

# Highlands Newspaper

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## PRIMARY 2020 Q & A PART 3

### Republicans up for NC Senate 50 seat

**By Brittney Lofthouse**  
Early Voting for the primary begins across North Carolina on February 13, giving voters another week to read up on all the candidates running for various offices in the Tarheel State. When Senator Jim Davis announced he would not be seeking re-election for the North Carolina Senate District 50 seat, two WNC Re-

• See PRIMARY 2020 page 8

### Highlands School rides out snowfall

**By Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily Nws**  
When snow began to fall Friday morning, staff at Highlands School began monitoring the weather and had their buses ready if the call to cancel was made – however school wasn't cancelled, and students weren't released early.

Highlands Assistant Principal Sarah Holbrooks said there were several factors involved in the decision to ride out the storm at school; including communication with law enforcement through Student Resource Officer Tim Broughton about roadway incidents and conditions, rising temperatures expected later in the afternoon, and how quickly the snow was falling before the

•See SNOW page 6



From left: Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart, Firefighter of the Year Davis Picklesimer and Asst. Fire Chief Robbie Forrester at the annual awards banquet at OEI's The Spring House, Friday, Jan. 31. See more photos on page 10.

### HF&R recognizes its own

Every year the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department enjoys a little down time to recognize its own for the year-long work it does and to announce the Firefighter of the Year.

The Firefighter of the Year is picked by the members of the department and represents the hard work and commitment they

all give to the job.  
This year, Davis Picklesimer was named "Firefighter of the Year."

"I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve," he said. "As a teenager, I saw my father save somebody's life at a fair in Franklin and that impacted

• See HF&R page 15

• INSIDE THIS ISSUE •		
Mayor on Duty .....	2	Dog Speak..... 9
Weather.....	2	HF&R Photos..... 10
HS Sports.....	5	Snow Photos..... 12
Word Matter.....	6	Police & Fire..... 19
Investing at 4,118 Ft .....	7	Classifieds..... 22

### Mission's independent monitor lays out its plan

Representatives from Gibbons Advisors – the Independent Monitor of the HCA/Mission Health System – got an earful last week at public meetings in Cashiers, Highlands and Franklin.

Citizens irate about decreasing or lack of services at area clinics and on hospital campuses had a lot to say and questions to ask Gibbons Advisors' representatives Tom Urban and Ron Winters.

Though they were more than willing to listen, the two made it clear from the start that they weren't there to solve problems, but would listen, take note and pass the questions and complaints onto Hospital Corporation of America (HCA). However, HCA is encouraging people to go directly to their hospital – in Highlands and Cashiers cases that's CEO/CNO Tom Neal.

In addition, Winters encouraged people to go to their website at [IndependentMonitorMHS.com](http://IndependentMonitorMHS.com) to log complaints or suggestions – even anonymously.

com to log complaints or suggestions – even anonymously.

"We won't be cycling back to you with answers, but we will get the information to HCA," said Winters.

As per the Asset Purchase Agreement (APA) an independent monitor was to be in the mix to make sure certain undertakings, commitments and obligations HCA made when they obtained Mission Health System are fulfilled.

Participants at the forums had similar complaints – the lack of primary care physicians in Highlands and Cashiers – there is only one in each location; the one in Cashiers starts in May; the lack of consistent services; the lack of providers; billing; and communication problems.

"We won't be able to answer a lot of your questions. We are not operating the health system," said Winters. "We are operating

• See MONITOR page 11

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### The future of the hospital may take a coalition of partnerships

Last Wednesday Gibbins Advisors, the monitor for the HCA/Mission transaction, held a public meeting at our recreation department. This inaugural meeting was one of several held in the region. The monitors outlined what their role would be in regard to Hospital Corporation of American (HCA) meeting the NC Attorney General's stipulations that were included in his approval of the sale of Mission Healthcare to HCA. The Highlands Cashiers Hospital, along with several other small hospitals, is a part of this process.

I was surprised that only 30 residents attended the meeting. I suspect there may be a jaded, skeptical view in the community that the new corporate owners of the hospital will do whatever they want to do. Frankly, when Mission took over the operation of the hospital six years ago, residents were told how services would significantly improve. Some folks contend just the opposite happened. I suspect there still remains widespread skepticism about what will happen to services under the HCA leadership.



