

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., March 31, 2016

The state of the Highlands' drinking water

Flint, MI and now hundreds of other municipalities and their residents have found contaminants – lead, copper and carcinogens – in their water. Such findings are alarming and have cit-

izens across the country wondering what is the source of the contaminants. Here at home citizens want to know how Highlands compares.

"The main thing to know is we are doing well," said Highlands

Public Service Administrator Lamar Nix. "Favorable testing results over the years has shown the town's system is fine. It's the homeowners' systems we have to watch and are now required to test."

Citizens can rest easy knowing that there aren't any lead or copper pipes used in the town's treatment plant nor in the town's distribution lines which are main-

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MC School board is considering the future of 'spankings'

North Carolina remains one of 19 states in the country that allows corporal punishment in public education. Monday night, the Macon County Board of Education decided to review the district's stance and evaluate whether or not to do away with the current corporal punishment policy.

With a work session already scheduled on April 13 to review a number of board policies, under the advisement of Macon County School attorney John Henning Jr., board members decided to look at the policy then.

While there is no law on the books in North Carolina prohibiting paddling, individual districts across the state have taken measures to eliminate such policies and prohibit it. Only three dis-

• See **SPANKINGS** page 2



The Barber family, from left, Bill Barber with granddaughter 4-month-old Virginia and son Josh with 1 1/2-year-old Jackson enjoying a balmy Monday while hiking the much improved Whiteside Mountain Trail. Bringing up the rear were Jonathan, Melinda and Rayne Barber.

– Photo by Jim Lewicki

USFS improves area attractions for expected visitors this year

The seven million people visiting Western North Carolina's forests and parks to camp, hike, mountain bike, hunt and fish keep the U.S. Forest Service busy.

During the summer and fall of 2015 and since the start of 2016, through \$300,000 in RPT grants from the state of North Carolina improvements were made to numerous area attractions.

The grants required a 25% match of cash, in-kind work by USFS crews and with its equipment, through volunteer labor or a combination thereof.

The Bartram Trail

Crews constructed the final three miles of the trail from the Fishhawk Mountains westward to Hickory Knoll near the Little Tennessee River. This was accomplished through a contractor.

Yellow Mountain Trail

Crews completed the last of a 3-year effort to reconstruct three miles of a new trail for a more sustainable grade and to move por-

tions of the trail off the edge of private land. Work was performed by the USFS and its summer student help.

Panthertown Valley

Crews constructed a new 10-12 car parking area at the Cold Mountain trailhead. Work was accomplished with district employees.

Wayhutta ATV Trail System

Crews constructed 0.25 miles of a new trail to reroute the trail to a more sustainable location and in addition performed heavy maintenance on the entire 27-mile system.

Houston Dam

Crews removed the high hazard Houston Dam which was off Buck Creek Road which opened the creek to fish passage. This will contribute to reducing the stream temperatures in the Cullasaja River watershed.

The USFS identified 40 high

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

• FORUM •

What to do about much needed road work?



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Subdivision. Technically the town is not authorized to work on state roads, but our water and sewer lines leading to the hospital had been exposed due to heavy rain and snow. Given the lack of maintenance and slow response, the town spent about a \$1,000 in time and materials rather than risking damaging our major utility lines in another storm event.

If the town were to assume maintenance of these state roads, there would be a significant impact

on the town budget. Besides, town residents pay yearly state taxes for DOT to maintain these roads. For Highlands to assume maintenance of these roads would be tantamount to double taxation.

So, it gets back to a fundamental question, what am I going to do about this situation as mayor? I attended the meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee of the Southwestern Planning Commission on Monday night. I'm a member.

At the meeting I again spoke with the DOT Division 14 engineer and the Division 14 representative to the NCDOT. I pointed out the urgent maintenance needs on the Highlands Plateau. I stressed it was better to be proactive rather than being reactive to this growing public issue. I am hopeful we will soon see DOT crews regularly maintaining our roads.

Local citizens can also get involved and help by contacting NCDOT about road problems. Please go to, or Google, the NCDOT website. Scroll down to the lower

• See MAYOR page 9

Citizens Buy Satulah Summit in 1909

By Jim Green

Thirty-two acres at the summit of Satulah Mountain were offered for sale by Macon County Land Company in 1909. One story relates that a man was considering buying the property and charging a toll to visit the summit. Another says that a potential buyer planned to build a grand hotel. Highlands' townspeople and visitors had enjoyed visiting the summit since the origin of the town. They were alarmed, and they reacted with purpose. They decided to buy the Satulah summit and preserve public access to this unique scenic property.

