

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 14, Number 13

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Thurs., March 30, 2017

Highlands agrees to Duke coal ash settlement

Customers to feel sting this summer

Initially it was going to be a story about a coalition of mighty mice fighting the fat cats but given the atmosphere in Washington these days, Highlands and

six other North Carolina electricity wholesalers will be fighting their battle with Duke Energy on their home turf.

At last week's special called

meeting, Kevin O'Donnell, the town's energy consultant and Duke liaison, said that Duke has gone through the legislative and judicial process to get clearance

to recover costs affiliated with its coal ash cleanup.

"It's no longer a matter of whether we are going to pay – it's

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Highlands School Girls Varsity Soccer Team is on a winning streak



Analyse Crook, Emily Crowe, Grace Crowe, Trinity Dendy, Kim Feria, Gracie Forrester, Betty Garcia, Chela Green, Jeslyn Head, Madison Lloyd, Kedra McCall, Alley Preda, Sarah Rogers, Sayla Roman, Ryan Talbert. Not pictured is Coach David Parrish. The team has played three matches so far; they are 3-2. They beat Cherokee Monday night 4-1 and play Hayesville at home (on the Highlands School field) tonight at 4:30 p.m.

– Photo by Kim Lewicki

How President Trump's budget will affect MC

Part 1 of a series – Overview

Two weeks ago President Donald Trump released his budget and now North Carolina residents are learning how proposed cuts could impact western North Carolina.

Trump's budget calls for massive cuts to discretionary spending in major federal agencies. State officials are warning that these cuts

could have a dramatic effect on state and local budgets as federal departments pare back the grants that make up more than 30% of North Carolina's annual state budget. In turn, programs at the local level may be scaled back or eliminated.

Trump's budget will also

•See TRUMP page 21

House Bill 356 promises to save taxpayers money

Leaders in the North Carolina House of Representatives filed the Tax Reduction Act of 2017, House Bill 356, last week, which introduces a package of tax cuts for small businesses and families across North Carolina. The proposal continues a trend started in 2013 with legislation that builds on tax cuts and reforms in the state that have been touted for stimulating the state's economy over the

last three years.

"The House tax plan for 2017 continues the good work that has been done over the last few years," said co-sponsor of the bill Kevin Corbin "Because of responsible budgeting and spending, and job growth spurred by solid economic policies, North Carolina is projected to have a budget surplus of over

•See HB 356 page 4

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

It's all about 'cleaning up' our environment

I've been thinking about cleanups. That is the Duke coal ash cleanup, and the impending Highlands Cleanup on Saturday, April 22, Earth Day.

Jennifer Cunningham of the Highlands Chamber will join me at the Community Coffee tomorrow at 11am at the Hudson Library. The Chamber sponsors the cleanup and Jennifer has the big task of coordinating the event. We need volunteers to help organize the event, and of course we need a large number of trash collector volunteers on that Earth Day Saturday.

Feel free to contact me, or Jennifer, if you have any questions.

The original Gorge Pickup was expanded last year to include the corridors to the town, NC 106, NC 28 and US 64 north toward Cashiers. The First United Methodist Church has adopted US 64 north and does a great job of picking up trash all year. If we have a good turnout all roads entering Highlands can be cleaned.

Some folks tell me they are at a point in life where they are reluctant to walk on highways. That's OK, I have another way that they can participate. Just pick up trash



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

that day in areas around town. Let me or Jennifer know, and we will send out a crew to haul away the trash bags.

This year will again be a partnership effort. The Town of Highlands will provide dumpsters, and the sanitation crew will help dispose the trash. The Macon County Sheriff's Department and Highlands Police will assist in slowing motorists down.

This pickup is in conjunction with the statewide NCDOT Spring Litter Sweep. The state program starts April 15 and runs through the 29. Highlands will kickoff the effort on the 22nd and Macon County will end the pickup effort on the following Saturday, the 29th, with a county-wide sweep.

The other cleanup issue was addressed by the Town board last Thursday. Our electric utility consultant, Kevin O'Donnell, traveled from meetings in Raleigh to give us an update on Duke coal ash recovery costs, and his recommendation.

Duke Energy is filing for coal ash recovery costs before the North Carolina Utility Commission. This filing would impact Duke retail customers and some wholesale customers. We had been invited by Duke to join and agree to this filing instead of challenging the costs before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington. Highlands had either option for resolving this issue. We had joined a coalition of small town utilities that were willing to retain legal council and fight in Washington.

Our consultant advised us that the pending NC Utilities Commission agreement with Duke will be the best and lowest cost option for our customers. Kevin stated that several of our small town coalition allies were going to go that route, and we might be going almost alone against Duke in DC. He believes we would get a very negative result in Washington. Coal might not be a dirty word in the nation's capitol anymore.

The board voted to go with the NC Utility Commission option. Kevin will continue to advocate for our interests as the process moves forward. Sometimes, "You gotta know when to hold them, and know when to fold them." My initial reaction was let's fight, but a whipping in Washington would have been bad for our customers.

• LEGISLATIVE UPDATE •

H.R. 1430: HONEST Act

Honest and Open New EPA Science Treatment Act of 2017 or the HONEST Act

This bill amends the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating a covered action unless all scientific and technical information relied on to support such action as the best available science, specifically identified, and publicly available in a manner sufficient for independent analysis and substantial reproduction of research results. A covered action includes a risk, exposure, or hazard assessment, criteria document, standard, limitation, regulation, regulatory impact analysis, or guidance. Personally identifiable information, trade secrets, or commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential must be redacted prior to public availability.

• The summary above was written by the Congressional Research Service, which is a nonpartisan division of the Library of Congress, and was published on Mar 8, 2017. Scheduled for a vote in the House of Representatives

• LETTERS •

Corporations as persons

Dear Editor,

There is a movement that challenges the idea that corporations, according to the courts, have personhood entitled to constitutional rights. Although this anti-corporation attitude has been around for years, it periodically comes to the forefront. This latest effort is pushed by liberals who still have not gotten over Hilary Clinton's election loss. Blaming corporations is just another excuse for the loss that included first her staff, then fraudulent votes, FBI director James Comey, FOX News, "fake" conservative talk, blogs, the proverbial right wing conspiracy, the Russians and probably soon extraterrestrial aliens.

According to a recent statement by a member of We the People, a group that is spearheading the anti-corporation movement, unions and PACs as well as corporate businesses should not be granted "personhood". There are masses of real people in those groups. Actually "corporations" have legal existence like a person. They can buy, sell, own, enter into a contract, sue persons or firms and be sued. "Corporations" are made up of people...the officers, directors, shareholders and employees. To consider a corporation just a nebulous entity, a non-person, is ridiculous. Do the critics think when a corporation goes on record in support of a politician, policy, law, charitable event or public facility that it is the corporate logo that rises up to make the decision? Not so. The corporate position is the result of the opinion, judgment and attitude of the people who make up the corporation, union or PAC.

The We the People campaign desires to "establish that 'corporations' cannot buy elections and that human beings not corporations are natural persons entitled to constitutional rights." The thrust of corporate critics seems to be centered on the idea that corporations buy elections. Nevermind the billionaire individuals like Soros, Koch Brothers, Rockefeller, Adelson and Steyer are among those who pour money into candidate campaigns. These

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• WEEKEND WEATHER •



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Highlands Newspaper

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Locally owned and operated by

Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at

www.HighlandsInfo.com

265 Oak St.; P.O. Box 2703,

Highlands, N.C., 28741

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Letter Policy:

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

• OBITUARIES •

Betty Jean Tart Mathis

Betty Jean Tart Mathis, age 71, of Cullowhee, NC, passed away Sunday, March 19, 2017. She was born in Franklinton, NC, the daughter of the late Jimmy and Alice Queen Tart. She worked in the medical field as a respiratory therapist and was a Baptist by faith. She loved gardening, flowers and dogs, and was a loving mother and grandmother.



dren, Nicole Sherrill, Sam Estes, Kevin Mathis, Heather Mathis, Tristan Mathis, Natasha Hamlet, Cassie McKinney, Tiana Phillips, and Autumn Johnson; great-grandchildren, Riley Cabe, Brighan Sherrill, Maddux Hamlet, Savannah Johnson and Cali Mathis.

A private memorial service will be held later.

Online condolences may be made at bryantgrantfuneralhome.com. Bryant-Grant Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the Mathis family.

She is survived by a son, Jamie Mathis (Pam) of Franklin, NC, daughters, Alicia Estes (Eddie) of Whittier, NC, Karen Grant (David) of Burlington, NC and Michelle Mathis of Sylva, NC; grandchild-

Raymond Eugene Crimmel

Raymond Eugene Crimmel, passed peacefully on Sunday, March 19, 2017, at the Eckerd Living Center. Ray was 94 years old. He was born in Neodesha, Kansas, on October 1, 1922, to the late Henry and Nelle Hamblin Crimmel. Ray was an MIT graduate and served in the Navy during WWII. He was an Engineering Professor, German Carpenter and was instrumental in the Apollo Space Program.



his second wife of 30 years, Myrtle Dickow Crimmel. Raymond is also survived by his granddaughter, Michelle Bears and her husband Harry of Highlands, NC; and his grandson, John Sanfilippo and his wife, Lori of Franklin, NC; and two great-grandchildren. He also left countless friends in addition to his family.