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

When the floor was opened to the public, I spoke first. I indicated that I have measured optimism that there can be improvements at the hospital, especially if HCA and other community organizations can establish mutually beneficial partnerships. Let me review several ways these partnerships might work.

Pisgah Legal Aid Services is working to establish a presence in the Cashiers and Highlands area. They specialize in assisting low-income people in qualifying for Medicaid and/or the Affordable Care Act. If a person shows up at an emergency room without insurance, hospitals have to treat the patient and possibly write off the debt. HCA made a commitment in the Attorney General's stipulations to provide a basic level of care for everyone. If Pisgah can help more people in the area qualify for this support, HCA will ultimately benefit. More patients with insurance to pay for services will benefit the entire community. The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation may have an important role to play in this Pisgah initiative, especially since access to legal services impacts the long-term health and wellness outcomes.

I am also optimistic that a concerted community effort may be able to address the lack of primary physicians in the area. The health foundations, Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation and the Dogwood Health Foundation could play key roles in addressing this issue. HCA will need to be an active partner also. Under the sales agreement HCA committed to investing 7.5 million dollars, or \$750,000 a year, in community benefit programs over the next 10 years.

At other meetings in Cashiers and Franklin, the health monitors heard more impassioned concerns from residents than what they heard here in Highlands. But, I have heard similar concerns here, too. Lack of consistent services, no doctors that remain in the community, and problems in the billing, are just a few examples.

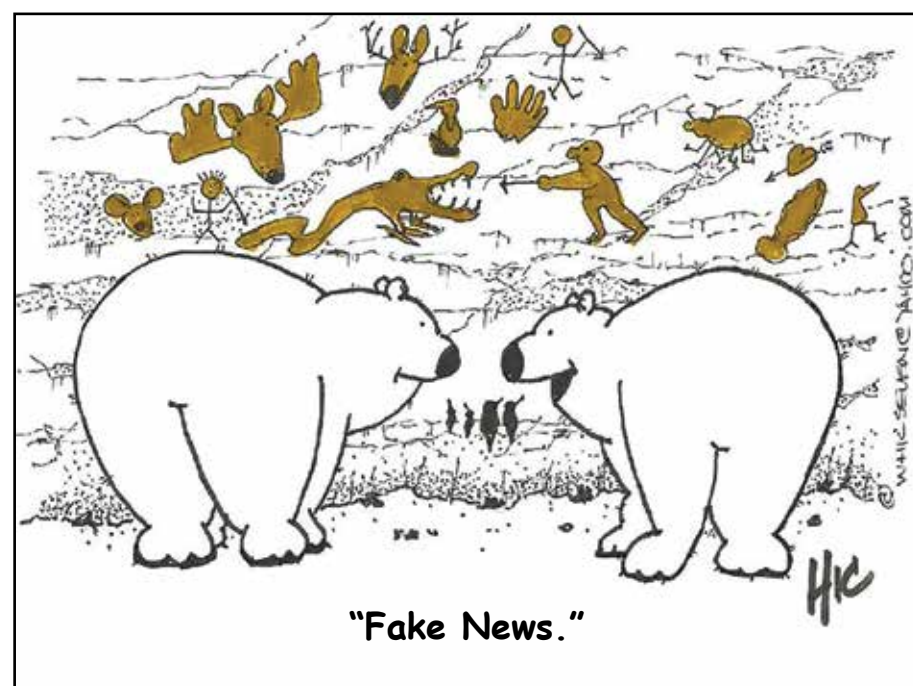
The good news is that the monitors have established a portal on the internet to receive concerns about services and operations at the HCA facilities. Email any concerns to: [IndependentMonitor@gibbinsadvisors.com](mailto:IndependentMonitor@gibbinsadvisors.com). Your information will be kept

anonymous. Patients can report good service and outcomes also.

The Wednesday meeting was a good first start. My involvement will continue. I am also in communication with the Western North Carolina Health Equity Coalition. HEC was formed during the sale of Mission to HCA. It is a coalition of nonprofit groups that are committed to representing

everyone, especially the underserved citizens of Western Carolina. It is concerned about access, services and operations at HCA facilities throughout Western Carolina. They are committed to insuring quality services throughout the region. HEC will seek to establish constructive engagement with the monitors. For more information Google WNC Health Equity Coalition.

