

# Highlands Newspaper

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

Thursday, Aug. 6, 2020

## Highlands School schedule firms up

By Brittney Lofthouse

The 2020-'21 school year may begin a little differently for Highlands School students on August 17, but Principal Brian Jetter hopes that by the third week

of school, all students will be in school for in-person instruction four days a week.

For the first two weeks of school, Highlands will slowly introduce students back to the class-

room, keeping social distancing in mind. The staggered start will allow time for students to familiarize themselves with changes throughout the school as a result

• See **SCHEDULE** page 11

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## Wilkes is running for Board of Ed

By Brittney Lofthouse

Highlands will have new representation on the Macon County Board of Education this Fall since incumbent Stephanie McCall did not file for re-election.

McCall was first appointed to the board in 2009 to fill the seat vacated by Frieda Bennet. She was then reelected to the board in 2010 and went on to finish the remaining time of Bennet's terms. McCall was then re-elected in 2012 and again in serving a total of 12 years on the Board of Education by the end of her term.

With candidate filing for the Board of Education wrapping up the first week in July, Hilary Wilkes filed for the Highlands seat on the board. With no challengers, Wilkes will replace McCall this November.

Wilkes and her husband Christopher have owned the Highland Hiker since 2013, taking

• See **WILKES** page 12



Highlands School's Class of 2020 commencement ceremony took place Saturday on the track at the school.

## Highlands School sends off the Class of 2020 at outdoor graduation

By Brian O'Shea  
Plateau Daily News

After a chaotic year cut short due to COVID-19, Highlands School was finally able to hold an outdoor graduation ceremony on Saturday celebrating the Class of 2020.

Graduates and their families were spread out on the end of the track to maintain social distancing,



Principal Brian Jetter addresses the class.

and students gave Principal Brian Jetter an elbow bump after receiving their diplomas.

Vice Principal Sarah Holbrooks said the ceremony turned out beautifully.

"It was a special time for our seniors and their families," said Holbrooks. "The way everything flowed was even better than we

• See **GRADUATION** page 18

## Guard changes at Mountain Findings

*Hill family steps back; business is still brisk*

It took a retired navy submariner to take over the controls at Mountain Findings Thrift Store from Gladys McDowell and Larry Brannen, keep it in tip-top shape and navigate it through the uncharted waters of the future.

It started in 2008 when husband and wife Tom and Rose Hill, familiar and constant faces at the store and in the Mountain Findings box truck tooling around town, decided to move from the position of volunteers to president-couple.

"The need was there and no one willing to do it so we stepped in," said Hill.

Tom and Rose have been volunteering at Mountain Find-

• See **GUARD** page 16

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### NC DOT issues explained

I attended the Transportation Advisory Committee of the Southwestern Commission last Thursday by way of ZOOM. As always NCDOT Division 14 staff were present, along with county and municipal elected officials.

In a previous article I noted that NCDOT was functionally bankrupt for the time being, and that road projects and road maintenance were suspended. Also, NCDOT staff are being furloughed without pay and are not allowed to even discuss DOT business while on furlough.

A primary function of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is for us to assign priority points to proposed DOT projects in the seven-county WNC region. We were to finalize our prioritization for this year at this meeting, but it became simply an exercise since no new paving projects will be funded in the near term.

I promoted two new projects for Highlands. First, is a project to improve the intersection at NC 28, Satulah Road and S. 4th Street. The second is to get sidewalks



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

built on the corridors coming into town, with the top one being NC 106. The sidewalks would not require the widening of the roads, but they would provide safer pedestrian passage. Folks who work in town are already walking on the sides of these highways. Both these projects do not have any assigned points at this time.

Road paving projects that have been let previous to this DOT shutdown will move forward. But, NCDOT has basically shutdown because funds went below the minimum reserves required by law. How did this happen?

There were several triggers that put the department in this crisis. First, in the past few years, hurricanes hitting the eastern part of the state caused DOT to divert resources to emergency repairs, etc. Second, with the robust economy, cost estimates for road projects shot through the roof. Finally, the COVID-19 Pandemic severely impacted revenues, especially in April, May and into June. Much of the DOT revenue is driven by motor fuel taxes. During these months, gasoline taxes went down to an all-time low to a minus 42%. In short, DOT experienced a perfect storm that depleted its treasury.

At the TAC meeting I expressed my concern that basic road maintenance was not being done. One staff member acknowledged the problem, and he told us that they had to park their equipment because there aren't funds to buy fuel. He stressed they were doing only critical, emergency maintenance. There are several problem areas in

•See MAYOR page 11

### Highlands Newspaper

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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.

## • HIC'S VIEW •







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HIC

"YUM, IT'S TAKE OUT TONIGHT.  
FIND ANY WINE?"

## • WEATHER •

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## • NOTICE •

The Highlands Newspaper office at 256 Oak Street is temporarily closed. We are going through some renovations and updates, and plan to be back open in a few weeks with new and improved facilities.

In the meantime, we are working out of our home office. To contact us – as always – please email [highlandseditor@aol.com](mailto:highlandseditor@aol.com) or call 828-200-1371.

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by Old Edwards

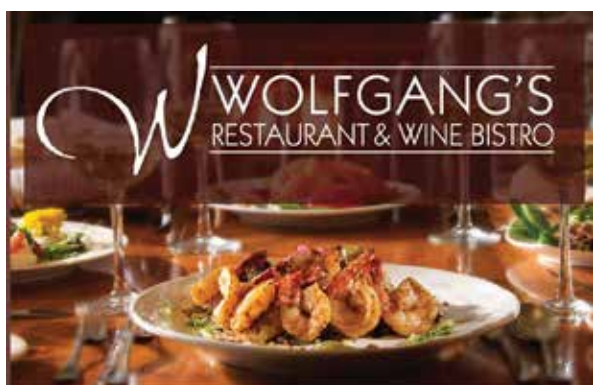
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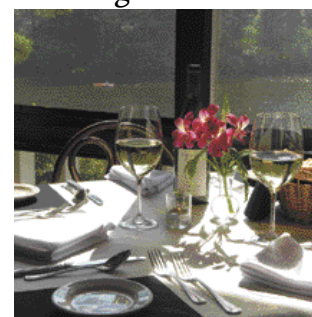
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# • LETTERS •

## I still say 'Masks are not necessary'

Dear Editor,

I stand by everything I said in my letter in the July 9th edition entitled "Not Everyone can wear a mask" about the useless, ineffective masks.