Solicitation of funds for the purchase began on September 1, 1909 under the leadership of the Highlands Improvement Society. The subscription list was headed:

We the undersigned, realizing the advantages to the inhabitants and summer visitors of Highlands of securing in perpetuity access to the Point on the Summit of Satulah Mtn...we desire to subscribe to the purchase of the same...for the use of the public."

The \$500 needed to buy the land was contributed in less than a month. Seventy-six Highlanders and summer residents gave to the cause. The population of the town one year later was only 258, and it is likely that someone from a large majority of the families participated. The two largest contributors were Margaretta Ravenel and Charles Albert Hill who gave \$50 each, a handsome sum in those days. Other donations were as small as five cents. Some contributors did not have much money, but they wanted to be part of the project.

The 32 acres at the mountain summit

and another 28 acres below the southern cliffs were purchased on September 30, 1909. The people were proud of their acquisition. Professor Thomas Harbison, principal of Highlands Academy, wrote with pride and passion:

The top of Satulah is OURS to keep forever. No money grubbing skinflint without any soul can ever acquire this top and then put up a toll gate to charge admission to what be the same as stole from God. I mean just what I say. No man has a right or can acquire a right to charge a man a toll to visit the tops of God's mountains.

Title to the newly acquired lands was placed in a trust to be managed by seven Highlanders serving as trustees. Instructions to the trustees, written into the deeds, require that the 32 acres at the summit be held "for the purpose of making and maintaining a public park for the use and enjoyment of the public forever."

And that's how it all began ...

...SPANKINGS continued from page 1

tricts in North Carolina permit corporal punishment, two of which, including Macon County, are located in western North Carolina. The other two districts are Robeson and Graham counties.

In January 2015, the Swain County School District voted to eliminate corporal punishment as a discipline option, at which point Macon County Superintended Dr. Chris Baldwin reported that while paddling rarely occurs in Macon County, it does occur and is confined to elementary schools.

The board's current policy states that corporal punishment shall not be administered in a classroom with other children present. The student body shall be informed beforehand concerning what types of misconduct result in corporal punishment. Only a teacher, principal, or assistant principal, may administer corporal punishment and may only do so in the presence of a principal, assistant principal, teacher, substitute teacher, teacher assistant or student teacher, who shall be informed beforehand and in the student's presence of the reason for the punishment. And an appropriate school official shall provide the child's parent or guardian with notification the corporal punishment has been administered.

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• WEEKEND WEATHER •



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...SPANKINGS continued from page 2

During the 2013-'14 school year, Macon County administered corporal punishment 27 times. Of those incidents, 24 occurred at South Macon Elementary and three occurred at Iotla Valley. During the same year, Graham County used paddling as a disciplinary measure 22 times and Robeson County did so 67 times.

Unlike Macon County, in Graham County Schools, corporal punishment is confined to the high school level and is only used if the student chooses it over different disciplinary actions.

Macon County parents are given the option to opt out of corporal punishment as an option, based on the district's current option.

...WATER continued from page 1

tained by the town.

"Potential problems arise with the homeowners' household plumbing pipes and fixtures," said Nix. "Those that have copper lines with lead solder."

Highlands started Tier One Testing for lead and copper in water in 1992. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandated that the town test the water in homes built from Jan. 1, 1983 to Dec. 1, 1985 because lead solder was used in the plumbing trade during those years and posed the highest risk to the homeowners.

Due to the town's proactive system, favorable results led to the reduced monitoring of water from 40 homes once a year to 20 homes every three years.

Once homes fitting the required time-span were found, homeowners were asked to voluntarily participate in the annual and now the current 3-year testing process.

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, during the 2014-'15 school year, the districts that employ the practice reported 122 uses, a 39.9 percent decrease over the 203 reported the prior year. Of the 113 students reported as receiving corporal punishment, 105 received corporal punishment once, while eight students received it two or more times.

In Macon County in 2014-'15, corporal punishment was used 11 times. Throughout the state, the number one reason cited for corporal punishment was disruptive behavior, followed by leaving school and use of cell phones during school hours.

Homeowners pick a faucet and remove the strainer and then in the morning they let the water run for 5-10 minutes and are asked not to use the tap for six hours. After the 6-hour limit is up, they fill the plastic bottle provided by the town and leave it outside for pickup.

The samples are collected by the town's water plant staff, packed and shipped to private labs in North Carolina. Results are mailed to each participating homeowner and to the state's Dept. of Environmental Resources (DENR).

Results show if any contaminates are found in each homeowner's sample and according to reports, tests show nothing or negligible amounts of lead or copper in the test samples.