To know Ray was to love Ray.

Raymond is survived by his two daughters, Sharon Lee Crimmel Winters (Richard) of Escanaba, MI, and Beverly JoAnne Crimmel Daggett (Russ) of Fletcher, NC; the mother of his daughters, Catharine Crimmel; five grandchildren; thirteen great-grandchildren; a sister-in-law, Delores "Dee" Porter Crimmel; and many nieces and nephews.

Services will be held at the State Veterans Cemetery in Black Mountain, NC at a later date.

A message of comfort may be left to the family and an online guest registry may be signed at www.garrettfuneralsandcremations.com

His family would joke that before Google, there was Grandpa Ray. He left no question unanswered. At the age of 89, through the generosity of Rotary District 7670 and Borg Warner he and countless other WWII veterans were honored with a trip to Washington, DC. He and the others were honored at the WWII memorial. Ray never met a stranger and was extremely generous. He was always up on the latest science and technology, and had a passion to teach. He was a family man who enjoyed camping, fishing and traveling.

Raymond was preceded in death by

• THANK YOU •

To everyone who has supported us during the sickness and passing of our husband, dad, paw and brother, we would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation. Your many acts of kindness and sympathy continue to be a great comfort to us in our time of sorrow. Proverbs 17:17 tells us that friendship is God's special way of loving us through someone else. How thankful we are for your continued loving friendship.

The Family of Tom James

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...HB 356 continued from page 1

a half billion dollars.”

House Bill 356 would raise North Carolina’s standard deduction from \$17,500 to \$18,500 for married couples filing jointly and from \$8,750 to \$9,250 for single filers, tripling the state’s zero tax bracket since 2011.

The zero-tax bracket under Democrat control was \$6,000 for married couples and \$3,000 for single filers.

“The House’s tax plan incentivizes good paying manufacturing jobs and continues to lower personal income taxes, setting the stage for increased economic growth, said Corbin.”

The income tax relief in House Bill 356 is expected to save taxpayers \$64.5 million in the 2017-‘18 fiscal year and \$124 million in the 2018-‘19 fiscal year.

House Bill 356 also allows North Carolina companies to invest more in their workforce and equipment by tax exempting major manufacturing machinery, helping the state

attract large employers and compete with regional neighbors who offer job creators the same tax relief. The tax reform is expected to save North Carolina businesses \$50.8 million per year.

“We are building a tax code that benefits everyone in North Carolina,” said Corbin. “The Tax Reduction Act of 2017 will continue to lower personal income taxes for the middle class, lower taxes on large and small businesses alike located in North Carolina, and attract manufacturing jobs.”

According to Corbin, in total – the legislation would be building an economic climate that works for all citizens.

“Finally, House Bill 356 continues North Carolina’s commitment to tax relief and reform by simplifying the franchise tax, letting companies with extensive operations in North Carolina reinvest more money, and providing \$85 million in tax relief per year,” said Corbin.

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...DUKE continued from page 1

about deciding what is the best route to pursue for our rate payers and customers,” said O'Donnell.

He suggested Highlands accept Duke's "secret" settlement offer, which by using publicly available sources he has determined will cost Highlands \$1 million. Then wait and see if the North Carolina Utilities Commission issues a disallowance in favor of Duke's retail and wholesale customers.

The board voted unanimously to heed his advice.

The back story.

Over a year ago, commissioner learned that Duke was going to try to recoup the money it spent in 2015, 2016 and now half of 2017 cleaning up its coal ash spill in the Dan River. Duke would also defer money to clean up four or five coal ash ponds and any subsequent costs associated with the project in the future. Duke doesn't want to pay for this nor does it want its stockholders paying.

Since Duke was pretty sure it was going to get its way,

over a year ago it offered its wholesale customers a settlement deal, but the exact monetary amount was "confidential." In other words, Highlands and the other wholesalers were to say OK without knowing the specifics of the deal.

Since such terms aren't fair on any playing field, at O'Donnell's suggestion, the town anteed up \$10,000 to be part of a seven-member wholesale coalition ready to fight Duke at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Washington.

But now times have changed. Once President Trump was elected one of the 3-member FERC board commissioners resigned. FERC no longer has a quorum and there is no telling who Trump will appoint – but it's likely it will be someone who is all about "big business," which would likely negatively affect the bottom line for the wholesale coalition.

Where Highlands stands now.

O'Donnell said the town now has two options: to litigate the matter at FERC, or take whatever disallowance the

North Carolina Utility Commission in Raleigh is going to give Duke's retail customers as part of the Duke rate case which is being litigated right now.

"What it boils down to is where are we going to be in the best position politically?" he asked. "We don't know who President Trump is going to appoint and I don't have a feel for the two sitting commissioners. In Raleigh I have a better feel," he said.

O'Donnell worked for the NC Utilities Commission from 1984-1991 and since then has been a consultant.

"Like every regulatory body, it's political; and utilities and politics go hand in hand. What we know is that we now have new folks in Raleigh – a new Attorney General and a new Governor. What they are going to do is the question," he said.

"I have been waiting to see the position of the new Attorney General and that became clear last week when comments were filed in an accounting matter where Duke was seeking to put costs in a deferred account for coal ash recovery at a later point. The AG made pretty strong comments asking for an evidentiary hearing and citing of 1994 public service case in NC where the utility commission issued a disallowance on utility costs," said O'Donnell. "Those comments and others made me realize that between politics in Raleigh and Washington I'd rather we deal with what's going to happen in Raleigh because when you talk about coal ash, everyone in the state of North Carolina has a very strong opinion on this."

O'Donnell said in a recent article published in a trade magazine, a poll by Conservatives for Clean Energy said

• See DUKE page 6

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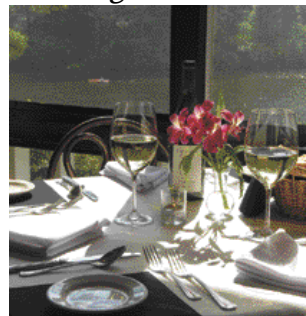
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...DUKE continued from page 5

that 80% of North Carolinians feel they shouldn't have to pay for Duke's coal ash cleanup

"With that in mind, my recommendation is the same I have made to other town boards; accept the settlement offer from Duke and see how the North Carolina Utilities Commission rules and what sort of disallowance it deems appropriate," he said.

According to O'Donnell, by General Statute, the NC Utilities Commission has nine months to issue a final order after Duke has finalized its case, which will be

this summer. O'Donnell said by the end of FY 2017-'18 Highlands should know what kind of disallowance, if any, the NC Utilities Commission decides in that case.

He explained that if the NC Utility Commission comes up with a 50% disallowance, Highlands would get that disallowance. The disallowance is the percentage the NCUC would "disallow" Duke to collect. If it charges Highlands \$1 million – which is the amount O'Donnell suspects Highlands will have to pay over the remainder of its contract with Duke which ends 2028 -- and the NCUC issues a 50% disallowance, then Highlands would only have to pay \$500,000.

Mayor Pat Taylor later said that the disallowance could be handled as a "true-up" at the end of the fiscal year. A true-up is the amount Highlands gets back for overpaying or Duke gets if Highlands underpays for services rendered.

"True-up refunds we have gotten from Duke typically go into a fund to delay future rate increases for our customers even if Duke hands down a rate increase to us. Or, it lessens the amount of a rate increase," said Taylor. "On the other hand, it may depend on the amount of money we are talking about, a few thousand or hundreds of thousands? If I were to bet, we won't get any money back. If we were to get significant money back, those funds could be applied to soften the amount charged to customers for coal ash recovery. Or, the money could be sent back to Duke to decrease the total amount due. We have to wait and see."

O'Donnell said the coal ash case is going to be "hot," which will be good for Highlands.

"In all my years, I have never seen the level of angst within the environmental community at the NCUC over this. I guarantee you people are going to be lining up out the door willing to testify about coal ash. That's why we should deal with Raleigh instead of Washington," he said.

The issue won't be settled until the end of FY 2017-'18 but everyone – wholesalers and retail customers – have to start paying now. The cost to Highlands is estimated at \$10,000 a month. Consequently, rates will go up beginning July or August of 2017.

O'Donnell suggested a line item on each bill so customers know exactly how much Duke is charging so it can recoup costs associated with coal ash cleanup.

"When people start seeing what they are paying Duke on their bills and the press picks up on that on a state-wide basis, I think the heat is going to be turned up on Duke and on the folks in Raleigh and I would

rather take a chance on a disallowance from Raleigh than in Washington," reiterated O'Donnell.

Unfortunately, the amount it will cost Duke and subsequently cost its customers is a moving target.

Initially, Duke said it was going to cost about \$2 million to clean up the coal ash but according to O'Donnell, every time it digs into the numbers it raises that estimate.

"Now they are saying it will cost \$5.2 billion state-wide. So, Highlands will be allocated a share of that coal ash cost. I have estimated it at \$1 million, but I have no way of knowing if that amount is accurate but I hope I'm close, but the reality is I don't know," he said.