For those who "took me to task" over my last letter to the paper, you seem to be missing some information, information which is readily available to you. The manufacturers of those little masks that most of you are wearing admit that they do not protect the user from covid 19. Why do you not take their word for it? And in addition to lung problems which make it dangerous to wear one there are other reasons why someone might not be wearing them. Here are some for you to consider.

- That woman you shamed in the grocery store, because she wasn't wearing a mask? She already feels enough shame because she was raped. Having something over her nose & mouth triggers her PTSD and causes her to relive that trauma.

- That man at the Quicke Mart who you called selfish? He's a volunteer firefighter, and just came from the ER, after being treated for smoke inhalation. He removed his air mask, in order to help a child breathe fresh air, instead of thick smoke.

- That elderly lady who you screamed at to put a mask on, or shop when it's her turn? Her husband of 60 years just passed away. She's doing her best to learn to live

• See LETTERS page 7



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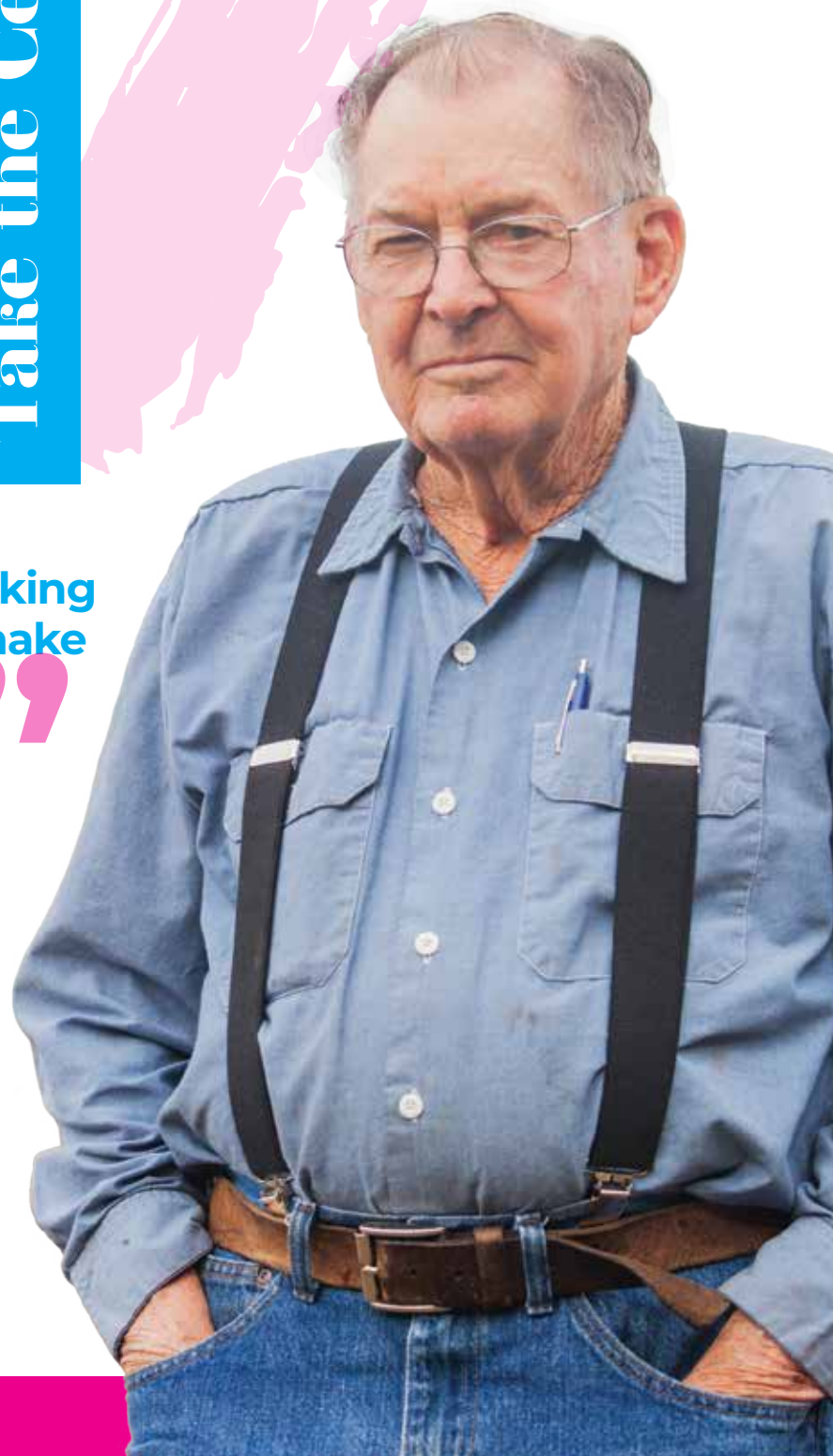
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## ...LETTERS continued from page 5

alone. Every breath is physically painful, due to her grief.

- That little boy you lectured about removing his mask? He's autistic. He doesn't understand. He simply wants it off of his face.

- That little girl who screams when somebody tries to mask her? She's claustrophobic. She came from an abusive home, where she was confined to a closet.

There are all sorts of reasons for not wearing a mask. Not all are lung, or immune system related.

How many of you are among those shaming, name calling, and berating complete strangers, or worse, family members? How many of you are against bullying?

If you are among the first group, and align with the second, you may want to pump the brakes, and check yourself ... you have become the bully you claim to be against.

Wearing a mask does not make you a kind person. You are either a kind person, or you aren't. A piece of cloth does not determine that trait.

On the flipside, not wearing a mask does not make a person selfish, or inconsiderate. It simply means that there may be an unseen reason why they cannot wear one. You don't know their story, and, to be quite honest, it's none of your business.

Certainly, there are people who wear masks and who don't act like those I am talking about. But with the exception of the good people who wear masks and mind their own business, it seems to me that there are only two benefits to be derived from wearing a mask.

(1) A false sense of security, and

(2) a holier than thou attitude toward those who don't wear them. But if you can pretend that the mask you are wearing protects you then you can also pretend that everyone is wearing one.