## • HIC'S VIEW •



## • WEATHER •

Thu, 6-Feb	Fri, 7-Feb	Sat, 8-Feb	Sun, 9-Feb
58°F 32°F	37°F 23°F	38°F 24°F	49 °F 31° F
Mild with rain, some heavy	Much colder	Cloudy, a few showers; chilly	Sunny and milder
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### Highlands Newspaper

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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.





# DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE.

## Investments year one:

- Total capital investment: \$139.9M
- Total community benefit grants: \$1.7M
- Additional property taxes paid: \$7.5M
- Investments in the most advanced robotic surgery: \$7.7M
- New physicians recruited to Mission Health: 100 new providers, including specialists in cardiology, surgery, gynecology and primary care
- Minimum wage increased to \$12.50/hr
- Infrastructure investments: opened new Mission Hospital North Tower, laying groundwork for new Behavioral Health Hospital, land purchased for new Angel Medical Center in Franklin
- New, larger helicopter added to the MAMA fleet
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- Approximately \$150,000 in emergency grants for staff in crisis



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# • HS SPORTS •

with Kedra McCall

## Rounding out the season

Middle school basketball finished out their season playing Tallulah Falls in the second round of their conference tournament. Both the girls and boys lost a hard fought game to finish out their season.

High school played Hayesville and Nantahala. Varsity girls won both games. Their win over Nantahala sealed first place for regular season conference.

Varsity boys could not quite pull out wins over either team.

JV boys did not win over Hayesville and did not play Nantahala due to them not having a team.

JV girls did not play either team due to Nantahala not having a team and Hayesville girls becoming sick. Their next home game will be on Friday, February 7th against Cherokee.

JV girls will start at 4pm followed by JV boys, then varsity girls and finally varsity boys.

Cheerleaders continue to cheer at every home and away games.

They finished 3rd in their last competition in Raleigh, NC. They will compete again on Saturday, February 8th in Greenville, SC with times to be determined.

Come support your Highlanders!



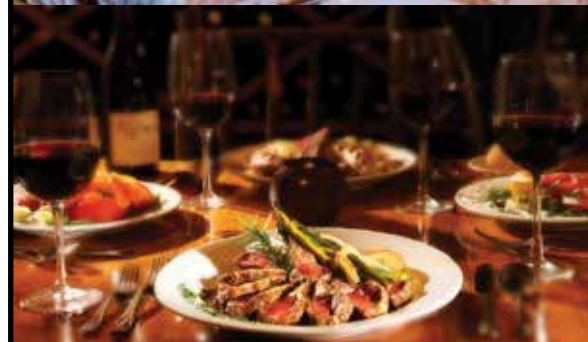
## • ANNIVERSARY •

### Petrones celebrate 70 years together



The children of James G. (Jim) and Thelma Petrone happily announce their parents' 70th wedding anniversary. Jim and Thelma were married on February 5, 1950. They have been extremely blessed with 5 children, 8 grandchildren, and 15 great grandchildren. We love them dearly and want to thank them for being such a great example of love, loyalty, and commitment to each other. Congratulations Mom & Dad!

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# •WORD MATTER•

## Harry Harris's Mustache

The strange case of Harry Harris and his mustache might be just what the doctor ordered to help demonstrate the sad stupidity of racism and xenophobia in our world. Stay with me for a bit; this may get complicated. It will definitely get silly.

Harry Harris is the United States ambassador to the Republic of South Korea. The United States has a long and storied history with South Korea. Even as the American President makes overtures to South Korea's sworn enemy to the north, our relationship with South Korea remains a solid example of great cooperation in an important region of the world.

Following WWII, the United States joined with South Korea to keep a communist insurgency in the north from overtaking the whole Korean peninsula. The U.S. still maintains over 23,000 troops below the border that separates the north from the south. And, all the sabre rattling emanating from the north, plus hegemony from nearby China, makes for a constant state of uneasy living in South Korea.