O'Donnell said Highlands has a true-up process in its contract so every summer Highlands either gets money back from Duke or pays money based its forecasted demand, estimated demand rate from Duke and an estimated energy rate.

"There are three components Highlands has to true-up with Duke every summer. So now a fourth one will be added – this time itemized on the bill -- that's going to be the coal ash cost," he said. "Folks need to see the amount that is coal ash recovery money because if Highlands' rates go up the amount of money folks have to pay to Highlands goes up. They have to understand this doesn't go to Highlands – it goes to Duke's coal ash recovery," said O'Donnell.

EPA costs vs. NC costs

There are two separate costs concerning coal ash cleanup – EPA costs and NC costs.

O'Donnell said the \$1 million projected cost to Highlands represents the costs to handle the cleanup both the EPA way and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Protection way.

"There are two different buckets and I maintain that North Carolina costs are much higher than the EPA costs. Duke doesn't agree. But, Georgia Power sets aside \$700 million for this sort of thing and Duke Power has set aside \$5.2 billion. Despite the age and size of comparable coal plants in the two states, I still came up with 20-80 split – 20, EPA and 80, North Carolina – a substantial difference," he said.

Another client and O'Donnell have requested that a consultant be retained to separate the costs between EPA and NC. He said that request is sitting at the NC Utilities Commission right now.

Meanwhile, the same issue came up in South Carolina and its Office of Regulatory staff is looking to determine what cost difference there is between EPA and NC so when they file its rate case there, they will be

on top of it. So, SC understands there is a difference, which will help the NC Utilities Commission in its decision.

O'Donnell, who will be a witness in the case against Duke is basing his argument on precedent.

"I say retailers and wholesalers pay the EPA costs but not the costs over and above the EPA costs. Those were incurred when Duke spilled coal ash into the Dan River. Then the NC General Assembly reacted and passed all these new stringent guidelines which are stricter than the EPA guidelines which means more cleanup expenses for Duke," he said. "But if they hadn't spilled the coal ash, then the NC guidelines wouldn't be in place, so therefore they pay everything over and above EPA costs."

Commissioner Amy Patterson said if you read that settlement, Duke had plenty of warning that this was going to happen

"Plenty of warning and they didn't do anything about it," she said.

According to O'Donnell they did have warning and it wasn't Dan River alone. They had two other plants they had problems with.

He said to be fair, what Duke did was industry practice years ago, which is why he doesn't have a problem paying the EPA costs.

"What I have a problem with is paying above the EPA costs. So, to the extent that management caused the Dan River spill and that caused NC General Assembly rules to come into place ... their stockholders ought to pay that and I've told Duke that," he said.

If there is a disallowance, O'Donnell said he doesn't know if money will be refunded or if it will mean a reduction in fees going forward.

"But Highlands will be treated in the same manner as Duke's retail customers to the extent that the money collected will have to be given back or bills credited.

Though the case won't be settled with the NC Utilities Commission until the end of FY 2017-'18, Highlands customers will see an increase on their bills in July or August of 2017 which will be appropriated to Duke's coal ash cleanup.

Duke requires an answer from Highlands by the end of March. The contract will be amended to reflect the settlement offer and terms. Some of the \$10,000 originally set aside to litigate at the FERC in Washington will be used by an independent consultant to go over the wholesale clients' contracts.

Whatever is left will be sent back to Highlands.

– Kim Lewicki

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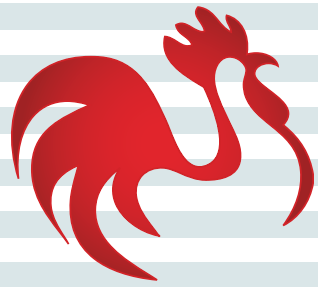
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...LETTERS continued from page 2

individuals support their sole opinion whereas a corporation, union or PAC represents the thousands of people in their organizations.

This anti-corporation movement is misdirected. Corporations large and small are the backbone of our economy and culture. They contain the people who provide jobs, benefits for workers, profits for shareholders, produce goods and hire employees. Throughout the country corporate logos are emblazoned on stadiums, arenas, zoos, convention centers and parks making it possible and affordable for the facility to exist. Anyone who puts on a show, festival, ball, party or any fundraising event for a school,

health issue, community or arts and culture knows that the first task is to get corporate sponsors to fund the event. So, who decides where the charitable and public facility money goes? It is the people who make up the corporation. Yes, along with other types of support the people in corporations support politicians and political ideas on both sides of the aisle.

The We the People Campaign supports a ballot measure to deny corporations personhood. That idea is not supportable by those of us who understand that corporations are groups of people who make up the corporate entity.

**Carol Adams
Glenville, NC**

Thank you to Mark Meadows

Dear Editor,

All citizens of western North Carolina owe a big "thank you" to Mark Meadows and the Freedom Caucus bloc of representatives in the U.S. Congress.

This group, led by Mr. Meadows, is responsible for the fact that those of us who are not wealthy, who may have pre-existing medical conditions, who are elderly, or who are not covered by a group

health care plan provided by an employer, can still—at least for now—purchase reasonably affordable health care insurance.

The withdrawal of Speaker Paul Ryan's American Health Care Act (Ryancare, or Trumpcare depending on your preference) means that the Affordable Care Act will continue as the law of the land "for the foreseeable future", according to Mr. Ryan. President Trump has made it clear that he will not be bringing up a healthcare initiative again in the near future. Apparently he didn't really have a plan in mind after all, in spite of his campaign promises. The Freedom Caucus put a stake in the ground (and a stake through the heart of the proposed legislation) over the fact that certain provisions of the ACA would survive—it was not a sufficiently complete repeal for this group of radical right politicians.

And it appears quite obvious that the Republican Party, after seven years of grandstanding votes to repeal what they termed "Obamacare" and which became a rallying point for resistance

to anything that had President Obama's or Democratic support, had absolutely no alternative plan or strategy to address health care. In spite of all the complaining, and Trump's empty promises during the campaign, nothing whatsoever had been done to develop a new way forward.

Instead, Paul Ryan rushed a poorly conceived and hastily written piece of legislation to Congress and tried to push it through before adequate analysis from the independent Congressional Budget Office could be completed, and before sufficient debate on its provisions could take place. Fortunately, there was enough push-back from both the moderate and the ultra-conservative wings of his own party that it wasn't possible to ram it through quickly. And we all know the final result: even with all the arm-twisting of house leadership, and the support of Trump (who apparently wasn't very interested in the actual content of the bill), there wasn't enough support within the Republican party to pass the legislation.

Although the American Health Care Act was eventually exposed as a relatively cold-hearted attempt to cut benefits, such as medicaid, that largely help the poor and the elderly, in favor of huge tax breaks for corporations and the rich, it still wasn't enough to satisfy Mark Meadows and the Freedom Caucus. Their insistence on even more severe cuts to benefits, up to or including complete repeal of the ACA, with no replacement at all, was the eventual undoing of the plan. Last minute deal-making to try to bring the Freedom Caucus on board only drove moderate Republicans away from supporting the bill.

It's ironic that it took such a debacle, amid the loud objections to the Ryan plan from all over the country, to make it clear to moderate Republicans that their constituents actually like many of the provisions of the ACA and would not appreciate being among the millions who would no longer be able to afford health insurance under the Ryan/Trump proposal. Is it possible they realize that perhaps there is a role for government in

overseeing our very complicated and increasingly costly healthcare industry?

Most Americans rightly believe that the United States has the best system of laws and government yet devised. It is not always pretty to watch—and can be frustrating at times like these when partisanship seems to be more important than policy. Americans are frustrated with gridlock in Washington, and want change. But Americans want to see things get done—we want government to govern. That means providing national defense and security; it means providing a legal framework for society, and assuring the rights of all as outlined in the Constitution; it means creating infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, railways and aviation systems to support the civil and economic environment in which all can participate; and the majority of Americans would agree it means providing certain social safety nets such as medicare, medicaid, and social security that assist vulnerable portions of our society.

To accomplish these objectives, we send ordinary citizens to Washington to be part of the House, the Senate, or even to be President. We expect them to represent all of their constituents—not only those who voted for them—and we expect them to govern. That means working with fellow legislators on both sides of the aisle to find the best way forward to serve the broad interests of their constituents. Which in turn may mean working with legislators of different viewpoints; it may mean compromising from time to time. It seems certain that the only way forward now with our healthcare challenges—and for needed improvements to the Affordable Care Act—will be for moderate Republicans, willing to accept their responsibility to legislate and govern, to give up the discredited idea of complete repeal of the ACA and to work with Democrats to find ways to preserve its critical benefits while assuring its sustainability.

Will Mark Meadows and the

• See LETTERS page 14



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LUNCH & DINNER

Grill

Every day from 11:00am - close
Fresh angus burgers, fresh Natural chicken breasts, fish or chicken tenders, cooked to order, hand-cut fries, salads, homemade soups, daily specials.
See our website for more info.

Pizza

Every day from 11:00am - close
Authentic Neapolitan and NY deck oven pizzas made from scratch. Pasta bowls, daily specials and weeknight dinner specials.
See our website for more info.