Danny Crane  
Highlands

## A Heartwarming Story

Dear Editor,

In 1857 William S. Pitts was traveling from Wisconsin to Iowa to meet his future wife. At Bradford, Iowa, he walked down Cedar Street while horses were being changed on the stagecoach and saw a little plot of land surrounded by trees. He

• See LETTERS page 12

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## DOGSPEAK

### • LORD BANJO REFLECTIONS •

#### How dare they call me old!

Sure, I've begun to stumble as I climb the stairs to the second floor, but I still climb 'em. And, yes, sometimes, Mum has to come down, touch me on my head, and coax me up. Sure, I occasionally fall on to my belly coming up the three steps to the front porch, but I never complain.

I bet none of this would have been an issue if I hadn't visited the vet for my annual checkup and shots. She told Mum I had muscle atrophy or something strange, and added I had something both my pet parents have — arthritis. She told Mum I was in pain.

What does she know? I never said a word. I'm a big boy. I just suck it up and keep on keeping on. But noooo. Now, I have to take anti-inflammatory drugs twice a day. The good news is these taste pretty good. That means Mum doesn't resort to cramming them down my throat. Thank goodness for small favors.

Mum and Dad also talk about me having dementia — whatever that is. Mum calls me squirrel dog, and I've never chased a squirrel in my life. Yes, I walk into the yard and stare off into the distance and appear unable to find my way to the porch. So what? My parents are so easily worried. I'm just thinking deep thoughts, and I find my way back when I'm good and ready.

Mum was also fit to be tied at my be-



**Lord Banjo**

havior the other night. We went out the front door, me to take care of business, Mum to visit the mailbox. She turned around to come down the driveway and was surprised to see me right behind her. Why? Well, I'm not allowed to go up the driveway unless I have my leash on and I'm invited — or so she says. I say, dang it, I'm 13 years old, and I should be allowed to do whatever strikes my fancy. If I have a mind to go up

to the street, so be it.

That goes for visiting the neighbors behind us too. Mum was more than surprised when that happened. She says she was distressed when she got a call saying I was at their house. That's also taboo. We have an electric fence, but it hasn't worked for years, and that's been fine because I knew my boundaries. Seriously, I still know them. I just can't be bothered to pay attention to them. I'm a social kind of guy. Unfortunately, by the time you read this, the electric fence will have been fixed. Darn!

Mum says I took the cake when I snuck off one night. Okay, okay, I did disappear — while she was watching me, mind you, but I DID NOT take any cake. I went behind a bush to take care of business and bamboozled Mum when I snuck off. After two hours of my parents search-

• See DOGSPEAK page 14



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## Highlands...A Mountain Haven for All Times

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The Highlands Plateau has always attracted people from a variety of walks of life. That has not changed. What HAS changed are these challenging times, not only for Highlands, but for our world as we have known it. Between the Covid 19 Pandemic, the polarizing political climate and the harm, injury and death in our major cities, more and more people are attracted to our area.

We will always have visitors, part-time summer residents who come because they love it. Many people are moving lock, stock and barrel to our plateau and why...because they love it! We all need a little slice of heaven where there is a sense of peace and tranquility during a time such as this.

I have heard from a few of our permanent residents and local folks that this may change our little town as we know it. I believe there is a special place here for all of us.

From the Internet: Diversity refers to the traits and characteristics that make people unique, while inclusion refers to the behaviors and social norms that ensure people feel welcome.

Steeped in history, Highlands offers a rare combination of scenic beauty, ideal summer climate, some snow on the peaks in winter and a variety of outdoor recreational activities, all with a charming blend of cultural amenities.

There are panoramic mountain views, waterfalls, lakes and streams, rolling hills, pastureland or simply the beauty of a wooded forest. The many outdoor activities include nature tours, hiking, fishing, camping, whitewater rafting, repelling and snow skiing.

Within the five blocks of Main Street and Fourth Street that make up the center of town, Highlands is a charming blend of city and country cultures. You will find antiques and art galleries, specialty boutiques, fine jewelry and local handicrafts.

There are a wide variety of restaurants, and a wide array of accommodations for visitors including suite hotels, historic inns, rustic cabins and genteel bed and breakfasts. Cultural amenities abound including professional theatre, visual arts and much more. Spiritually speaking, there is an extensive selection of places of worship.

And last but not least...perhaps the greatest natural asset found in Highlands is the warm and welcoming spirit of its people.

Lynn Kimball has over 45 years of real estate experience, with over 35 years serving the Highlands Cashiers area. She has gained Emeritus Status with the National Association of Realtors and has served as a Director and Vice President for the Highlands Cashiers Board of Realtors. Whether you are interested in searching properties or comprehensive information about our area, you are invited to visit her user friendly website at [www.signatureproperties-nc.com](http://www.signatureproperties-nc.com). Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices BHHS Meadows Mountain Realty has three locations: 488 Main Street in Highlands, 132 Hwy 107S in Cashiers or visit Lynn at her 2334 Cashiers Road location in Highlands across from Highlands Falls Country Club. Lynn Kimball may be reached at 828-421-8193 or by email at [lynn@bhhsmmr.com](mailto:lynn@bhhsmmr.com)



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• OBITUARY •

Eloise Buchanan Crane

Mrs. Eloise Buchanan Crane, 86, went home to be with the Lord Saturday, August 1, 2020. Mrs. Crane was born March 20, 1934 in Jackson, Co. NC to the late Dan Buchanan and the late Minnie Gregory Buchanan. She was married to the late Carlton Crane who preceded her in 2002. She worked and retired from Burlington Industries and she was a member of Buck Creek Baptist Church. Eloise was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. She loved to cook for family and friends.

Survivors include her three children, Joan Hicks of Highlands, NC; Rev. Baker Crane (Susan) of Highlands, NC, and Danny Crane (Maiza) of Highlands, NC; two brothers, Nick Buchanan and Smokey Buchanan; four grand-



children, Henry Crane, Hannah Crane Sykes, Adam Hicks, and April Hicks Newland; one great-grandchild, Hayes Sykes; numerous nieces and nephews; and her bird, "Buddy."

In addition to her husband and parents Mrs. Crane was preceded in death by a son-in-

law, Charlie Hicks; three sisters, Lola Buchanan, Rose Buchanan Jamison, Hilda Buchanan Jamison; and two brothers, James Earl Buchanan and Claude Buchanan.