We're not regularly reminded that

Japan occupied Korea from 1910 through 1945. It seems many Japanese military officers, along with the Emperor, Hirohito, and the Japanese Army's commanding general, Tojo, had mustaches. Many of these officers brutalized the Korean people living under occupation. Hence, the disdain many Koreans have for men with mustaches in positions of authority.

Harry Harris is a retired Navy Vice-Admiral. He has dedicated much of his life to the service of his country. Following his Naval service, Mr. Harris was nominated by President Trump to serve as Ambassador to Australia. Soon after being confirmed, and at the suggestion of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Mr. Harris was nominated to be Ambassador to South Korea.

By the way, Harry Harris is not only America's ambassador to South Korea. He is also the son of an American naval officer ... and a Japanese mother.



Bud Katz

It was upon his release from the Navy, which favors clean-shaven officers, that Mr. Harris decided to grow a mustache. Now, Mr. Harris grew his mustache some time before being nominated for ambassador to South Korea.

Ambassador Harris was asked recently by an enterprising reporter with the Korea Times to explain why he decided to grow his mustache. No doubt thrilled to have been offered an opportunity to justify his aberrant behavior with regard to facial hair, with tongue in cheek, Mr. Harris replied, "I wanted to make a break between life as a military officer and my new life as a diplomat," he said. "I tried to get taller, but I couldn't grow any taller. I tried to get younger, but I couldn't get younger. But I could grow a mustache, so I did that."

Hyper-sensitive South Koreans, appalled at Mr. Harris's unwillingness to demonstrate an empathetic response to their pain at having to accept a mustached, Japanese-American ambassador, from the country providing its security for the past over 70 years, mind you, have been picketing the American Embassy in Seoul, writing letters to both the Secretary of State AND the President himself, complaining about the whole indignity of it all.

Sorry, but this is nothing short of xenophobic racism on the part of some people who really have more to worry about than an American ambassador with a mustache. See the references to North Korea and China above.

I have three words for our friends and allies in South Korea: get over yourselves. The war in the Pacific, and Japan's occupation, ended three quarters of a century ago. Americans have made peace with the Japanese, and the Germans, and the Italians, and the British, for that matter.

I've said often, and I believe it with all my heart that racism, antisemitism, sexism, gender bias, xenophobia – broad bigotry of any kind – is based in ignorance and/or indoctrination. The ignorance stems from fearing that which we do not understand, and then hating that which we fear. Negate the ignorance, negate the fear, negate the hate. Indoctrination comes from outside influences – parents, mostly – who fill our heads from the time we are small children with THEIR prejudices, THEIR fears and THEIR ignorance.

It's always okay to not like someone – an individual – who has, in some manner, wronged you. It's never okay to hate an entire class of people whose only crime is to have been born, in some way, different than yourself.

I'm sure Ambassador Harris will survive Korea's mustache-gate. Sometimes, I just don't get people.

## ...SNOW continued from page 1

roads could be treated.

"If we had called it and had early release our buses would have been in the middle of their route when the roads were at their worst," said Holbrooks. "We needed temperatures to rise and the roads to be treated before we could send them home. Throughout all of it our staff did a tremendous job fielding phones calls and keeping things orderly; and our teachers did a wonderful job communicating with parents and students. Everybody did an awesome job."

However, of the 392 students enrolled at Highlands School, 160 left with early release.

Highlands Fire & Rescue (HFR) officials said there was an accident on Highway 28 and rescue crews arrived to find the vehicle in an embankment. The driver was nowhere to be found and they assumed the driver made their way to town on foot.

HFR had two calls for motor-vehicle

accidents on Friday. Chief Ryan Gearhart said when the weather gets bad and drivers must hit the road he suggested "taking your time."

"Accidents were mostly due to people just not being patient and trying to hurry off the mountain," said Gearhart.

### Cashiers community rallies to rescue stranded Blue Ridge students

The snow came on hard Friday morning and based on the flood of incoming information, Blue Ridge School and Early College (BRS) staff made the decision to call it a snow day. Three buses tasked with delivering students home safely called back to headquarters and said it was too risky to go on.

It was then a flood of support came from several Jackson County offices and agencies offering vehicles and staff to pick up the stranded students and take them

• See SNOW page 7



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## Is there a doctor in the house?