Soup & Salad Bar

Mon-Sat 11:00am - close
Fresh salads, homemade dressings, soups, chili and more.
\$9.99 each (dine in) or \$9.99 a pound (to go)

Weekday Lunch Special

Monday - Friday 11am to 2pm
Pizza, pasta, soup and salad bar
Continuous fresh pizza from our pizza ovens, pastas, fresh breads from our bakery, plus the entire soup and salad bar... \$9.99 each (dine in) or \$9.99 a pound (to go)

SUNDAY SOUTHERN BRUNCH BAR

Every Sunday from 11am - 3pm
Skillet fried chicken, country angus steak, skillet corn, biscuits & preserves, mashed potatoes, veggies, cobbler, plus the entire soup & salad bar.
\$11.99 (dine in) or \$9.99 a pound (to go)

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DINNER TO GO

A different full dinner every night.
Serves four serving Monday through Saturday from 4:30 until we sell out -
Call ahead to reserve.

Monday: choose either:

Four chicken and four cheese enchiladas, refried beans, monterey rice, homemade tortilla chips, salsa, shredded lettuce, tomatoes, sour cream.

Or...

24 buffalo wings or 2 lbs chicken tenders and hand cut fries.
\$21.95 serves four.

Tuesday: Made in-house Italian sausage lasagna and a large house salad.
\$21.95 serves four

Wednesday: Chicken or steak pot pie and a large salad.
\$21.95 serves four

Thursday: Roasted meatloaf with mashed potatoes, gravy and a large salad.
\$21.95 serves four

Friday: Wild caught fried shrimp, baked potatoes, hush puppies & coleslaw. \$24.95 serves four

Saturday: In-house smoked bbq, coleslaw, apple and bacon-baked beans, and yeast rolls. \$21.95 serves 4

Weeknight Pizza Special:

Available Monday -Thursday 4:30 to close
16" NY style pizza with up to 5 toppings.
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or

Baked Linguini: Meatballs, tomato sauce & cheese. Comes with garlic bread and salad \$21.95

or

Baked Penne Pasta: Italian sausage, onion, bacon and mushrooms in white sauce. Comes with garlic bread & salad \$21.95

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SPECIALTY CHEESES

Dozens of cheeses, tapenades, olives and specialty items to choose from including our made in-house crackers.

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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

Ongoing

• Indivisible Highlands, a non-partisan activist group, meets Thursdays, 5pm, at the Hudson Library, Highlands. Want more information? Call 770-823-0601.

• Movies at the Highlands Playhouse: Friday - Tuesday: 2, 5, and 8 pm.

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

Mondays, May 29, July 3, and Aug. 7

• Botanical Garden Tour: 10:30 am - 11:30 am. Free. All ages. At the Highlands Botanical Garden. Learn to identify and remove non-native invasive species from your garden and the surrounding forest.

First Mondays

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

Mondays

• At the Rec Park, 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. & Thurs.

• The Joy Program at HUMC from 11:30a to 1:30p. Includes a free lunch and a variety of programs and games. All seniors are welcome. For more information, call Tricia Smith at 828-338-8167.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

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

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.

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.

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

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. For info call 369-7385.

Through April 1st Saturday

At the Nature Center, First Saturdays Citizen Science - All Ages • 10:30 am - 11:30 am • Free

Come out and visit the Nature Center each 1st Saturday of the Month through the off-season. Each month visitors can participate in a national citizen science project, Project FeederWatch, and help collect data on winter bird populations in Highlands. Basic bird identification skills will also be addressed. The Nature Center will be open 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on each 1st Saturday and bird watching will begin at 10:30 a.m. For info, call 828-526-2623

2nd and 4th Tuesdays

• OccupyWNC meets at the Jackson County Justice Center. For more information, visit www.occupywnc.org or call 828.331.1524

Third Tuesday

• The Macon County Poultry Club meets in Franklin on the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Meetings are open to the public of all ages. The meetings are held at the NC Cooperative extension office located at 193 Thomas Heights rd. For information call 828-369-3916.

Tuesday and Thursdays

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

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

Wednesdays

• 49ers Bridge Club at the Rec Park at 8:45 a.m. Be seated by 8:30.

• Open Duplicate Bridge at 1 p.m. Be

seated by 12:45 a.m.

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.

• Zahner Lecture Series at 6:30 p.m. at the Nature Center. Free

• 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. at First United Methodist Church Outreach Center on West Main Street beside Bryant's Funnel Home. 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 4:30-6pm, Angel Medical Center, Video Conference Room, 3rd Floor, 120 Riverview St. 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

• 49ers Bridge Club at the Rec Park at 9 a.m. Be seated by 8:45 a.m.

• Open Duplicate Bridge at 1 p.m. Be seated by 12:45 a.m.

• Friday Night Live, 6-8pm in Town Square. Live music. Free

Saturdays

• At MountainTop Wine Shoppe on Main Street, free wine tastings from 1-3 p.m.

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

• Highlands Marketplace at K-H Park 8a to noon.

• The Bascom Knitters on the Terrace at The Bascom from 10 am until noon. In event of cold/rain, meet down-

Local artist on exhibit at MC Library



Otto artist and jewelry artisan Sharon Ann Volker will feature her art and jewelry creations at the Macon County Library on Siler Road in Franklin beginning April 1st through the end of the month. A self-taught artist, Sharon began working with pastels in the mid 1980s, experimenting first with the human form and then with a variety of still life and landscape subjects. More recently, Sharon has added nine original pieces to her portfolio, her most recent titled "Brigitte's Boudoir." Her work has been profiled in the Asheville Citizen-Times and the Macon County News and she has won gold and silver medals in a variety of competitions, including 2nd in the state of NC in 2007 at Senior Games, Silver Arts division.



• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

stairs in The Bascom Library room.

Fri., March 31

• Community Coffee at Hudson Library Meeting Room 11a to noon w/ Mayor Patrick Taylor on the topic "What's up in Washington, Raleigh & Washington." For more information call the Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

Fri., March 31

• The High Mountain Squares will host their "A Night with Elvis Dance", Friday night at the Memorial United Methodist Church, 4668 Old Murphy Rd, Franklin NC from 6:15 to 8:45 PM. Bob & Lorrie Morrison from Winder, GA will be the callers. Rounds & lines by Mike McDonald & Debbie McClain. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. Everyone is welcome. For information call 828-342-1560, 828-332-0001 or

Sun., April 2

• At PAC, Live via Satellite from Moscow, the Bolshoi Ballet's production of "A Contemporary Evening" at 12:55 p.m. Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org – at the door or by calling 828.526.9047. 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

Sat., April 8

• At PAC, the MET Opera "Nabucco" at 12:55. There will be a pre-opera discussion at 12:30pm led by Beverly Wichman. Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org – at the door or by calling 828.526.9047. 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

Tue., April 18

• SIRI, 10:30-3:30 Cost \$75/\$85 Instructor: Nigel Sixsmith To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

Fri., April 21

• Eco-Tours: "Laughing Earth Garden Tour" Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The earth laughs in flowers." What better way to celebrate Earth Day than a guided walk through Dan Pittillo's wildflower garden in Cullowhee on this easy to moderate hike. Co-hosted by Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and The Village Green. Reservations required. \$35 donation for new friends includes the guided hike, lunch on the trail and a one year membership to Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, \$10 for HCLT members. To reserve: info.hitrust@earthlink.net or 526-1111.

Sat., April 22

• At the Nature Center, Earth Day Festivities - All Ages • 11:30 am – 4:30 pm • Free. Celebrate our planet and learn what you can do to conserve its resources! Interact with local conservation organizations, learn more about our native wildlife, and participate in animal feeding programs. For info, call 828-526-2623.

• Highlands and Gorge Road Cleanup. Meet at the Highlands Visitor Center at 9 a.m.

Fri. & Sat., May 5 & 6

• At the Nature Center, Wildflower Whimsy - Friday, May 5, 5 – 8pm. Cost: \$75 members; 828-526-2623

Sat., May 6,

• At the Highlands Biological Station, 10am – 2pm. \$100 non-members Curious about the complex interactions between these plants and their environment? Join us for Wildflower Whimsy to observe these re-markable plants and learn more about their diminutive world. All proceeds support the Highlands Biological Foundation. Speaker: Gary Kauffman, NC Fish and Wildlife Service

Fri., May 12

• Spring Wildflower Garden Tour, 12:30-3:00 Cost \$30/\$40 Tour the spring garden of Dick and Judy Allison To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

Thurs., May 12

• "Blue Valley Overflow Trek" Join us as we partner with Chattooga River Conservancy on this easy walk through the Overflow Creek Wilderness Area. Our own botanist, Dr. Gary Wein, may even help you spot the imperiled Mountain Camellia tree that is sometimes found there. Co-hosted by Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and The Village Green. Reservations required. \$35 donation for new friends includes the guided hike, lunch on the trail and a one year membership to Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, \$10 for HCLT members. To reserve: info.hitrust@earthlink.net or 526-1111.