This is likely due to the fact that the town treats its water with orthophosphate

• See **WATER** page 6

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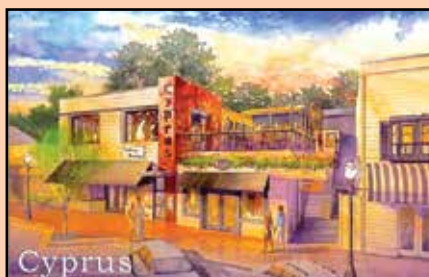
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...USFS continued from page 1

hazard dams in the nation and two of them were in the Highlands area – Houston Lake and Cliffside Lake.

Houston Lake was at the headwaters of Big Creek and at one time was the town's water source. (See related story "Water" on page 1.) The USFS dismantled the dam and the lake was filled in because there are people living downstream of it and a breach would have been detrimental.

Cliffside Lake is a popular recreation area and will remain so because a breach wouldn't affect property owners



Between 85-100 steps from the parking lot make the ascent to the Whiteside Trail roadbed much safer and easier to negotiate.

– Photo by Kim Lewicki

downstream.

Whiteside Mountain Trail

The expected 50,000 visitors to the Whiteside Mountain Trail this year will see a much improved trail system.

Over the last three weeks, crews have worked to improve and repair trail access and drainage along the trail.

A series of elevated steps were built on the shady side of the hill where water weeps out and freezes which creates very dangerous footing, said Mike Wilkins, Nantahala District Manager.

In addition to replacing numerous steps leading from the parking lot, the trail up the old road bed was reconstructed. Work included reestablishing the ditch line, installing drainage structures and placing 440 tons of gravel on the trail.

A large portion of the roadbed has been covered and mounded in the middle with gravel to promote proper drainage.

This work was completed by district employees and according to Wilkins was well in excess of the 25% match.

"When it's all said and done we will have placed 440 tons of gravel on the trail and constructed 85-100 wooden steps," said Wilkins.

Though the entire roadbed hasn't been graveled, Wilkins said they got the worst of it.

"They have finished graveling all the trail work we can afford for now," said Wilkins. "The work represents a huge improvement and will improve the hiking experience."

He said crews still have another 30 feet of steps leading to the roadbed to finish but that will be completed within the next 3-6 weeks.

The current work on the trail not counting salaries was about \$20,000. The elevated steps throughout the trail were funded by \$85,000 grant.

The \$25,000 in fees collected at Whiteside help pay for everyday maintenance. Whiteside is one of seven sites whose funds are pooled to manage Whiteside, Whitewater Falls, both shooting ranges, Wayahutta OHV trail system, Appletree Campground, and Balsam Lodge.

– Kim Lewicki

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...WATER continued from page 3

which coats the interior of pipes in the distribution system and ultimately in the homeowner's infrastructure. More on this later.

How is Highlands' water



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system different from Flint's?

First of all, Highlands' financials are in the black and the administration spares no expense updating, maintaining and monitoring its infrastructure.

Flint, MI was in emergency receivership. It abandoned a good water distribution system for a bad one due to finances.

In 2013, to save money the Flint city council voted to purchase water from the Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA) rather than from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD). However, KWA was not expected to be completed until the end of 2016, so the city decided to rely on its backup, the Flint River. The Flint River, however, contains high levels of chlorine (whether it is naturally occurring or an additive isn't known) and chlorine is highly corrosive to iron and lead – materials used widely in the pipes carrying water in Flint.

Since the late 1960s, DWSD has treated its water with orthophosphate. The water from the Flint River was not treated with orthophosphate even though it contains eight times more chloride than DWSD water.

Highlands water treatment plant also feeds orthophosphate to coat the lines within the system with a protective barrier but it's really to protect homeowners from contaminants leaching into their water once it is circulated through

their home system.

"Problems arise in the home distribution system and its plumbing fixtures, not with the town so we inject the orthophosphate which is OK'd by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) to make sure the water is safe and testing over the years indicates it is," said Nix.

About Chlorine

The EPA mandates that every water system use some sort of disinfectant to deal with contaminants and bacteria. Chlorine bleach in liquid or in gas form is the most common used in the industry.

"We use chlorine gas, but this time next year we will probably be using bleach for safety reasons because gas can be dangerous if it leaks. We are getting away from that," said Nix.

Last summer the town's supplier for chlorine gas wanted to drop Highlands because it didn't want to transport or handle it anymore due to liability. So in the interim, Highlands teamed up with Franklin and Cullowhee and as a group was able to find a gas supplier.

Switching from chlorine gas to chlorine bleach is on the capital improvement list for 2016-'17 and will cost \$550,000. The Town Board is considering the project.