A funeral service Wednesday, August 5, 2020 at Highlands Assembly of God with the Rev. Baker Crane officiated. Burial followed in Highlands Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers memorials can be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital 501 St. Jude Place Memphis, TN 38105 or the National Kidney Foundation 270 Peachtree St. #1040 Atlanta, GA 30303.

Online condolences can be left at [www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com](http://www.bryantgrantfuneralhome.com) Bryant-Grant Funeral Home & Crematory is serving the Crane family.

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## ...MAYOR continued from page 2

town for which I will continue to request service, but I am afraid there is a long line of requests throughout Division 14.

There is a solution on the horizon in the form of HB 77 which is now under consideration in the state legislature. If passed, it would restore funds to get NC-DOT back to work. Call our representatives, Senator Davis and Representative

Corbin and urged them to act quickly on this bill.

In the meantime, as you drive through North Carolina, expect to see tall grass on rights-of-way and major potholes. As for Highlands, the town's roads funded for paving in this current budget will proceed as planned.

## ...SCHEDULE continued from page 1

of COVID19.

During the first two weeks of school, elementary students will be on campus Monday through Thursday and will be remote on Fridays. Middle School students will be on campus on Wednesday and Thursday, with remote instruction on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. High School students will be remote every day except Friday, when the only students who will be on campus will be high school students. Beginning with the third week of school, all students will be on campus every day, with remote learning on Friday.

The week of September 7, which includes the Labor Day holiday, will be remote for everyone to give the district and teachers time to regroup and evaluate the first three weeks of school.

According to Jetter, whether students get off a bus in front of school or out of a car in the drop-off line, the student and accompanying adult (if in grades K-3) will get in line 6 feet apart to answer health assessment questions, to have temperatures taken, and to be checked to ensure they have a mask on correctly.

• See SCHEDULE page 14

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## ...WILKES continued from page 1

the reigns of the business built by Christopher's family. Wilkes is an active member of the Highlands Community and also currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Highlands Chamber.

Macon County Board of Education incumbent Melissa Evans, who represents

the Nantahala district, will also be re-elected in November as she will not face a challenger on the ballot.

Long-time Board of Education Chairman Jim Breedlove will run his first uncontested bid for re-election in quite sometime as two residents have filed against him.

Franklin resident Emily Ritter, who works as the Public Information Officer for the Macon County Board of Health, is one of two challengers in the November Election.

Matthew Mason, former Macon County Planner, also filed for the open seat. Mason has served on the Macon County Soil & Water Conservation Board since 2016.

Breedlove has served on the Board of

Education since 2008, spending most of the last decade serving as Chairman of the board.

The Macon County Board of Education will appear on the General Election ballot in November. While Wilkes and Evans are guaranteed to be elected, the top vote getter between Mason, Breedlove, and Ritter will win the open Franklin seat.

## ...LETTERS continued from page 7

thought, "wouldn't this be a nice place for a church?" He went back to Wisconsin, wrote a hymn called "The Church in the Wildwood" and put the music in a drawer and practically forgot about it. Meanwhile, the residents of Bradford, about 500 now, wanted to build a church. The church was started in 1862 and completed by the citizens of Bradford in 1864. The song at that time was still in Mr. Pitts drawer.

When William Pitts returned with to the area with his wife in 1862, he discovered the church being erected where he had imagined it to be. During the winter of 1863-1864 Mr. Pitts taught a singing class at Bradford academy. He resurrected the song and tutored his class to sing the song at the dedication of the new church in 1864. This was the first time the song had been sung by anyone other than Mr. Pitts himself. The song was soon forgotten again.

In 1865, Mr. Pitts moved to Chicago to enroll in medical school. To pay for his enrollment fees he sold the rights to song for \$25.

1914 the Weatherwax Brothers Quar-

tet, a group of traveling singers throughout Canada and the USA in the 1920s discovered the song "The Church in the Wildwood" and used the song as their trademark song. The song became popular and was recorded by The Carter Family in 1932. It has since been recorded by many artists including Dolly Parton and Johnny Cash.

As the song became more and more popular, The Little Brown Church became a tourist and wedding destination. Since 1924 over 76,000 weddings and many more tourists have visited. It all started with a hymn written before the church was erected in 1862.

*There's a church in the valley by the wildwood*

*No lovelier spot in the dale*

*No place is so dear to my childhood*

*As the little church in the vale*

*Oh come to the little church in the wildwood*

*Oh come to the little church in the vale*

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# • WORD MATTER •

## President Trump's Challenge

An election involving an incumbent is primarily a referendum on the incumbent's record. Voters will consider the President's accomplishments and failings. These are matters of perception as well as fact, since, for many Americans, perception is fact.

We'll look at the election regularly and will try to keep an open mind. This may not always be possible.



**Bud Katz**

I haven't written much about President Trump because, literally every day he says or does something that merits consideration. By the time I get a column drafted it's already dated and both of us are on to something else. That said, and while I am neither his biggest fan nor his harshest critic, it would be wrong not to point out that, in terms of American politics, Donald Trump has established an impressive record. For example:

He proved that both major parties had ignored the fears and frustrations of older, white, working-class American voters. Technology eliminated a sizable number of their jobs as did America's changing energy infrastructure. These voters were left behind by a complex global economy, which brought additional job losses. And they were confronted by an increasingly diverse nation representing unwanted change.

He revealed the irrelevance of political labels since he'd registered both Republican and Democrat and had supported both liberal and conservative causes and candidates. He holds no governing ideology. He seems comfortable only with those who say or do, nice or good things, about him or for him.

He demonstrated to his base that experience in affairs of State matter less than a willingness to employ confrontational rhetoric, understanding that their fears and prejudices matter more than their aspirations, and that truth and facts are debatable. He relentlessly attacks the news media, except when they provide favorable coverage. The damage inflicted on trust in the American media may be irrevocable.

As candidate and as President, he attacks the real or perceived enemies of his base. In this regard, he remains the fiery, populist communicator. His voters love his

so-called "plain talk."

He proved that a number of Americans don't much care what a candidate or President says or does, as long as he or she maintains an enemy-centered attack on those his supporters hold responsible for their miseries. His connection with his base is enviable. When he claimed they'd support him even if he shot someone in the middle of 5th Avenue, he was right.

He altered the playbook for future campaigns. Going forward, candidates appealing to fearful or angry voters can say whatever they wish, free of propriety, decorum, and of any fact-, or truth-based platform. None of that matters to this President's core supporters.