Tue., May 16

• iOS for Beginners: The Basics for the iPad and iPhone, 10:30-3:30 Cost \$75/\$85 Instructor: Nigel Sixsmith. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

Tue., May 23

• Vladimir Putin: New Czar or Last of a Dying Breed? 10:00-12:00 Cost \$25/\$35 Presenter: Niall Michelsen. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

lands.com

Tue., May 23

• iOS for Intermediate Users: Learning more about the iPad and iPhone, 10:30-3:30 Cost \$75/\$85 Instructor: Nigel Sixsmith. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

Thur., May 25

• iOS Delving Deeper: More about the iPad & iPhone, 10:30-3:30 Cost \$75/\$85 Instructor: Nigel Sixsmith. To Register Call 526-8811 or www.clehighlands.com

May 26

• At the Nature Center, Salamander Meander - Ages 6-Adult • 9 pm – 10 pm • \$5. Join herpetologists on a night search to observe some of the area's salamanders in the wild. Registration is required. Don't forget to bring your flashlight! For

info, call 526-2221.

Tues.-Fri, May 30 – June 2,

• Plants-a-Plenty Highlands Nature Center • 828-526-2623. Ages 4 - 6 • 9 am – 11 am daily • Cost \$75 per child. Highlands is a perfect place to investigate plant biodiversity. Campers will be exposed to plant and tree basics while exploring in the Highlands Botanical Garden. From flowers to ferns, the fun is never-ending!

Tues., May 30

• Village Nature Series: Hungry Like the Wolf - Learning About Endangered Red Wolves with Ben Prater. Co-hosted by Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and The Village Green. 5:30 PM, rain or shine. For more information contact the land trust at 526-1111 or info.hitrust@earthlink.net.

At PAC live via satellite The Bolshoi Ballet on April 2



The Highlands Performing Arts Center will screen Live via Satellite from Moscow, the Bolshoi Ballet's production of A Contemporary Evening on Sunday, April 2nd at 12:55pm. Music by: Benjamin Britten, Max Richter, Ludwig van Beethoven, Leonid Desyatnikov Choreography by: Hans Van Manen, Sol León, Paul Lightfoot, Alexei Ratmansky. For one evening, the Bolshoi takes on a new challenge with audacity in Hans Van Manen's Frank Bridge's Variations, Sol León and Paul Lightfoot's Short Time Together and Alexei Ratmansky's Russian Seasons. This encounter between some of the best dancers in the world and masters of contemporary choreography results in an outstanding synthesis of bringing Van Manen's formal beauty, León and Lightfoot's intensity, and Ratmansky's witty brilliance to a new level.

The MET Opera's Nabucco will be shown on Saturday, April 8th at 12:55pm Nabucco was originally broadcast in January, but Highlands was snowed out. The MET has granted us permission to show it on April 8th. There will be a pre-opera discussion at 12:30pm led by Beverly Wichman.

Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org – at the door or by calling 828.526.9047. 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

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Spring Home Improvement

New Color Trends in Home Exteriors

(StatePoint) One of the simplest ways to make a big impact on your home's exterior is with your front door. But if you are tired of the old standards colors, you're not alone -- experts predict bolder trends this year.

"Exuberant hues will be popular this year as a way for homeowners to show the world their energy," says Kate Smith, a color trend forecaster and president of Sensational Color. "For those going for a classic feel, colors that are vibrant, yet at the same time, offer comfort, warmth and reliability will reign."

For homeowners looking to express their "color-

ful selves," consider selecting a paintable fiberglass door with a smooth finish. For example, those from Therma-Tru Classic-Craft Canvas Collection and Pulse, feature clean lines, crisp angles and attractive glass configuration options, and are ideal for adding personal expression to a home.

According to Smith, the top five door colors for the "exuberant homeowner" in 2014 include:

- Capri: A tropical blue that wakes up natural woods and neutral surroundings, this hue adds a splash of energy.

- Raucous Orange: This color demands attention with its energetic tone

and makes the perfect punctuation point for homes with a modern look.

- Dynamo: This flirty violet hue instantly updates traditional color schemes for a trendier home front.

- Relic Bronze: A deep, almost brown mustard color, "Relic Bronze" reflects aged beauty.

- Quixotic Plum: This sophisticated deep purple is where trendy meets timeless.

The top five door colors for those following the more classic trend of comfort, as identified by Smith include:

- Georgian Bay: Brighter than dark navy, this step-above reserved blue is a trusted color when it comes to the welcoming message it sends to family and friends.

- Show Stopper: Like classic red at dusk, "Show Stopper" adds a touch of mystery to this bright hue. A slight spin on traditional red, this color warmly welcomes people to a home.

- Polished Mahogany: The deep, rich shade of brown has a staying power that traverses trends and

captures a solid feeling for homeowners.

- Classic French Grey: Stepping out of the shadows to stand on its own, this cool, neutral grey will continue to rule the palette in 2014.

- Gulfstream: This bright, modern blue has an of-the-moment appeal. At the same time, it still feels rooted in something familiar and nostalgic for homeowners.

Whether you follow new trends or stick to tradition, don't forget to take your entire home's exterior into consideration. From roof to door, a "top down" approach can help you pick color combinations that are eye-pleasing and flow naturally to create curb appeal.

For tips on picking the perfect colors for your home's exterior, including the front door, download a free copy of Smith's e-book at www.thermatru.com.

This year, don't conform or be bored. With a paintable door, you can make fresh updates as often as you like.

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Spring Home Improvement

What to Know Before Replacing Home Flooring

(StatePoint) Whether you are building a new house or making upgrades on a current home, there is a lot to consider when it comes to flooring. It's important to keep in mind that the choices available have changed in recent years.

Here are some things to know.

Choose Style

When people choose flooring products, they may be ruling out a large swath of options because of the associations they have with specific materials. For example, you may not associate vinyl with luxury but new products on the market are redefining vinyl flooring, offering fashion-forward high-quality products in striking elegant designs.

Ensure Durability

If you love the look of traditional hardwood floors, consider all of your options. New vinyl technologies are

allowing homeowners to get the same elegant style engineered to withstand the wear and tear to which wood is susceptible. For example, Mohawk SolidTech, a luxury vinyl tile, has a thick, rigid construction and planks that look and feel just like real hardwood, but are designed to resist scratches, scuffs and indentation, and maintain stability under heat and temperature change. The planks also fit together to create an impenetrable lock so that the floors remain water-proof and odor-free.

Consider Maintenance

Make sure the flooring you opt for is easy to clean and requires very little maintenance. If you have pets, you may want to consider getting extra protection with a special warranty designed for pet owners, such as Mohawk's



All Pet Protection and Warranty, which covers all pets and all accidents. More information can be found at MohawkFlooring.com.

Before making flooring decisions, get savvy and

weigh all your current options. These days, it is possible to find flooring products that combine style, durability and low maintenance



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...LETTERS continued from page 8

Freedom Caucus be among those willing to work in a bi-partisan way to achieve a good result for a broad cross section of Americans? It doesn't seem likely based on what we've seen on healthcare and so many other issues. Do they believe that their constituents really want them to vote "no" on every bill that is not a big tax break for the wealthiest 1%, or a big cut to any spending

programs that aren't for defense or a border wall?

If that turns out to be the case, remember it when you decide which citizens to send to Washington when election time comes around in 2018.

Dan Chasins
Cashiers, NC

Art Scholarship Applicants Sought

The Arts Council of Macon County will accept applications through May 1 for its annual \$1000 Jinny Jones Arts Scholarship. Guidelines and application forms are available from the Council or any Macon County high school guidance office. Macon County residents of all ages wishing to pursue a college degree in the performing, literary, or visual/graphic arts, or in arts education may apply. All applicants must submit to an in-person interview on Thursday afternoon, May 18. The recipient is chosen on the basis of talent, commitment, career aspirations, and financial need.

The scholarship was established in 1988 to help talented and deserving Macon County residents prepare for a career in the arts. For more information contact any high school guidance office or the Arts Council, 524-ARTS or arts4all@dnet.net.

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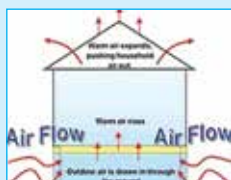
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Do you need to declutter your real estate portfolio?

"The question of what you want to own is actually the question of how you want to live your life."

~ Marie Kondo

About five weeks ago, I chose to begin a 30-day experiment as a Vegan. Thirty days in, I was feeling so good physically, mentally, and spiritually, that I extended my experiment to an additional 30 days, plus also removed all caffeine, sugar, gluten, and alcohol from my diet for the same period of time. My friends jokingly asked, "What's left?" – but, I knew I was on to something.

I began noticing that I was no longer willing to tolerate anything that was not a complete fit with how I want to live my life, and I began making other positive choices. Among those changes was a highly-energized decluttering episode of my home. To be sure, I am not one who typically has a lot of clutter in my environment – I tend to operate in the other direction (donating/recycling/throwing away are some of my favorite pastimes). I got very clear on what I wanted to keep, and what I wanted to release. If items were not used at least monthly, out they went.

In her book, *The Magical Art of Tidying Up*, Marie Kondo writes about what happens when you become very intentional as to what you keep in your life. If an item does not bring you complete joy, or is not one you absolutely love, it goes. What remains are things that make your heart sing and lift your energy. Gone are the energy Hoovers and drags on your daily happiness. Kondo asserts this process has a magical domino effect on the rest of your life, bringing you more joy and alignment in every aspect of your existence.