"Everyone is getting away from chlorine gas, going to liq-

• See WATER page 13

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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

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

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Mondays

• Shortoff Baptist Church non-denominational Men's Meeting at 7 pm first Mondays.
• High Cardio Zumba Fitness with Certified Instructor Tiffany Austin at 5:25 p.m.

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• 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.

• 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

• The Humanist Discussion Group meets every Monday morning from 10:30-11:30a in the Meeting Room in the back of Hudson Library,

• 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 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.

• 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.

• At The Bascom, Pottery Sale in the barn from 10a to 5p.

Fri., April 1

• The High Mountain Squares will host their "All Fools Day Dance." Friday night, at the Macon County Community Building, GA Road (441 South), Franklin NC from 6:15 to 8:45 PM. Ken Perkins from Pelzer SC will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. New classes will begin April 18th. Everyone is welcome. For information call: 828-342-1560, 828-332-0001, 828-283-1171

Sat., April 2

• A booksigning and sale from noon to 3 p.m. author Scott Conard's book "Touching the Soul -- A collection of poetry --at The Pizza Place. 50% off food order with purchase of book.

• At PAC, The Met Live via satellite Madame Butterfly at 12:45 p.m.

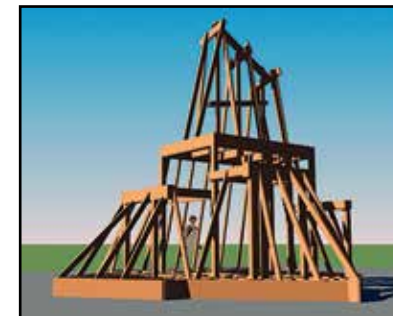
• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a 3-mile easy-to-moderate hike, elevation change 300 ft., to Alarka Falls and Walton Smith Memorial Trail, a unique bog area in Cowee Valley. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 10:30 am. Call leaders Kathy Ratcliff and Bill Crawford, 349-3380, for reservations. Visitors and friendly dogs are welcome.

• Mating and Dating in the Animal Kingdom." at 7:30 in the Highlands Nature Center. Desserts and drinks will be offered along with a prize for the top couple. Registration is required. So find your mate (friend or other) and call (828) 526-2623 to register.

• A Benefit Car Show for Operation Christmas Child, Western North Carolina, will be held Saturday, April 2nd from 8 am to 3 pm at Franklin High School parking lot, by football field. Registration Fee: \$15 to enter a car. If you are interested in showing or participating please contact: Shelly Pilkerton at 828-371-7503 or e-

mail: shellypilkerton@yahoo.com.

New sculpture going up at The Bascom



On Friday, April 15, artist John Kenneth Melvin will break ground on a new site-specific sculpture at the entrance of The Bascom art center's campus.

2016 is slated to be an exciting year for The Bascom's outreach, education and exhibitions departments. As a result of focusing to extend further into the local communities, The Bascom is now offering artist residencies in a variety of mediums. Melvin is the first ever Sculpture Resident Artist at The Bascom and will be at the visual arts center for one month to install the sculpture.

John Melvin is an international artist whose work is a study of the social implications of ecology. He is reputed for building sculptures with "up-cycled" materials that have passed their traditional use. His sculptures and installations can be found around the world both in public displays and private collections.

Melvin will be available to meet with school children and community groups visiting The Bascom, as well. A large focus of the Sculpture Residency program is community involvement and The Bascom is inviting community members to schedule time to meet with Melvin or to volunteer to assist with the construction of the sculpture, which is a 16-foot by 20-foot "Mountain" constructed from reclaimed lumber.

Come help Melvin erect the Mountain! To learn more about this sculpture, or to schedule a time to volunteer, please contact Director of Community Outreach, Will Barclift at 828-787-2897.

Madame Butterfly live via satellite at PAC Saturday



The Highlands Performing Arts Center will show Live via Satellite the MET Opera's Madame Butterfly on Saturday, April 2 at 12:55pm, the pre-opera discussion lead by Beverly Wichman begins at 12:30pm. One of the world's foremost Butterflys, Kristine Opolais, takes on the title role of the spurned geisha in Anthony Minghella's breathtaking production, which has thrilled audiences ever since its 2006 premiere. Star tenor Roberto Alagna is the callous naval officer who breaks Butterfly's heart. Karel Mark Chichon conducts.

Stations of the Cross J. Jay Style

By Lee Lyons

I've walked the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem and I've followed the cross down Main Street in Highlands but nothing is quite as memorable as J.Jay's interpretive Stations of the Cross walk through the Nantahala Forest.