*"The good Physician treats the disease; the GREAT Physician treats the Patient"*  
(Sir William Osler)

Perhaps the most frequently asked questions to we get in downtown Highlands from those considering a real estate investment are these (in no particular order); "How's the market doing?" or "What's the difference between Highlands and Cashiers?" and of course this one "How do we get to the Ugly Dog?" But with increasing frequency here's a question we get that not only deserves our attention but truly impacts the Real Estate market, and those who plan for full-time or seasonal residency – "What can you tell me about available medical services up here?"

Enter Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) which has been around since 1966. We are blessed to have it within minutes. Owned by HCA and part of the Mission Health network of hospitals. Their mission statement is Mission... You! Our friends Kurt Shulzman and Richard Neri said it best; "In life, we don't always have the luxury of choosing where medical emergencies happen. We are so fortunate to have a top Emergency Room here in Highlands. It takes the risk out of spending time at our home away from home. Actually, the hospital is one of the main reasons we chose Highlands for our mountain residence."

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital takes a team approach in emergencies: to ASSESS (determine what's going on); then to STABILIZE (the condition of the patient), and finally to TRANSPORT (if necessary). A constant interface with Mission Health in Asheville in extreme cases means there's always a "team" of experts determining the best course of action. And the renaissance continues at HCH with the hiring of Tom Neal as Chief Executive Officer and Chief Nursing Officer. Tom has 30 years of progressive healthcare experience and recently said this; "I'm humbled that I've been entrusted with leading HCH and look forward to my work here, to running, hiking, and golfing in these stunning mountains, and to eventually retiring here



Pat Gleeson, Owner, BIC White Oak Realty Group  
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with my wife. We've concluded that this community is a great fit on every level for us, and I intend to give my best to this hospital and our community members – our neighbors." This is the guy you want running your hospital.

A rich and meaningful source of healthcare providers are here to provide health and vitality. Dr. Sue Aery owns Aery Chiropractic & Acupuncture and recently added a Master of Science and Human Nutrition degree

to her already impressive background. Dr. Robert Buchanan owns The Center for Plastic Surgery next to the hospital and specializes in minimally and non-invasive procedures and skin care. You will not find two more dedicated professionals (or nicer people) than Dr. Sue and Dr. Bob.

My wife and I are very fortunate to live here full-time, and we employ a full staff of medical professionals. They include a cardiologist, urologist, gynecologist, orthopaedist, radiologist (mammogram), gastroenterologist, Internist, dentist, and of course a mixologist. Let's face it, none of us really gets older, we just add another "ologist."

• Pat Gleeson, his wife Bee, and their dog Gemma are Owners and Brokers of White Oak Realty Group, in downtown Highlands (4th Street across from the Old Edwards Inn). White Oak Realty Group, founded in 2009 by Susie deVillie, is one of the leading boutique brokerage firms on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau. You can reach Pat, Bee, Christal, Tom, and Susie at 828.526.8118.

## ...SNOW continued from page 6

back to BRS or secured drop-off sites along the way, such as the BP Gas Station at the Crossroads.

Supporting agencies included the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad (GCRS), Cashiers-Glenville Volunteer Fire Department, JC Emergency Management teams, JC Maintenance Department, N.C. Department of Transportation, and the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Jackson County Public Schools.

BREC Principal Tracie Metz said the decision was made to cancel school at approx. 8:45 a.m. At that point, students were either picked up by their parents or they hopped on a bus to make their way home; three of which were forced to turn off and call in for back up.

"I feel really good about our quick decision to cancel the day," said Metz. "We have excellent bus drivers; they know what's safe and what's not safe. They stopped and called in and said we're not comfortable continuing. All the drivers and staff were

great, and I appreciate all their hard work."

Buses on Jody Town Road, Bee Tree Road, and Slab Town Road were forced to pull over and call in for an alternative plan. BRS Bus Driver Sheila Kinsey has been behind the wheel for 32 years and said this was not her first rodeo in the snow.

"The roads were starting to get slick," said Kinsey. "I took my time and decided to pull over and stop. I think we did a good job handling it. We all worked together and kept the kids safe. That's always number one."