Taking a nod from Kondo, I believe investors should apply the same principles to their real estate portfolios. That is, I advocate that investors should go through each and every holding and give it rigorous scrutiny. Outline your financial, lifestyle, and personal goals and apply the Kondo test to each property you own (whether it is a second home or a primary residence). I have developed a real estate performance calculator that facilitates this process, but for the purposes of this writing, I'll give you a simple set of criteria:



Susie deVillie
Owner/BIC
White Oak Realty Group

1) How many days per year are we using the property?

2) What are the true expenses to carry this property?

3) What are the hidden expenses to carry this property (for example, time spent on weekends/holidays fixing things and tending to lawns/gardens, and/or feeling the odd pressure to use the property more often given your investment level when you'd actually prefer to spend your time elsewhere)?

4) Have you outgrown the property or need to downsize?

5) Is the area one that continues to call your heart (for example, many investors are leaving hotter, congested, coastal areas in favor of cooler climates, less traffic and more peaceful communities)?

6) What is our cap rate if using the property as a rental? What is our long-term upside in appreciation?

If you determine after your analysis that the property doesn't pass the Kondo test and is no longer a fit with your goals and objectives, consider doing a 1031 tax-deferred exchange. You can sell the properties that do not fit and reinvest your sale proceeds, tax-free, in new properties (it must be a true, like-kind exchange) that do fit. Please note: there are certain requirements that must be met when doing a 1031 exchange, and you will want an attorney, a CPA, a qualified intermediary, and your real estate agent working in concert to assist you throughout the process.

Life is short. There is no better time than now to really get clear about what it is you want in your life, what it is you want to let go of, and what you want to bring in. Be certain that every property you own brings you immense joy and a great return financially. Perhaps you will also see magic appear in other areas of your life as well.

• *Susie deVillie, ME, ABR, SFR, is Owner/Broker-in-Charge of White Oak Realty Group. Her areas of expertise include real estate investments, niche marketing, social media, and strategic property positioning. An expert in entrepreneurship and anthropology, Susie applies her acumen in human behavior toward negotiating and advocating on behalf of her clients. White Oak Realty Group's sales office is located at 125 South Fourth Street in the heart of the retail district in Highlands. For more information, visit WhiteOakRG.com or call (828) 526-8118.*

• REAL ESTATE SNAPSHOTS •

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Great family home just off a paved, state maintained road with a nice yard and recreation court for outdoor living plus 2-car garage. Huge living room with stone fireplace and bath, powder room, laundry room, huge master suite. Upper level features 3 bedrooms, office, large bath. Crow's nest features large room with built ins and a full bath. Offered at \$485,000. mls #85176



Wildwood Mountain home loaded with custom features. Main level features wood floors and a flowing floor plan. Living room with stone fireplace and covered porch. Custom kitchen. Master suite and 2 guest rooms in the upper level and 2 baths. \$399,000. Additional lot available. mls #85417



5 bed 5 bath home in Highlands Country Club. Seller has golf membership. 45 KW Generator. Sophisticated irrigation system which allows full property irrigation Offered at \$1,495,000. mls #85242



Located on a nice level lot with good mountain view. 3 bed 2 bath all on one level. Workshop and carport. Offered at \$275,000. mls #85026



Great family home with spacious layout. Main level living with oversized 2-car garage and guest bedroom. Open kitchen and living area with fireplace. Porch and patio. Large master suite with huge bath. Lower level family room, bedroom & bath. Offered at \$389,000. mls #85367



Mill Creek Village! Total remodel and walk to town! 3 bed, 3 bath home. One level living with a split floor plan. Living room has vaulted ceiling and stone fireplace. Fully updated kitchen and separate dining area. Covered porch overlooks small private yard. 2-car garage. Offered at \$575,000. mls #85272



Chef's kitchen, New wiring-electric upgrade to 200 amp, new heating, 30-yr. shingle roof, enlarged MBR, new deck. Propane HWH. Insulated pipes. Public water and a view! Offered at \$195,000. MLS #85055



Great starter features 3 bedrooms and 3 baths. All on one level with a 2 car garage. Deck with easy access. Electric heat with a propane heater. Open living dining area. . Offered at \$159,000. mls #85076



Completely remodeled and updated 3 bedroom, 2 bath. Large master suite with his/her baths, double shower. Large deck, burning fireplace, end of the road privacy! Waterfall! Adjoining lot available for sale. Offered at \$725,000 mls #85410



Historic Joe Webb 2 bedroom 2 bath log cabin remodeled in 2016. New septic for 3 bedrooms, lower level could be finished off. Great views. Original home built 1929-'32. Original bedroom and living room has wood burning fireplace, and dining bar area has gas fireplace. Offered at \$595,000. mls #85267



Cozy 3 bed 2 bath log home on over an acre of land. Open floor plan with hardwood floors, rock fireplace, skylights. Recently upgraded bathrooms. Open deck and screened porch with woods and mountain views. 10 minutes to town. Offered at \$225,000. mls #84920



3 bed plus den 4 baths. Exceptional mountain view. Beautifully landscaped yard. Old mountain charm on 4.71 acres with pond and great gardens. Offered at \$1,150,000. mls #85028



3 bed, 3 baths and a loft. Views of Whiteside, Shortoff, the Fish Hawks, Billy Cabin and Flat Mountain. Stunning. Being sold furnished except for a few things. In town on Little Bear Pen Mountain. Huge deck Offered at \$495,000. mls #85411



French country home on over four acres with a view of Satulah Mountain. Two master suites; fireplaces in the kitchen, living room and screened porch; dining room, open deck. Family room and two more rooms downstairs. Close to town on Billy Cabin Road. Offered at \$1,100,000. mls #80665



2 bed 2 bath rondette is waiting for a new owner. Don't miss this one at an exceptional price! Offered at \$160,000. mls #84899



Own a piece of history in Joe Webb's original farmhouse. Lovely grounds with garden spot, Pasture, and stable. Farmhouse is year-round living with many upgrades. 3 bed, 3 baths, study, screened porch with root cellar. Offered at \$649,000. mls #84955

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

Reynolds Foundation gives \$50,000 to Hospice House Foundation

Hospice House Foundation of WNC (HHFWNC) recently announced that it has received a \$50,000 grant from the Richard J. Reynolds, III and Marie M. Reynolds Foundation in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The grant supports the construction of a hospice inpatient facility in Franklin, NC.

HHFWNC has made significant progress towards its mission of bringing a Hospice House to the western NC/northeast GA region:

1. Certificate of Need granted to HHFWNC and Four Seasons Compassion for Life1 by the State of NC.
2. Established partnership with Four Seasons to manage day-to-day operations of the future Hospice House (SECU Hospice House).
3. Purchased home on 2.8 acres in the town of Franklin, NC – the site for SECU Hospice House.
4. Received \$1 million challenge grant from NC State Employees' Credit Union (SECU).
5. Received \$300,000 challenge grant from an anonymous individual.
6. Raised \$1.4 million toward \$5 million project goal, in addition to the two challenge grants totaling \$1.3 million.
7. Pre-construction engineering work has been completed or is in progress, including a survey of the site for the future hospice house, the preparation of construction documents, and the solicitation and evaluation of cost estimates.

1 Four Seasons is a not-for-profit, providing hospice care for 35 years. They serve roughly 1,500 hospice patients annually in western North Carolina and have 17 years of experience in the development, management and operations of hospice inpatient facilities. Four Seasons currently operates a 19-bed hospice house, Elizabeth House, in Flat Rock, NC (Henderson County) where they are based.

SECU Hospice House, with six patient suites, will serve hospice patients from the six far western counties of North Carolina (Macon, Jackson, Swain, Graham, Clay, and Cherokee), the Qualla Boundry, and northeast Georgia. HHFWNC anticipates serving roughly 200 hospice patients per year. All hospice patients requiring inpatient care and qualifying respite care, regardless of their hospice provider or ability to pay, will be eligible for care at the future Franklin facility.

Hospice houses are dedicated to expert end-of-life care, as is their staff...without the additional responsibility of providing curative care for other patients as is the case with nursing homes and hospitals. In addition to pain and symptom management, hospice's interdisciplinary team provides emotional and spiritual support for the patient and their loved ones. Hospice houses help ensure life's final journey is one of peace, comfort, and dignity.

Michele Alderson, President of Hospice House Foundation of WNC, expressed her excitement and extreme gratitude for the Reynolds Foundation's generous grant. Ms. Alderson cited the critical need for a hospice inpatient facility in the region, adding that currently the closest hospice houses are well over an hour's drive for most people in western NC and northeast GA.

To learn how you can support this important community initiative, contact HHFWNC's President, Michele Alderson, at 828-524-6375. Donations may be in the form of cash, 3-5 year pledges, stock/bonds, or planned gifts (bequests). For cash gifts, make checks payable to: Hospice House Foundation of WNC, P.O. Box 815, Franklin, NC 28744. Donations may also be made on line at www.hhfwnc.org. Hospice House Foundation of WNC, Inc. is a not for profit, 501(c)3; donations are entirely tax deductible.