In 1980, J. Jay Joannides (JJay) left a ranch in New Mexico to housesit for a friend in Highlands during the winter. She drove her then four-year-old Mercedes diesel (she drove it for 33 years) and wasn't sure which would freeze first, the pipes in her friend's house or her. However, by Easter she had decided to stay and build a house on Short Off Road, a house that had a stall in it.

That first Easter, Father John, the Catholic priest, and Charlie Bryan, the Episcopal priest alternated the Stations of the Cross between the two churches. They used a pamphlet from the Catholic Church called Everyman's Way of the Cross by Clarence Enzler and J. Jay has been reading it for almost thirty years on her personal Good Friday hike.

J. Jay is ageless. Her long legs are strong and her trim and erect figure are a testament to her years of hiking and former horseback riding days. Back then, she and her buckskin mare, Missy, and her Afghan hound, cut the trails out Buck Creek and Cold Springs. She knows the area like the back of her hand.

Her horse and dog are gone but J. Jay still walks these trails with her four legged friends (she often dog sits for special clients) and is always glad to share her little bit of heaven with others. For the past two years, I have been fortunate to join J. Jay and experience her unique way of seeing the Stations of the Cross in nature.

As an accomplished artist, J. Jay sees the world and the woods through her artists' eyes. We head out across her pasture and as we walk through Cold Springs, she points out various flowers and animal tracks or scat, but when we reach the trailhead, we quit talking. J. Jay pulls her well-worn pamphlet out of her backpack and reads the beginning prayer. "These fourteen steps that you are now about to walk, you do not walk alone. I walk with you."

Then we begin our pilgrimage in silence, under the tunnel of rhododendrons that arch over the path to crucifixion and search for the first station. In the dark woods, we see a tall, over bearing tree and we know we have found Pilate condemning Jesus. At its' base, we read the poetic words of both Jesus and man.

When Jesus takes the cross, we walk

until we see a long, sturdy tree, fallen over the winter and we can imagine Jesus trying to lift it. "This cross, this chunk of tree is what my Father chose for me."

When Jesus falls, we find a log, face down on the ground, beaten and battered, covered in brown leaves.

We search through the trees and in the distance, we find Jesus meeting his mother. Two trees, one bent over and another trying to hold it up. "My mother sees me whipped. We hide no pain from each others eyes."

When Jesus comforts the women, we walk softly in to a group of trees entwined together with green leaves almost like hair.

We search for the station where Jesus is crucified. Looking up into the sky, we see a tall, dying tree, limbs outstretched and read, "My executioners stretch my arms." When you adjust to seeing the possibilities, you can pick out two trees or figures standing at the foot of the cross.

The last station is the tomb and we discover a huge, moss covered boulder beside a stream of living water. "My work as man is done. My work within you and through my church begins. Don't seek me in far off places. I am close at hand. Take up your cross and with your life, complete your way."

Amazingly, the sun shines through the branches, the mountains are seen in the distance. We hear birds sing for the first time. The forest becomes magical as the sun makes patterns with light all around us. Green turkey feet, violets, daffodils and forsythia greet us in our own Garden of Gethsemane. Everything we see affirms life. Within two hours, winter has ended and spring has come. We have each found our Way of the Cross.

• *This installment is from the Highlands Writers Group which meets every Thursday at 1:30 p.m. at the Hudson Library.*

Center for Life Enrichment Activities

Tuesday, April 19

SIRI, Everything You Ever Wanted to Know (for users of Mac products). 10:30 am – 3:30 pm. CLE Classroom, Peggy Crosby Center. Contact Sandy Carlton @ 526-8811.

Thursday, April 21

A Life of Creativity in Fiber. 4 – 5 pm. Location: CLE Lecture Hall, Peggy Crosby Center. Contact Sandy Carlton @ 526-8811.

Tuesday, April 26

Rough Run Spring Wildflower Hike. 10 am – 2 pm. Meet @ CLE Parking lot, Peggy Crosby Center. To reserve space, contact Sandy Carlton @ 828-526-8811.

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Spring and Hope Eternal



Pat Allen
Broker-in-charge
Cell: 828-200-9179
Office: 828-526-8784

With a little less chill in the air these days, there is an excitement that springs forth in Highlands. Tourists arrive in shorts and locals put away their down jackets but know we may still get a precipitation surprise! We have had snow in April and flowers we were determined to plant became little icicles. Still anticipation of a glorious summer grows.

Easter Sunday inspired me to think about my role as a real estate broker and clients' needs. With our aging population of sellers, their needs are different from bigger cities such as Atlanta and Tampa. Many are selling for health reasons and it breaks my heart but it becomes my mission to help them accordingly. Some sellers have created family memories here for generations but it is time to move on. Upkeep and maintenance have become a burden and kids are too busy with their own lives to keep up two houses. My role is to help sell in the shortest time possible, helping

meet that goal. I love getting to know my sellers and discussing their needs...they are all different and deserve time and energy to make it happen in a timely manner.