He's mastered communication platforms like Twitter and Facebook, using them to galvanize angry voters and exploit divisions between supporters and opponents. He exhibits little regard for long-term consequences. In this, Mr. Trump outpaces even Machiavelli.

In 2016, candidate Trump was a novelty; an outsider, but with enormous name recognition from years as a reality television host. This worked for people disgusted with Washington politics as usual.

As with all candidates, he made promises he couldn't keep; a return of coal and steel jobs, for example, or a border wall paid for by Mexico. But those promises resonated among voters in several swing states he narrowly won.

In general terms, his 2016 support came from four specific blocks:


Forty-five and older white voters, mostly men, who loved his confrontational style. He gave voice to their fear, anger and frustration, with no effort at political correctness.

Others identified with his core policies. They believed as he did about immigrants, and they related to his words about backing us away from America's leadership role in the world.

A third group were party purists. These voters support anyone who wears the right color; in this case, red.

Finally, he ran against Hillary Clinton, a polarizing candidate, even among Demo-

• See WORD MATTER page 17



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## ...SCHEDULE continued from page 11

All students in Kindergarten through 12th grade will be required to wear a cloth mask at all times while on school campus, unless a medical exemption applies.

Everyone will be asked health assessment questions as they enter the school. Lines on the ground at the door will mark the 6-foot distance. After they answer the screening questions, the adult/child will have their temperature taken by walking through a temperature monitor, similar to a metal detector. Highlands School has been allocated four temperature scanners, which can register temperatures of 60 individuals per minute.

After temperatures are registered and if OK, parents and/or students must stay 6 feet apart while in line to enter the building.

Parents will be allowed to walk lower (K-3) elementary students to their classroom the first two days of school. Students will go into the cafeteria to pick-up breakfast, which will be eaten in

the classroom.

For classrooms across Macon County, desks/tables will be organized to be 6 feet apart and where needed, plexiglass will be placed to further separate students.

Gyms will be used for PE, which will have alternative lessons to maintain social distancing. The cafeteria will be used to dispense food, but students will eat in the classrooms or outside with their teacher.

If a student has a temperature or gets sick during the day, they will be taken to an isolation room, where there will be a Health Assistant who will wait with the student until a parent picks up the child. Macon County Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin said funding has been allocated to hire either a school nurse or a medical professional at every school site in Macon County.

According to the survey sent to parents in July, 860 students are currently registered for the Macon County Virtual Academy, which will be 100% remote learning. Those parents who opted for the virtual academy may opt for in-person school beginning Monday, Oct. 19, after the first full semester.

Specifics concerning the virtual academy are expected by the end of the week.

The structure of the virtual academy will depend on actual enrollment numbers for the district beginning August 17. Students will be allowed to participate in sports if they are enrolled in the virtual academy, assuming the sport or

activity is permitted under COVID19. If a senior attends the virtual academy all year, the diploma the student receives will reflect the last in-person school they attended.

The district has 30 teachers who signed up to teach the virtual academy based on need, however, matching the grade level of virtual academy students with the qualifications of teachers is still being worked out.

For in-person school, Franklin area schools including all elementary schools, Macon Middle School, Mountain View Intermediate and Macon Early College, will be divided into two groups, Group A and Group B, to reduce the number of students on campus to follow social distancing requirements.

Group A will attend in-person instruction on Monday and Wednesday and have remote learning on Tuesday and Thursday. Group B students will attend in-person instruction on Tuesday and Thursday and have remote learning on Monday and Wednesday. All students in Macon County will have remote learning on Friday to allow for sanitation of school sites.

Franklin area parents will learn which group their child is placed in when homeroom information is released.

Union Academy and Nantahala Schools are small enough for all students to attend in-person instruction Monday through Thursday, with Friday being a remote learning day.

Franklin High School will

be divided by grade level with Freshman and Juniors attending in-person school on Monday and Wednesday and Sophomore and Seniors attending school in-person on Tuesday and Thursday. Students will have remote learning on days they are not in-person as well as Fridays.

Classes such as art and music will be integrated into core curriculum based on grade level. Students who are enrolled in-person school, might end up with a teacher who is not physically present in the classroom due to health concerns. If a teacher is considered high risk, she/he will teach via video screen with an adult monitor or substitute present with the students in the class.

Based on the survey, 36% of parents intend to send their child to school on a school bus, which will only allow one child per seat unless they are siblings. High school students will not be permitted to ride the bus the first week of school and shuttle buses will not be used until the district ensures there is enough space on all buses for students.

Students with IEP concerns should contact their school with questions and for more information on the structure of those classes.

Each student will be assigned an iPad and community connectivity hotspots will be provided at various churches and community buildings throughout Macon County. The district also has 100 mifi hotspots (a portable hotspot with wifi) for families who do not have internet at home.

## ...DOGSPEAK continued from page 8

ing for me, a neighbor brought me back. The upshot of this is I have a new collar that lights up and there are threats that I may never-ever get to go outside again except on a leash.

There's also been conversation about what will happen when I can no longer make it upstairs to the bedroom. Heaven forbid, I sleep downstairs all by my lonesome. Mum says she may be forced to sleep in the guest room on the first floor. Trust me, that's only be-

cause she doesn't want to hear me bark all night. Yup, that's what I do when I can't find my parents or I think they've left me by myself. I like to be where they are. It's that social thing again.

Most of all, I keep hearing the word "old." I've heard a psychiatrist call this projecting, and I'm sure that's what it is. They're so worried about getting old themselves, they're projecting it onto me. Surely if I can talk psychobabble, I have all my faculties.

And, I might point out, I still have all my original parts, unlike my dad. He has two fake knees and a fake hip. I'm 100% dog—no replacement parts here. So there. You saw me stick out my tongue, right?

• *Lord Banjo lives in Georgia with his mum, Kathy Manos Penn, author of the Dickens & Christie cozy animal mystery series available on Amazon. Find Lord Banjo's book locally at Highland Mountain Paws and write him at inkpenn119@gmail.com.*



# • EVENTS •

## Nantahala Hiking Club

These hikes are limited to 6 – 10 people. Masks are required during congregating and driving to the trail head. Four people per car with windows down for air circulation.