Governor Cooper highlights NC GROW free community college scholarship proposal in Asheville

ASHEVILLE: Governor Roy Cooper today highlighted his proposed NC GROW (Getting Ready for Opportunities in the Workforce) Scholarship to help make North Carolina a Top 10 Educated state by 2025. Starting next year, good students who graduated high school with a 2.0 GPA or higher would get free tuition to any NC community college through the NC GROW scholarship. NC GROW would cover last-dollar tuition and fees for students who have used up other financial aid options.

Touring Linamar's Asheville location with representatives from Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (A-B Tech), Governor Cooper also lauded workforce training programs working to ensure students are ready for a 21st century jobs.

A-B Tech and Linamar have a strong partnership that shows how community colleges can work with local industry to train North Carolinians for available jobs. Since announcing an Asheville facility in 2011, A-B Tech worked with Linamar to provide training programs through the state's Customized Training Program. A-B Tech also has various short term 15-week training programs to place students and recent graduates into positions at Linamar.

In fiscal year 2015-2016, A-B Tech trained 149 people.

Expanding access to community college will benefit North Carolina's economy. Since the recession, 95 percent of newly-created jobs have required more education than a high-school diploma. North Carolina's community college system provides high-quality workforce training that prepares students for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

In addition to the NC Grow Scholarship, Governor Cooper's budget invests \$18 million in workforce training, with up to \$1,000 in financial assistance available per student to pursue non-credit, short-term workforce credentials.

The Governor's proposed budget makes other critical investments in education including early childhood education, K-12 schools and higher education, with the goal of making North Carolina a Top 10 Educated State by 2025. His budget also includes an average 10 percent pay raise for teachers over the next two years, an annual school supply stipend of \$150 for each classroom teacher, and the Best and Brightest Scholarship to draw talented students into teaching.

NC State legislators introduce the 'Efficient and Affordable Energy Rates Bill

On Tuesday, March 21, a group of North Carolina state legislators filed a bill to implement a program that will change the economics of energy and speed up the transformation to energy efficiency and solar energy in an effort to address the urgency of climate change on a meaningful scale.

The Efficient and Affordable Energy Rates Bill, H427/S236, directs the NC Utilities Commission to implement a system of inverted, tiered-block rate structures for residential, commercial and industrial electrical ratepayers. This type of rate program has been successfully implemented in other states and nations to dramatically reduce state-wide energy consumption while promoting new industries and creating thousands of well-paying jobs in fields related to energy auditing, energy efficiency, rooftop solar and co-generation systems.

Inverted tiered-block rate structures provide lower rates and reward those who are

efficient in their energy usage. Those who are wasteful and use more energy during the course of each month will pay a higher rate as their consumption moves into the next higher tiered-block of energy usage.

In addition, the legislation creates an Energy Efficiency Bank that will provide low-interest loans to ratepayers for energy efficiency projects and rooftop solar energy systems. The loans are administered through monthly utility bills, eliminating up-front costs for the home, business or industrial efficiency improvements. Monthly utility bills including the loan payments will be lower immediately, due to the lucrative savings in energy usage. Once the loan is paid off the consumer realizes a dramatic reduction in monthly energy costs.

"The Efficient and Affordable Energy Rates Bill outlines the economic mechanism needed to transform and modernize our

• See **ENERGY** page 22



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•BIZ/ORG NEWS•



From left: Eric Araujo, Phillip Price, and Will Barclift at Antique Reclaimed Lumber, Nebo, NC

Regional connections spur Bascom-Greenway Public Art Project

Construction of three site-specific sculptures at The Bascom Art Center is underway. Progress is aided by a recent material donation from Antique Reclaimed Lumber LLC, Nebo, North Carolina, and student volunteers from Western Carolina University.

The Bascom's second annual Sculpture Fellowship began on March 1. The Sculpture Fellow, Brooklyn-based artist Eric Araujo, will construct two sculptural benches and one arching sculpture to signify the new rear entrance to The Bascom's trail, near the Oak Lane trailhead of the Highlands Plateau Greenway.

On March 9, Araujo traveled with Bascom Director of Community Outreach Will Barclift to the reclaimed lumber farm in Nebo. There, they were greeted by owners Phillip and Michelle Price, who toured them through the heaping piles of barn wood and metal scraps that constitute the 20-acre property of Antique Reclaimed Lumber – in addition to the Price family home, a lake, and a woodshop. Araujo and Barclift spent a full day selecting, stacking, sawing, and loading a substantial assortment of lumber, which was given in-kind to The Bascom. Noteworthy in the inventory are five 2-inch by 12-foot live-edge poplar slabs, one 3-inch by 12-foot live-edge ash slab with crotch, 300 board feet of 2-inch mixed species wood of varying widths, and 12 feet of 16-inch by 14-inch beams. The donation is valued over \$3,500.

Now that the lumber has arrived, The Bascom is seeking community assistance to prepare the materials and trail for construction. Nine student volunteers from Western Carolina University's Center for Service Learning have volunteered to assist Araujo on March 29 in order to de-nail and clean the boards. Participating students include Anabelle Cockrell, Emily Huff, Briana Jolly, Lauren Joy, Ross Lenard, Derek Moose, Taylor Samuels, Anna St. Onge, Nathan West, and Brendan Best. The WCU Center for Service Learning provides transportation for students to travel off-campus to participate in reciprocal community engagement initiatives throughout the region.

The Bascom and the Highlands Plateau Greenway are seeking additional financial support from the community to underwrite the cost of additional steel tubing and to pay for the artist's incidentals. Contributions made are eligible for naming and/or dedication opportunities and are 100% tax deductible. To become a sponsor or volunteer for The Bascom Sculpture Fellowship please contact Director of Community Outreach, Will Barclift at 828-787-2897.

The Bascom is a 501(c)3 led by a professional 21 person Board of Directors. The Visual Arts Center focuses on providing excellent exhibitions with free admission; a robust education department which features classes and workshops for people of all ages; and an expansive community outreach program. For more information about The Bascom, please visit www.thebascom.org.

•THE INK PEN•

Where's Spot?

"It's spring and there are babies everywhere. Baby birds, baby flower buds and baby people!"

When I read that blurb in the Atlanta paper as a lead-in for baby products to buy, I smiled and thought of my go-to baby gift—"Where's Spot."

Are you a Spot fan? If you were born in 1980 or later, you were likely raised on the Spot books. Eric Hill's books brought joy to a generation of children, beginning with the first one, "Where's Spot?" I discovered Spot, not as a child, but as an adult in search of a book for a one-year-old. I gave the book to that child in 1983, and it became my go-to baby gift ever after.

Though lift-the-flap books existed prior to the publication of "Where's Spot?" that book popularized the concept for children's books. The next few Spot books were all lift-the-flap style, but the author soon branched out into board books. Last year when I bought a baby gift for a friend's first grandchild, I also found a snugly stuffed Spot toy to accompany the books.

The first little girl I gave the book to was the oldest of nine children, and I loved her Mom's story of reinforcing the flaps with clear packing tape so they would hold up as the book was passed down the line. I continued to give the book here and there and eventually stumbled across the 25th Anniversary Edition when I was headed to a baby shower. I was astonished to realize I'd been buying the book for so many years.

I was happy to hear Spot had become the favorite of another friend's grandson when I gave him the books a few years back, but it wasn't until I got a thank you card this year that I learned just how popular Spot had been. These parents told me that they had both grown up with Spot and were



Kathy Manos Penn

looking forward to introducing him to their newborn.

It makes sense that children love Spot, as the author originally wrote and designed the Spot book to entertain his three year-old son. His son was so delighted with Spot that Mr. Hill went on to seek a publisher. In today's world of complicated books with interactive pieces, it's hard to believe that it took some work to find a company that would take a chance on the

flap concept. His puppy character soon won the hearts of children everywhere. After the debut of "Where's Spot?" letters began to roll in requesting that the story continue. And so it did with Spot going to the park, having a birthday, celebrating Christmas and more. I had to laugh when I read that Mr. Hill had begun referring to himself as Spot's Dad.

Who knows what further adventures await Spot? He now has a baby sister, has learned to count and has been to the farm, and it looks like we're well on our way to another generation growing up with this popular puppy. Not long ago, a friend in search of a baby gift decided to go with "Where's Spot," thinking the newborn might already have today's popular books, and this one would have a better chance of being a unique gift. If you're in search of a gift for a newborn or toddler, try wrapping up a Spot book to make the whole family smile.

Kathy Manos Penn is a Sandy Springs resident now happily retired from a corporate career in communications. Find her book, "The Ink Penn: Celebrating the Magic in the Everyday," locally at The Molly Grace or on Kathy's website at www.theinkpenn.com. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com.



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• BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NEWS •



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Kenton David introduced speaker Carol Mullarkey, RN and Clinical Director, from the Smoky Mountain Pregnancy Care Clinic. The organization has two locations, both in Franklin and Cullowhee, NC. The clinics provide diagnostic testing to confirm pregnancy as well as emotional support to their clients. Appropriate referrals are made for medical care as needed.

Mission Health launches 'Mission My Care Now,' walk-in access to primary care

Mission Health announces the launch of a new initiative called Mission "My Care Now," ensuring patients can access primary care services when they need it most – outside of normal business hours and on the weekends – and with no appointment necessary.