I listen to emotional stories from the past and feel the love for our magical town that continues to get better and better with age. I

also am seeing a trend where younger people are looking for second homes here and retirees are desiring to make Highlands their primary residence.

Just as days of sadness led to Easter, the excitement and joy of a new beginning and the promise of hope prevail. Birds are chirping outside my window and the morning sun is glorious. Highlands is a magical place and I'm so glad to call it my home for 22 years.

Wishing you all a glorious spring and flowers that live and bloom.

• To see Pat's listings go to www.patalenrealtygroup.com

...MAYOR continued from page 2

right and press Contact Us. A link will appear for reporting road problems such as potholes, road washouts, clogged culverts, trash, etc. Click on the problem and request action for a specific site. For example, on Horse Cove, aka State Road 1603, there is a serious road washout on the curve just below Lower Lake Road. If several citizens report the problem, action has to be taken within a specific period of time. Be sure to get a tracking number when filing a report.

The NCDOT internet reporting process is applicable to all state roads. As I have said before, there are numerous state roads within Highlands, like Big Bear Pen, Cobb Road and Webbmont to name just a few. Usually, the street sign has a state road number posted in the lower right corner, i.e. SR 1603. Use the name of the road and SR number in reporting a problem. If you are not sure about the status of a road, call or drop by Town Hall. We have a map of town and state roads. If it is a town road, Highlands road crews will address the problem. If it is a state road, the problem can be reported through the NCDOT website. I have been assured NCDOT wants to hear from and respond to citizen concerns.

By the way, our town crews will be patching potholes as it warms up and doing roadside cleanup. Like always, there are a number of town roads on the paving list for the coming budget year. The board will have to decide the priorities and how much can be spent on paving this year.

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Don't be afraid

By Curtis Fussell

First Presbyterian Church

Don't be afraid! That's what an angel said on Easter. It was spoken by the angel to the women at the empty tomb. It was also spoken by the resurrected Jesus when he too met the women.

Fear - yes fear was the first reaction to the experience of Jesus' resurrection. We might have expected astonishment as the first reaction to the resurrection and not fear. On the other hand, seeing an angel could certainly be fearful. Likewise, being so close to the work of God, a miracle, is surely a frightening experience.

Yet, it is also the case that fear seems to be more widespread than other emotions. People in Biblical times knew fear and so do we. Nowadays, fear is a dominant emotion. Terrorists fill us with fear. The state of our health can make us fearful. The possibility of losing our jobs make us fearful. It's a dangerous world, making us fearful of losing our lives and fearful for our loved ones. We are fearful people.

Having a life lived without fear is certainly a genuine goal for all of us. We do want to live in the power proclaimed at Easter: "Do not be afraid." But how do we live beyond fear? The issue is "living beyond fear," since we cannot live fear-free. Yet, in the experience of fear we can do something to move beyond fear. Even the angel's declaration "Do not be afraid" makes it clear that we can do something when fear strikes.

Here are three suggestions for living beyond fear. First, pray often. Prayer does not have to be formal. In your daily activities pause briefly and seek the presence of God in a simple prayer. For example, merely pausing at the water fountain and offering a simple prayer can remind one of God's presence and bring assurance to a troubling experience.

Second, attend church. People who attend church do indeed live less fearful lives. Worship attendance allows people to be more reflective, to become more in tune with the blessings of life, and compel harmony with others. Worshiping God instills in us confidence that we are not alone in dealing with the frightening things of life.

Third, be aware that wherever you are God is with you. However, this awareness means we have our part to do. God desires us to do good. God desires us to love others as we love ourselves, and to show mercy and grace to others as God is merciful and gracious to us. Doing our part with God helps us move beyond the fears we experience into a place of peace.

Fear arises when we see ourselves alone and powerless. God, though, is a God of the living and of the future. Let that ring in your heart and mind daily so that you may live beyond fear and live toward the peace and joy of God. "Do not be afraid," God is with you even now.

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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

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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

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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

Holy Eucharist Rite I, (chapel) 8 a.m.

Education for Adults, 9 a.m.

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

Thursday

Healing services (chapel) 10 a.m.

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

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Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

Bible Study: 6 pm

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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 8:30, 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

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Worship/Communion: 10:30

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Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

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4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

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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.

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Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 7

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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.

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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 REPORTS •

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

March 3

• At noon, officers were called by Scuders Gallery about a bad check of \$2,927.40.

March 16

• At 1:51 a.m., officers were called about a child being made to leave a residence without providing an alternative place to stay.

