked at Mountain Top. According to court records, from March to July 2014, Philip Elliott sold multiple firearms to a convicted felon and was therefore prohibited from possessing a firearm. Court records show that in addition to selling the firearms, Philip Elliott discussed selling the felon rocket-propelled grenade launchers and

told the felon he was willing to buy stolen goods, including stolen firearms.

While executing a search warrant at Mountain Top, ATF agents seized approximately 20 firearms in the store which were "off the books," meaning they were not included in the ATF Acquisition and Disposition Records as required of federal firearms licensees. Philip Elliott pleaded guilty in July 2015 to one count of selling a firearm to a prohibited person.

Law enforcement also seized seven firearms and ammunition from Donald Elliott's residence. Donald Elliott's previous felony conviction prohibits him from owning a firearm. He pleaded guilty to one count of felon in possession of a firearm and was sentenced in December 2015 to six months in prison and two years of supervised release.

The investigation was handled by ATF Assistant U.S. Attorney Don Gast of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Asheville prosecuted the case.



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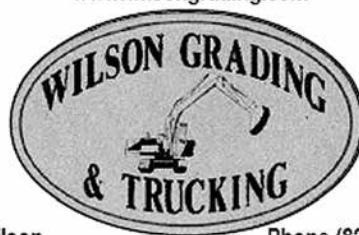
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## ...BIZ NEWS continued from page 17



**Pat Gleeson**



**Deborah Gleeson**

is actively involved in the community and is a member of the Marketing Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, Highlands, 2016 and is on the Landscaping Committee of the Cashiers's Showhouse 2016.

Pat Gleeson attended the University of Minnesota, having majored in journalism. His career in media sales resulted in an account manager position in sports marketing for the Atlanta Braves and the Georgia Bulldogs on WSB Radio in Atlanta, Georgia. He is an avid fly fisherman and guide and a former tennis professional. He has volunteered with many non-profits and understands the importance of giving back to the community and helping others. He has been involved with the Tour de Cashiers and Highlands Motoring Festival.

"I'm so delighted to have Pat and Deborah on our team, says Allen. "Their enthusiasm is contagious and their integrity and respect for the real estate business will catapult them to the top."

The Gleesons are full time brokers and can be reached at Pat Allen Realty Group, 295 Dillard Road, or by calling the office at 828-526-8784 or 828-782-0472.

## ...KATZ continued from page 14

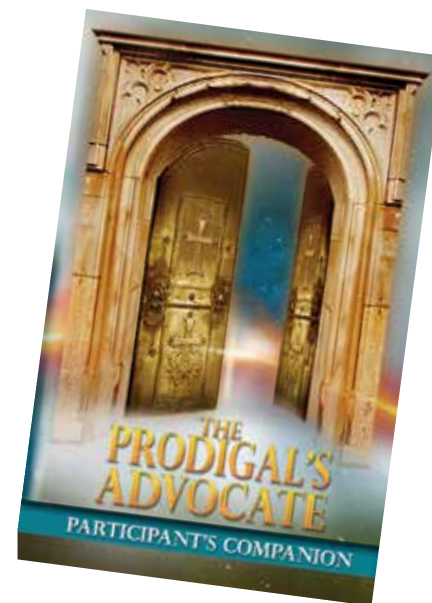
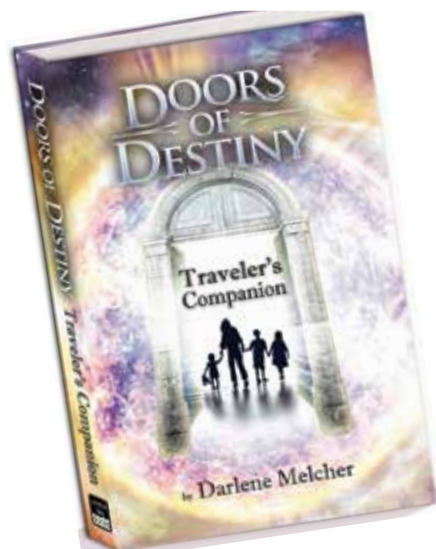
anything, anti-climactic. An IV line was placed into a visible vein on the top of my hand. The technician eased me onto the table and partially into the donut-like apparatus of the scanner. She told me what was going to happen and less than three minutes after the scan happened as she said it would, it was all over. Now, we'd wait for the scan to be read by a radiologist in Asheville, after which the result would be sent to my doc, who would, in hopefully short order, communicate the findings to me.

Technology being what it is, the result was reported to my doctor in less than two hours. Since he wasn't in his office when the results arrived, the same nurse who started this whole process 11 days earlier with a phone call after the nodule was first revealed on that x-ray called again, this time to say that there was, indeed, a small nodule that was "most likely" benign, and that I should plan to have a follow-up CT scan in a year. I laughed out loud, which is what I do when releasing pent up stress, while my darling wife whimpered with the relief reserved only for those most loved in her world.

The takeaways from this Christmas/New Year '15/'16 experience are manifold.

Dr. Wade and the HCH ER team, Dr. Baker and his staff, and the HCH Radiology department could not have been any more professional and personally caring. The prayer chain my wife kicked into high gear, engaging pretty much anyone and everyone she encountered since the x-ray, obviously did its job.

We spent the afternoon following the CT scan eating a pizza at Slab Town in Cashiers and then calling all of the family members, friends and others who'd been in on this 16-day journey with us, sharing the good news. In case we missed saying it while all of this was going on here's to a Happy New Year, and thanks for all of the good thoughts and prayers.



## Highlands School and WCU graduate publishes two books

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Darlene (Nugent) Melcher shares her real life struggles as an encouraging friend who reads and grows along with you. An award winner for the NC Literary Magazine competition (Highlands High School) and contributor to local newspapers, she has been working with graphic design for 20 years and writing since 2003. A graduate of Highlands High School, and alumna of Western Carolina University, Darlene lives in Sylva, NC with her husband, three kids and her tripod dog.

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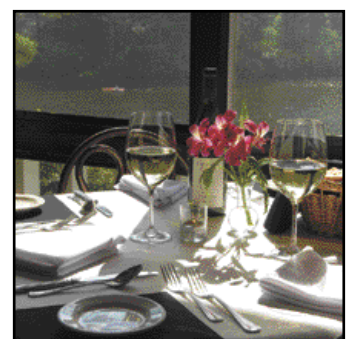
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