GCRS EMS Director Jeremy Stewart said the stranded bus on Jody Town Road was able to get back with a little help from the NC DOT.

"We were over on Jody Town and the state department was able to clear the road so the bus could get back to school safely," said Stewart. "After that, some parents picked up their kids and the Rescue Squad took others home."



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# ...PRIMARY 2020 continued from page 1

publicans signed up to run as his replacement. Political newcomer Dr. Sarah Conway and Macon County native Kevin Corbin will face off in Primary on March 3.

Dr. Sarah Conway is a Jackson County Republican who has always had a love of hiking and the outdoors. Having vacationed in North Carolina since childhood, she eventually made it her home.

She is retired radiologist who practiced hospital-based diagnostic radiology for over 20 years.

"We have a narcotics epidemic in Western North Carolina; when I read the statistics,

I was compelled to run and use my medical knowledge and experience to try to make a difference," said Dr. Conway. "Right now, we have an opioid crisis, so a doctor would be a great choice to work on this issue. If we have an agricultural crisis, I would love to see a seasoned farmer or an Ag PhD run for the position."

Representative Kevin Corbin was born and raised in Western NC in Macon County. He is a sixth generation, his kids are seventh, and his grandkids are now the eighth generation to live on the same farm in the Holly Springs community of Macon County. He attended Franklin High School before graduating and attending Appalachian State University where he graduated with honors with a double major in Business Marketing and Management. Corbin is a member of Holly Springs Baptist Church where he has served as a deacon and also served as Music Director prior to being elected to the NC House.

Rep. Corbin founded Corbin Insurance Agency in Franklin in



Dr. Sarah Conway

1983 and in 2013 started Blue Ridge Insurance Group in upstate South Carolina. He has worked in the insurance industry since 1983 and has earned several professional designation and honors in that field including being inducted into the Hall of Fame with BCBS of NC. Only 23 members have been inducted

into that group in the history of the company.

Rep. Corbin served 20 years on the Macon County School board, serving 16 years as Chairman. After that, he served six years as a County Commissioner in Macon County, five years as Chairman. In 2016 he was elected to the NC House of Representatives and was re-elected in 2018.

"I believe my experience

in local and state government gives me the background to hit the ground running serving the folks in the far western seven counties of NC," said Rep. Corbin. "I love the people of this district and want to give the best constituent service possible. In the House, I have been a constant reminder to leadership that we have unique needs here and have sought support and funding for our area. I have been successful in doing so and will continue that in the NC Senate."

*What is the biggest challenge facing District 50 and how would you approach it?*

**Conway:** "Our biggest challenge is the opioid epidemic. My plan is to focus on prevention by creating an educational template which can be used in schools for children as young as 8 or 10 years of age. Young students need to understand the health hazards and ramifications of becoming addicted to these agents. Also, I would like to address mental health by having a mobile mental health unit which would travel to all seven of my counties and provide much needed mental health services to individuals who may not have access."

**Corbin:** "In my last term I co-sponsored the STOP act in the NC House that has begun to slow the opioid epidemic. It was a beginning and there is much work left to be done. We must address mental health issues in our region and I have been a consistent voice for that in the NC House. I have worked on many levels to bring high speed internet to far Western NC including being a primary author of the FIBER ACT (HB 144). Because of those efforts, we persuaded leadership to begin the GREAT grants which have brought money to our region and have facilitated the hookup of thousands to high speed in-



Kevin Corbin

ternet. The work is far from over. The grants have been \$10 million in 2018, \$15 million in 2019, and now we have \$30 million budgeted for 2020-'21. I have requested but not yet received \$100 million from our budget surplus for the same purpose. The work is far from over. We need to continue

the push for Western NC. Additional funding for K-12 public education has been a priority for me and we have had great success in the past four years bringing additional state funding to Macon, Clay, Graham, and Cherokee counties. In this new Senate district, I will do the same putting Swain, Jackson, and Haywood to my radar."

*What strengths do you have as a candidate?*

**Conway:** "I like to think of myself as a great listener. Great leaders need to be great listeners. Each of my counties has their own unique needs which require attention."

**Corbin:** "In one word... experience. Having served in local government, I know the challenges and pitfalls. Now, being an experienced legislator, I know how the system works and will continue to work in the NC Senate for my district. It is about serving and prioritizing the needs of folks of this district."