March 21

• At 8:30 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Mill Creek Lane.

March 23

• At 10:38 a.m., officers were called to Highlands Plaza regarding a domestic disturbance in the parking lot.

• At 12:03 p.m., officers were called about

drug violations, equipment, paraphernalia and possession of sch 11 at a residence on Cottage Walk.

• At 1:44 p.m., Seth Patrick Stelert, 23, of Franklin, was arrested for possession of SCH 11 controlled substance with intent to distribute. His trial date is April 14.

• At 1:44 p.m., Kelsey Anne Potter, 24, of Franklin, was arrested for drug violations and possession of SCH 11 controlled substance. Her trial date is April 14.

March 24

• A little after midnight, Elisa Maria Hedgpath, 30, of Chester, SC, was arrested for being drunk and disruptive, obstructing arrest and having a handgun. Her trial date is May 5.

March 28

• At 10:42 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on US 64 west.

March 29

• At 6:40 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on NC 28 south.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log from March 18.

March 18

• At 4:16 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a business on Church Street.

• At 5:13 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire

alarm at a business on Main Street.

March 19

• At 12:09 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Carriage Lane.

March 21

• At 12:30 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Bowery Road.



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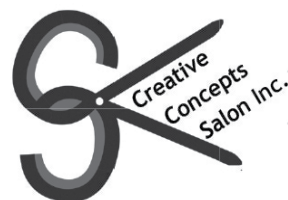


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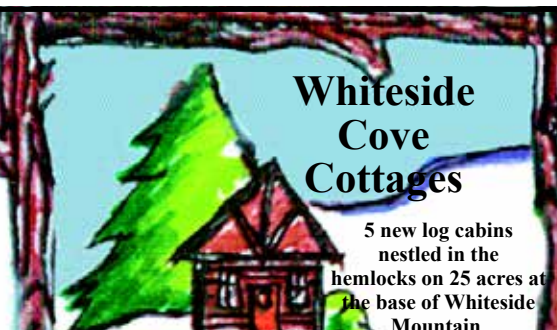
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...WATER continued from page 6

uid bleach,” said Nix. “It’s much more readily available and safer than gas.”

Besides coating pipes with orthophosphate to counteract the effect chlorine has on iron and lead, how else does chlorine affect a water system?

According to Nix, the key to using a disinfectant of any kind is keeping parts per million between a maximum and minimum level.

“That means you have to test it often to make sure you don’t exceed or go below. We test at the plant where we are injecting the chlorine because that’s where it will have the highest concentration. Then as the water gets out of the system, the chlorine loses its strength so you have to test it at the far end of the system – the Bowery, Queen Mountain and the far end of NC 106. We constantly test those areas to make sure we are meeting the minimum that far out which helps us adjust the amount injected at the plant.”

In addition to maintaining the chlorine balance, the town has to test for bacteria samples which is done at seven sites across the plateau once a month.

“These tests ensure our disinfectant – the chlorine – is working and there is no bacteria in the water,” said Nix.

In addition, PH requirements must be kept in check. If the PH is too little, the water becomes acidic (corrosive) and if the PH is too high it goes base which is also corrosive. There is a narrow window where the PH is neutral and that delicate balance must be maintained.

The town’s distribution system includes PVC pipe (plastic), cast iron, galvanized iron and ductile iron. Every time a pipe needs to be replaced Nix goes for ductile iron which is a steel pipe that has a concrete coating and inside that an emulsion coating. There are three layers to protect the pipe.

So how much orthophosphate coating is enough?

Orthophosphate is injected into the town’s water supply daily. The amount of additive depends on the type of water. A large volume of Highlands’ water was sent to a lab in Chicago that tested the water to determine the correct blend of orthophosphate, specific to Highlands.

“Because of its origins and over what it flows, our water has a different chemistry than Franklin’s or Atlanta’s. To get the correct coating, you need the correct formula and the right concentration. A meter pump constantly injects it at the correct dosage and this protects all pipes, but particularly homeowners’ pipes which may still be copper with lead solder or pipes that are corroding,” said Nix.

The origin of Highlands’ water – Why is the water plant where it is now?

In 1925-’26, when the town’s water distribution system was born, the town got its water from Houston Lake out on Buck Creek Road past the recycle center on the right before Cold Mountain Gap. At that time, the town got a permit from the USFS to build a small reservoir – a dam/lake at the headwaters of Big Creek – to supply the town’s public water system.

The water was chlorinated and traveled by gravity from Houston Lake to the water tank on Little Bear Pen and was pumping 65 gallons per minute.