To avoid racking up medical bills at the emergency room, or long waits and higher copays at local urgent care facilities, consider walk-in care at Mission My Care Now. With four locations across western North Carolina, you can be seen for symptoms spanning

colds and flu to minor injuries. You don't need an appointment and your bill will be processed as a primary care visit – saving you from those higher bills for emergency or urgent care visits.

Locations and hours of operation:

Mission My Care Now Angel,
195 Franklin Plaza Drive,
Franklin, NC 28734

Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–5:30 pm; Saturdays, 8 am–noon;

Sundays, 10 am–2 pm

Call (828) 213-4444 or visit MissionMyCareNow.org for more information.

AARP is glad health care bill failed

In a statement today, AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeaMond applauded the withdrawal of the House health care legislation that would have harmed millions of older Americans and their families:

"The leadership's decision to withdraw the bill from consideration proves that the voices of Americans are very powerful. This harmful legislation would have added an Age Tax on older Americans and put vulnerable populations at risk.

"Instead of this harmful bill,

we encourage Congress to focus on the issues important to older Americans and their families, including: protecting and improving Medicare's benefits and financing; providing access to affordable quality coverage; preventing insurers from engaging in discriminatory practices; lowering prescription drug costs; providing new incentives to expand home and community based services; and strengthening efforts to fight fraud, waste, and abuse.

AARP North Carolina Director Doug Dickerson added, "North Carolinians would have been hit especially hard by this proposal. According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, health care premiums would double for people in many counties in the state accounting for too large of a portion of household income. We thank those who stood firm for the affordability of care.

"AARP will continue to oppose legislation that would impose an Age Tax on older Americans, weaken Medicare, erode seniors' ability to live independently because of billions of dollars in Medicaid cuts, and give sweetheart deals to drug and insurance companies while doing nothing to lower the cost of health care or prescription drugs."

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Spirituality of Work



Rev. Dr. Francis Xavier Arockiasamy, Ph.D., (Physics) B.Th.
Our Lady of the Mountains Catholic Church,

Work is an important activity in both our physical and spiritual lives. What is the need for doing work? Is there any purpose to working? Is it necessary or compulsory to work? Do you raise these questions in your life? There are answers. Every human being is called to work for one or more reasons: for survival economically, for supporting family or the needy, for physical exercise of the body, for helping others. Let us enlighten our mind and heart on the spirituality of work looking to physical science as well as to the Holy Bible.

In Physics, work is the transfer of energy to an object by the application of force that causes the object to move in the direction of the force. Work is calculated by multiplying Force by the Distance over which the force is applied. The force used to accomplish work must be applied in the direction of the object's motion. The Work equation is as follows:

$$\text{Work} = \text{Force} \times \text{Distance} \quad (\text{or}) \quad W = Fd.$$

In order to compare this physical law of work to work in our spiritual life, let us refer to Creation in the Holy Bible. The book of Genesis teaches, "In the beginning ... God created the heavens and the earth". (Genesis 1:1.) God is the external and internal force having a purpose of creating all that is on earth and in the heavens. In addition, His creation was made with a purpose of its own: to reflect God's glory. Humanity fulfills this purpose when it loves and serves God. God also blessed humanity by giving Adam and Eve good work to do, saying, "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it". (Genesis 1:28.) "The Lord then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it." (Genesis 2:15)

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they gave up the pleasant, productive, satisfying and rewarding work he had initially blessed them with. Instead they, and we, are cursed to hard, unpleasant, frustrating work just for survival. "To the man he said. 'Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat, cursed be the ground because of you! In toil shall you eat its yield all the days of your life'". (Genesis 3:17.) Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God's word, hard work entered the life of mankind.

In the second letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Paul teaches on work saying, "... we instructed you that if

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 21

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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...TRUMP from page 1

drastically cut or eliminate altogether programs and initiatives that are critical to the economic health of North Carolina communities from Appalachia to the Outer Banks.

Macon County Commissioner Ronnie Beale believes

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 19

anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat" (2 Thessalonian 3:10). St. Paul tells us, too, to work hard for the ministry of God.

We see in the New Testament of the Bible that, in his early years, Jesus himself worked with his earthly father, Joseph, in the job of carpenter. Jesus also asks us to work for the kingdom of God. He places importance on work. Most important, though is that Jesus came to do the redemptive work of God (Luke 4: 18-21). The core of spirituality of His work is to bring back all the people to God.

Physical work, then, is a permanent feature of humankind's design and destiny. Work was initiated in the Garden of Eden and it will continue in the next age. Our mandate is to do the work in a manner that glorifies God. This is the spirituality of work in human life.

The work of God is to apply His creative and sustaining force on mankind multiplied by the distance in the relationship between Him and humanity. This force-times-distance is the core of spirituality on mankind. In a sense, those who are open to God require less work in His part.

In summary, the physics of spirituality consists of the ascending level of human consciousness of God's presence in ourselves and in the work of Creation. God promised mankind to send a redeemer, Jesus Christ the Son of God. Jesus did the work of redemption to eliminate the factor of Distance bringing humankind back to God.

the impact to Macon County would be widespread, with President Trump's proposed budget impacting everything from regional economic development initiatives to the public school system.

"The first budget proposal we have seen will impact several areas in Macon County," said Beale. "From a local perspective, not even a political perspective, people in rural areas across the country, in places like Macon County, should be paying attention to this budget and the effect it could have."

Beale noted that one of the most significant cuts to impact WNC and Macon County would be proposed cuts to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), an organization that has been around since 1965.

Trump's budget proposes eliminating ARC, an independent agency set up "to address the persistent poverty and growing economic despair of the Appalachian Region."

Since October 2015, the ARC has invested \$175.7 million in 662 projects around the region, with a disproportionate focus on "distressed" counties and coal towns. The organization provides grants for everything from highways to broadband infrastructure. According to Beale, most recently the ARC provided Macon County with grants to address affordable housing needs in the community.

Beale noted that the Southwestern Commission passed a resolution on Monday night opposing the budget's proposal of eliminating the ARC because of the vital importance it plays in WNC.

While Trump's budget would impact public housing across the country, Beale said the proposed cuts to the Public Housing Capital Fund will directly impact programs in Macon County such as the weatherization program.

Nationally, as many as 20–30 million U.S. families are eligible for weatherization services. The program enables low-income families to reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. Funds are used to improve the energy performance of dwellings of families in need, using the most advanced technologies and testing procedures available in the housing industry. Trump's budget would mean eliminating the program locally.

The budget also proposes \$6 million in cuts to the Housing and Urban Development, something Beale said would impact low-income families and senior citizens in Macon County.

"Our low-income families and our senior citizens depend on the federal rental assistance programs through HUD and any cuts to that would directly impact those groups here in Macon County," said Beale. "Cutting those programs would have a huge effect in Macon County and on our residents."

Trump's proposed cuts to Community Block Grants would impact programs such as Meals On Wheels which regularly depend on those federal funding programs.

"The three percent cut to Meals and Wheels — we aren't sure if that's a straight cut or how it would be applied -- but for our Meals On Wheels program to continue to grow at a rate we never expected, any cut would be detrimental," said Beale. "We don't know how that cut would translate into dollars, but we do know that it would be substantial."

Another area Beale is concerned about is public education and a shift in funding for charter schools of public

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...ENERGY continued from page 16

electrical energy system to meet the demands of our climate-challenged future,” explains Avram Friedman, the Executive Director of The Canary Coalition. “We’re moving in this direction anyway, but this legislation provides a framework to smooth the pathways and speed up the process. Inverted rates combined with low-interest loans for investment in efficiency make the transition profitable and easy for everyone, while generating jobs and ushering in a new, prosperous green-energy economy for our state. This is a no-brainer. It’s a non-partisan, pro-business, pro-people approach to modernizing our energy system and addressing climate change in a comprehensive manner.”

...TRUMP continued from page 21

education.

“When those charter schools turn students away for whatever reason, or operate with no accountability and not having to answer to anyone, public schools are going to be the ones to open their doors and accept those students, but there won’t be funds in the budget to adequately do it,” aid Beale.

Trump’s budget cuts funds to after-school programs and according to Beale, decreases funding for teacher training, something he believes is essential.

“We have great teachers here in Macon County and that is partially because of the federal dollars and programs for teacher training that is now being proposed to be

cut,” said Beale. We need those funds to continue to retain quality teachers and to educate our students.”

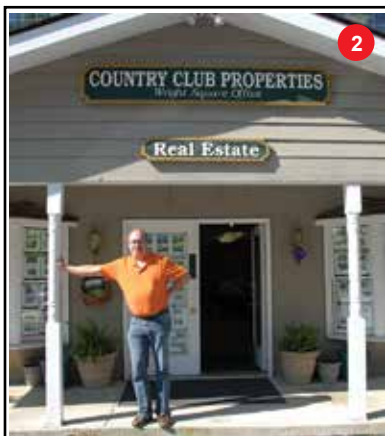
“This isn’t a political opinion,” said Beale. “We anticipate that this budget will go through a lot of cycles and we anticipate a lot of changes; but everyone in Macon County needs to be paying close attention because it affects a lot of our folks, especially our lower income citizens, our elderly, and our students. We are also worried that cuts on the federal level will be passed down to the state which becomes something the county is going to have to make up for, and we just don’t have the money do that.”

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