### Fri. Aug. 7

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 6-mile hike, elevation change 300 ft., to Straight Fork in Big Cove outside of Cherokee NC. Walk along a lovely creek to the horse camp. Meet at Bi-Lo parking lot in Franklin at 8:30 a.m. Drive 80 miles round trip. Call leader Katharine Brown, 421- 4178, for reservations.

### Sat. Aug. 8

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 6-mile hike, elevation change 520 ft., to Martin's Creek Falls on the Georgia Bartram Trail, beginning at Warwoman Dell, crossing the highway to Becky Branch Falls, continuing along the creek, passing interesting rock formations, to have lunch at Martin Creek Falls and return. Meet at the Smoky Mtn. Visitor Center at 8:30 a.m. or at 9:00 a.m. at Warwoman Dell. Drive 35 miles round trip. Call leader Robin Lurie, 954-632-7270, for reservations.

• The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation (HCHF) is sponsoring a COVID-19 drive-through, pre-scheduled appointments on August 8 in Highlands. Participants should call 828-506-6907 to initiate registration.

### Sun. Aug 9

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 3-mile hike, elevation change 500 ft., on the Wayah Loop, starting at Wayah Bald tower, hiking north on the Appalachian Trail to the Bartram Trail, and coming back through the "bald" for a spectacular view. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 10 a.m., drive 32 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations.

### Sat. Aug. 15

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take moderate-to-strenuous 7-mile hike, elevation change 1000 ft., on the Cowetta Hydrological Lab Center Loop, hiking up Shope Creek Road to Cunningham Branch to Dyke Gap, over to Ball Creek Rd. and coming down Ball Creek. Meet at Smoky Mtn. Visitor Center at 8:30 a.m., drive 10 miles round trip. Call leader Katharine Brown, 421-4178, for reservations.

### Sun. Aug. 16

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 3.5 mile hike, elevation change 800 ft., on Ramsey Trail in Tellico Valley. This lovely trail is on the acquired property of Mainspring Conservation Trust. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 2 p.m., drive 38 miles round trip. Call leader Jean Hunnicutt, 524-5234, for reservations.

### Sat. Aug. 22

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 8-mile hike, elevation change 800 ft., for experienced hikers only, from Kimsey Creek to Deep Gap, walking along the creek most of the way to Deep Gap. There are three bridges to cross, the last being in bad repair. Also, the trail goes across rocks that slide into the creek. Meet at 8:30 a.m. Drive 35 miles round trip. Call leader Katharine Brown, 421-4178, for reservations and meeting place.

### Sat., Aug. 29

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 6-mile hike, elevation change 700 ft., to Bee Cove Falls in South Carolina. This hike has some moderate ups and downs on an old logging road off 107 near the Fish Hatchery. View this 80' multi-tiered falls in a pretty area near the edge of the escarpment of the mountains. Meet at Cashiers Rec. Park at 10 a.m. Drive 20 miles round trip. Call leaders: Mike and Susan Kettles, 743-1079, for reservations.

## Bel Canto

• The annual Bel Canto concert whose proceeds support the Highlands School music program as well as The Bascom exhibits has been cancelled for 2020. It's the first cancellation in 28 years and its due, of course to the Covid outbreak. Director Stell Huie asks that folks please contributions, regardless, so Bel Canto can still fulfill its mission this year. Meanwhile, Bel Canto is scheduled for September 12, 2021.

## Highlands Twilight 5K and 10K

Unfortunately, we are having to postpone until November 28th at 9 a.m. given present circumstances. You can still sign up for November!! Help us SAVE THE RACE! during these uncertain times so AHEC (Advance Highlands Education Committee) can purchase more laptops for Highlands School. They are needed now more than ever, as the school adapts to the new circumstances created by COVID 19.

Jim Tate, Derek Taylor, Hilary Wilkes, Janice Raby, Jeff Weller, Melissa Delany, and Leigh Hartman; board of directors for AHEC, are personally asking you to HELP SAVE THE RACE! for our kids. All proceeds will go to the school for technology. Last year you helped us raise \$25,000.00 for our kids. Signup, donate more!, sponsor, be generous, to help us exceed last year and SAVE THE RACE!!! Checkout the details and signup at [www.highlandstwilight5kand10k.com](http://www.highlandstwilight5kand10k.com). Contact Derek at 828-200-9226 for questions or to sponsor.

## Mountaintop Art & Craft Show

• Mountaintop Art & Craft Show (previously the Village Square show) will be held in K-H Founders Park (Pine St.) Highlands from 10a to 5p. Aug. 29 & 30. If the event is canceled due to Covid-19, there will be a virtual craft show.



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# ...GUARD continued from page 1

ings for 17 years and he has been president for 12 years.

Navigating the future meant finding room for the myriad of donations in both the expanded original Mountain Finding house as well as eight storage units.

What was needed was more “retail” space and more parking.

“Donations and pickups were increasing. When it looked like we would have to start paying in the vicinity of \$500 a month for the basement space under the funeral home we decided to build a new 5,000 sq. ft. building which cut down on the parking we needed, but increased our retail space,” said Hill.

Thanks to the addition on the original building and the new building as well as expanding Mountain Findings hours – typically just six days a week May 1 – Oct. 1 to one weekend each month Oct.-April – only three storage units are needed.

“But they are not climate-controlled so we don’t like to keep items in them very long,” said Hill.

With the expansion of the Mountain Findings campus, Hill said many people took their items out of local consignment shops where their pieces could sit for years and donated them to Mountain Findings to get the tax write-off.

Tom said the affluence of the

area has made Mountain Findings the place to go to find good stuff – not just typical thrift shop stuff.

By all accounts, Tom and Rose really helped in that regard.

“We worked hard to keep items clean and not smelling like a nasty thrift store. Rose kept the place and the items clean and organized so if people wanted something they knew right where to go to find it.”

Current president Glenda Bell said the Hill family as done it all at Mountain Findings.

“Tom has done every single job: hauling, keeping up with donations, handling all the financial responsibilities, making sure both mortgages were paid off, educating volunteers, being present nearly every day to handle day-to-day operations, contacting donors for pickups, the list is endless,” she said. “He handled the purchasing of the property annex and having it built, even painted and built shelving many times. And Rose has washed and cleaned and neatened and priced more dinnerware and glasses than most families use in a lifetime.”

When brand new items came in, Rose cut the price in half; prices on other items she adjusted for condition and would research on Ebay to know where to start.