By 1965 Highlands was outgrowing the flow from that lake and EPA rules had changed; people could no longer drink surface water that had only been chlorinated, it had to be filtered, too.

So the town built the water treatment plant on Lake Sequoyah/Big Creek on Hickory Hill Road at the lower end of the Highlands watershed where 1,500 gallons of water per minute is pumped.

Last fall the USFS took out the dam at Houston Lake and has restored the creek. (See related story "USFS" on page 1.)

“Big Creek feeds Lake Sequoyah and that’s where we could get the most water. From 1965 to the mid-’80s all our water came out Big Creek. In the mid-’80s, we began to need more water so we applied for a permit to put an intake valve in the lake – the north side of the US 64 bridge – which was a much bigger reservoir rather than just relying on the flow of the creek. Then in the mid-’90s, forecasting supply and demand, the town applied to have Lake Sequoyah classified a Class I Public Water Supply which meant, if necessary, the town could draw from the main body of the lake,” said Nix.

A few years later, siltation became a problem in the Big Creek arm of Lake Sequoyah. Siltation affected the quantity and the quality of the water.

Due to silting, the water in Big Creek was more shallow so in the summer months, the water became heated and was therefore more susceptible to algae growth and bacteria.

“In 2003, the prediction was that we would begin to

have problems with organics as well as carcinogens. Organic matter mixed with chlorine makes water susceptible to carcinogens by-products. In 2006 and 2007, we were getting hits on those and this had become a reality. So we relocated the chlorine injection spots in the plant so hours and hours of contact time were removed which meant no byproducts,” said Nix.

But water quantity and quality due to silting was still an issue. The town considered dredging Big Creek but not including acquiring easements from property owners who own to the middle of Big Creek, the cost would be near \$3 million.

The alternative was to install an intake valve at the Lake Sequoyah Dam which was property already owned by the town.

To make sure the investment would be a good one, a diver inspected the base of the dam for siltation. He scraped his foot and found he was standing on the base of dam. There was basically no silt.

All the silt in Lake Sequoyah was heavy and fell out where the tributaries entered at the head of the lake and the silt never made it to the bottom of the dam.

“Therefore, we knew this was a good spot for another intake valve,” said Nix.

On March 24, 2016, the town got the OK from Raleigh to start using the new intake valve. Now the town has three options – draw from the creek at the water plant, draw from the first intake valve in Lake Sequoyah near the bridge, draw from the new intake valve at the dam – or a combination of all three as needed.

The state of Highlands’ water has never been better and over the years every scenario has been considered.

“We can use whichever source we want and will continue to use them all alternatively until there is a mechanical breakdown,” said Nix. “When it rains, you get a flash of turbidity. Then it clears up. But when operators of the plant get that first dose of turbidity they can use one of the alternatives and draw out of the lake instead of the creek and when the creek clears up, they can switch back.”

According to the town’s drinking water quality report published each year, 150 contaminants are monitored. Turbidity is said to be due to soil runoff; lead and copper – when found – is due to corrosion of household plumbing, erosion of natural deposits, or leaching from wood preservation; and trace carcinogens when found back in early and mid-2000s were due to the temperature of the water reacting to chlorination which has since been addressed.

– Kim Lewicki



Infrastructure at Lake Sequoyah Dam.

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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



Rotary Club of Highlands Veterans left to right: Mayor Patrick Taylor, Luther Turner, Carter Davis, Rick Travathan, Slocum Howland and William Edwards with the quilt turned to Buck Trott on March 15. The quilt was made by Lois Williams of Glenville.

Members of the Rotary Club of Highlands recently learned about the Quilts of Valor Program when Liz View, President of the Mountain Valor Quilters gave a presentation. Quilts of Valor (QOV's) are handmade and awarded to service men and women touched by war regardless of the conflict - declared war or otherwise - in which they served. These quilts serve as tangible reminders of appreciation and thankfulness to service members.

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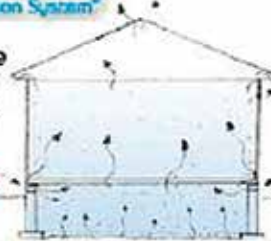
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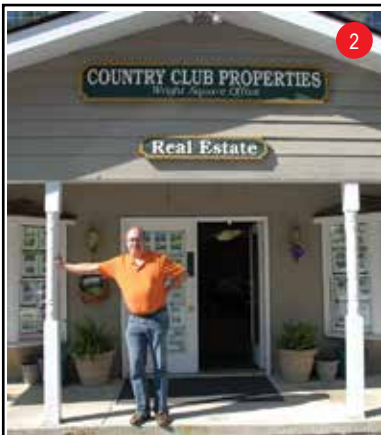


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