Opening for a weekend each month has kept proceeds coming in and has helped empty storage units of donations.

“A lot of people are staying here year-round now and there are more and more second-home owners coming up for weekends and not just during ‘the season.’ People love Mountain Findings being open one weekend a month in the off-season – it’s ‘the place to shop’ and people were always asking when we were going to open,” said Tom.

Now with Covid and the amount of time it takes to clean items and get them ready for display Mountain Findings is only open on the weekends instead of its normal Mon.-Sat. 10a to 4p.

Tom said it’s also a bit harder finding volunteers willing to come out during the pandemic. But still every weekend is packed with



Tom and Rose Hill.

– Photo by Kim Lewicki

shoppers.

Initially, the Hills said they would stay as full-time volunteers until the buildings were paid off but that happened a few years back. Finally doctors’ orders made the decision for them.

“It was getting to be a lot of stress and it was nonstop. A lot of time we would have crackers and bottle of water for lunch and keep going. Rose was on her feet and moving at 90 mph going nonstop,” said Tom.

Rose has a health concern and Tom still feels the effects of back surgery, so the doctor told them to slow down and get off their feet.

Now-a-days the Hills fill their time doing little things – crossword puzzles and yes, volunteering still at Mountain Findings and Tom said it’s been hard to give up.

“But when I go in there, volunteers see us and assume we are still taking care of everything. I say, ‘No. Look for Carter Teague, Susy Jackson or Marvin Carmichael!’”

The Hills have been married since 1962, have four children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Tom joined the navy in 1960, served on submarines which kept him submerged for as many as 75 days – many times missing major holidays and living far from his family.

They lived in Orlando, FL and after being on shore duty from

1978 to 1981 he decided to retire and went to work for the postal service from 1981 to 2003.

Tom and Rose bought a house on Yellow Mountain in 1993 but did not spend substantial time in Highlands until 2003. From then until 2010, they spent six months in Orlando and six months in Highlands. In 2005 they started volunteering at Mountain Findings and as they say, “The rest is history.”

Tom was quickly voted in as president and has served in that capacity since 2008 as well as Chief Operating Officer.

After expenses are paid, all proceeds from sales at Mountain Findings go back into the community.

Over the years, donations to the community from Mountain Findings have risen from a few thousand dollars a year to well over \$200,000 this year alone.

President Bell said filling their shoes is no easy task.

“Rose spent more hours that we can imagine working at Mountain Findings. She has kept the spaces immaculate, cleaned donations that were not up to standard, priced a million objects, and has been Tom’s companion all these years just because as a couple they love Mountain Findings and everything it stands for.”

– Kim Lewicki

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# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



## Getting used to 'the new normal' may take awhile

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Rev. W. Bentley Manning

Very few of us, I suspect, knew what was ahead of us back in March. Who could have predicted, those many months back now, that our lives would be so upended – that we would be forced to stay in our homes – unable to gather with friends – forced to be physically isolated? None of us could have imagined this would be the “new normal.”

Certainly, this is one of the most painful lessons we have learned during the pandemic – none of us know what the future holds. How could we? And while most of us do all we can to prepare and plan for the future, COVID-19 has forced us to give up the illusion the we are in control of our lives.

Another lesson we are learning, if even slowly, is to truly appreciate the value of things we once took for granted. One of my favorite theologians, Stanley Hauerwas, wrote about this a few weeks back in an article published in The Living Church. Midway through the article Hauerwas writes:

“The wound that the virus has inflicted on us is to tempt us to become impatient with ourselves and others in an effort to return to the ‘normal.’ We had not realized how dependent we have become on the everyday habit of going to church and seeing one another on Sundays. We had lost track of the significance of our willingness to touch one another as a sign that we rejoice in their presence. In short, we had lost the significance of the everyday, and we rightly want it back.”

Getting back the things we once took for granted is taking much longer than any of us would want it to take. As we journey ahead, we would do well to re-examine all the things we once assumed were fixed, permanent, and secure. I know I have my list.

Life is contingent and always has been. What is new is our perception and appreciation for this truth. My prayer is that during this unfamiliar time we might recover the significance of everyday matters. I trust, that with God’s help, such a hope might be realized.

## ...WORD MATTER from page 13

crats.

This coalition gave him the narrow electoral majority he needed.

In 2020, it appears he can still count on those who like his style, who like his policies, and who vote straight party.

But the novelty has worn off, and to defeat a likable, moderate, not polarizing Joe Biden, he’s going to have to replace those anti-Hillary voters, and that may not be easy. He also must distract voters from Covid-19 and its impact on the nation’s health and the economy.

His opponents believe he’s vulnerable. His supporters believe he’s bullet proof. Suffice it to say, we Americans are in for an interesting presidential campaign.

## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

**John 3:16**

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Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965

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

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7

Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore, Pastor

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

### CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Wes Sharpe, Pastor 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

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Sun. 10:45am, S.S. 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.

Tues. Guys study 8am, Gals 10am.

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

Wednesdays – Supper at 6 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

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Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun.: 9:30am: Sunday School 10:30am: Middle & High School;

10:45am: Child. Program, 10: 45am: Worship

Wed.: 5pm Dinner (\$7 adult, \$2 child), 6pm CBC U.

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Sun.; Tues: Community Supper 5:30 followed by Bible Study.

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Holy Eucharist at noon in the garden on Mondays and

Wednesdays

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands

Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am

Wed.: Men’s Bible Study 8:30 am; Choir 5p; Prayer Mtg 6:15p

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors

526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

Sun.: Worship 8:30a Adult Ed.: 9:30a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.

Mondays: Men’s Prayer Group & Breakfast 8 a.m.

Wed: Choir: 6p

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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

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670 N. 4th Street (next to the Highlands Civic Center)

Sun.: Morning Worship 10:45a., Evening Worship, 6p.

Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

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### MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

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Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

### SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

### SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

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

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

### ST. JUDE’S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

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## ...GRADUATION continued from page 1



The 33 seniors of the Class of 2020 culminated their senior year by socially distancing under blue skies.

— photos by Brian O'Shea

had pictured it. It was not a traditional Highlands graduation, but this was truly a special and unforgettable event. It was an emotional time for many, as we did not know if it would end up happening or not."

Salutatorian Morgan Olvera welcomed those in attendance and thanked Highlands School staff, students, and parents for their efforts throughout the year.

"COVID-19 definitely made my senior year a bit more difficult with my in-person classes and just overall productivity," said Olvera regarding an unpredictable senior year. "The canceling of the end-of-year senior activities was hard to deal with at first, but we later learned it was the best option during these circumstances. I'm glad that later on in the year we got to experience the final milestone of high school, graduation!"

The Commencement Address was delivered by First Grade Assistant Teacher Cindy Reed who encouraged graduates to follow their dreams, achieve their goals, and do something that makes them happy.

"Life will be tough and ever-stressful, but you will survive, and the learning process will make you

smarter and stronger," said Reed.

After seniors received their diplomas, Co-Valedictorians Camren Dalton and Sayla Roman delivered the Farewell Addresses.

Roman said remote learning had its challenges and is glad to be moving onto the next step in life.

"I am so happy to finally be done with high school, it's taken far too long," said Roman. "It almost felt like we had already graduated earlier because classes ended in May, but it was nice to finally have the closure of graduation to end high school."

Roman added it was nice having an outdoor ceremony, too.

"I love that we had an outdoor ceremony," she said. "I consider it a 'perk' of COVID if you will and even though it was hot, I enjoyed having the ceremony outdoors. The location also helped with keeping the distance."

Graduate Kedra McCall said the outdoor ceremony went well and she's excited for the future.

"It's a weird feeling to be a graduate, but awesome to know we're all moving onto a new chapter with the whole world laying at our feet in front of us," said McCall. "I'm very excited for college, while nervous at the same time. I'm

excited for so many new things and people."

McCall added that students wouldn't have made it to graduation without a strong support system.

"Thank you to all of Highlands who made our graduation possible, both by educating and motivating us, and being persistent throughout all of the unknown during COVID," she said.

Holbrooks said she was grateful Highlands could host a ceremony for seniors who have all worked hard to reach this milestone.

"We are beyond proud of this special group of seniors," she said. "They lifted each other up during times of disappointment during their senior year, as well as personal tragedies. They stuck together and showed their maturity throughout these difficult times. We look forward to seeing them spread their wings and to hear of all the magnificent goals that they will accomplish. We hope they always remember their time as Highlands School and take the Highlander Pride motto whenever they go. Congrats, Class of 2020!"



# Mountain Garden Club brightens up the Eckerd Living Center campus

By Brian O'Shea  
Plateau Daily News

Ladies from the Mountain Garden Club developed and maintain a garden behind the Eckerd Living Center on the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital campus much to the delight of ELC residents.

MGC Members were able to visit the garden earlier this month for the first time since they performed in last year's Highlands Christmas Parade for some much-needed maintenance.

MGC Member Midge Rothermel helped spearhead the project 4 years ago.

"When we first began this project and took a walk around, the shrubbery was up past the windows," said Rothermel. "When I trimmed down and could see the resident inside, they were applauding. They love coming out here, it's just wonderful."

The garden is full dahlias, shrubbery,

and blooming plants from this year's cancelled annual Plant Sale. ELC Resident Joe Marks said he visits the garden often.

"It's beautiful," said Marks. "I come out here every day and I like looking at all of the plants, we're very lucky to have this."

ELC Activities Director Chase Nelson said the residents are very appreciative of the MGC's efforts.

"It's one of the few places they can go and be surrounded by nature," said Nelson. "They water the plants, they points things out to us, they love it."

MGC President Ellie Houston said the Club supports the ELC in a variety of ways to help make their days a little brighter.

"We come dance for them on Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day, the residents love it and so do the nurses," said Houston. "And we love doing it."



MGC members, Sherrie Cathcart, Ellie Houston, Midge Rothermel, and Ginny Dunwoody.

## Highlands Police Dept. Seeks Information

The Highlands Police Department is requesting information in the following cases:

A Dewalt table saw and a Dewalt chop saw were reported stolen from a job site on Holt Circle during the weekend of July 10. The Police Department is looking for any information on the location of these tools, or any suspicious activity observed in the area of Holt Circle during the July 10 weekend.

The Police Department is also looking for information on vandalism which occurred at the Highlands Skate Park at the Highlands Civic Center. During the evening hours of July 19 the park was vandalized by graffiti painted on the concrete.

If you have any information on either of these crimes, please contact Highlands Police Department at (828) 526-9431 or email Investigator Tim Broughton at [tim.broughton@highlandscnc.org](mailto:tim.broughton@highlandscnc.org)

## Notice of Unclaimed Property

Notice is hereby given that the Highlands Police Department, Highlands North Carolina, has in their possession, Bicycles, Computer Equipment, Jewelry, Driver's Licenses, Books, Wallets, Purses, Clothing, Cell Phones, Electronics, US Currency, Firearms, and other various items which have been turned in to the department as found property and have been held for a time greater than the required preservation time as described by state law.

All persons who have or claim any possessory interest of these items are requested to make and establish such claim or interest to the Highlands Police Department Evidence and Property Section no later than 30 days from the date of this publication. Claims for said property may be made to Sergeant Tim Broughton - Property Control Manager. Persons may make claim of ownership in the following manners: In person at the Highlands Police Department, 372 Oak Street, Highlands North Carolina; by phone by calling (828) 526-9431; or by email to [tim.broughton@highlandscnc.org](mailto:tim.broughton@highlandscnc.org). Proof of ownership is required.

The Highlands Police Department will offer said articles for auction, donation, or destruction after the 30 days. Auction of suitable property will be handled by [www.gov-deals.com](http://www.gov-deals.com) and funds from auctioned property will be turned over to the Macon County Public School System. Unclaimed bicycles and property will be donated to a charity organization. Property not suitable for donation or auction will be destroyed.

This notice is given in accordance with provisions the General Statutes of North Carolina, Chapter 15, Section 12.

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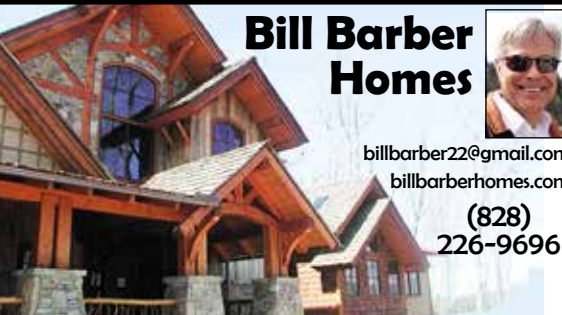


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