*What is your top priority if elected?*

**Conway:** "Addressing the Opioid Epidemic. Other goals: Access to reasonably priced health care; Cut spending; Term limits"

**Corbin:** "Without question, my top priority is constituent service. My office has helped literally hundreds of folks in my four-county district with issues with the State of NC. I have answered every call and have tried

• See PRIMARY 2020 page 9

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# • REFLECTIONS FROM LORD BANJO •

## The Best Dog Ever

I know, I know, you think I must be the best dog ever, and I'm inclined to agree with you, but I must admit my Dad had some super dogs before me. Lucky for me, they trained him well.

He was a dog person long before he met my Mum, and Fuzzy was the dog he had when they married. Dad called him his little hero boy. A friend found Fuzzy beside the railroad tracks and brought him to Dad, a known dog lover. He already had a few dogs, so he offhandedly called the tiny thing Fuzzy, thinking he wouldn't be keeping him. It took Fuzzy only a few days to steal my Dad's heart and become a keeper. Most puppies are fuzzy little things, but Fuzzy fooled everyone by staying fuzzy as he grew. He looked like a German Shepherd Chow mix, and

according to the stories, was one sweet dog.

I can hear the love in Dad's voice when he tells stories about Fuzzy:

We lived out in the country, so Fuzzy got to run free when I was at home. I could let him roam without worrying about cars, and the neighbors loved him. We two had a routine; I'd feed him and play with him in the mornings before work and give him a biscuit before I put him in his pen in the backyard. Fuzzy carried his biscuit to the pen and kept it all day, eating it only when I let him out in the afternoons.

He was so like a little boy; he



The Royal Pooch  
Lord Banjo

even had a golden retriever friend named Zack up the street. When I drove by Zack's house in the afternoons after work, he'd take off after me and gallop straight to Fuzzy's pen. Then the two of them played in the yard and up and down the cul de sac until dinner time.

I got the scare of my life one day when Fuzzy took off across the street and up the driveway to greet a little girl. I knew he was a sweet boy, but I was afraid he'd barrel into her and knock her down. Nope! She opened her arms wide and called, 'Fuzzy, oh Fuzzy,' as she hugged him and buried her face in his soft coat.

Fuzzy was also an adventurer and went camping with me. He had a doggie backpack and carried dog food and my adult beverage. How I loved that boy!

Fuzzy was known as the best dog ever right up until Mum and Dad got Tinker from the Animal Shelter one December. After they fell in love with Tinker, Fuzzy be-

came known as the best BOY dog ever and Tinker, of course, the best GIRL dog. Stay tuned for my next column to learn more about Tinker.

• Lord Banjo lives in Georgia with his Mum, Kathy Manos Penn. Find similar stories in his book, "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch," available at

*Mountain Paws in Highlands, Books Unlimited in Franklin, and on Amazon. Contact him at [inkpenn119@gmail.com](mailto:inkpenn119@gmail.com). Sign up here to receive our newsletter and be the first to know about a new mystery series starring a dog and cat <http://eepurl.com/cO79Yj>*

## ...PRIMARY 2020 continued from page 8

my best to address every need. I have had about 90% success in solving issues for my constituents and I will continue the same in the NC Senate. In most cases, I would be the only voice available for the 210,000 folks in this large Senate district. I love Western NC and will continue to work hard to make sure our voice is heard."

*Is there anything else you would like to address?*

**Conway:** "I am running organically. No one asked me to run for this office, but I love the people of Western North Carolina, so I am determined to work hard to make a difference. If I am blessed to be elected, much of the time I will physically be located in Raleigh, but please remember: I am working for you, the people. I am Working for the West."

**Corbin:** "Serving in the NC General Assembly is truly a labor of love for those who attempt it. With an annual salary of \$13,941 it is certainly not for

personal gain. The meager per diem of \$104 and the mileage of .26 cents a mile are barely enough to cover expenses back and forth. I come home pretty much every weekend, having only stayed in Raleigh 3 weekends in my nearly four years of service. My home is Western NC, not Raleigh. I come home every week to be with my family and to stay in touch with the people of my district. As long as I enjoy it and can stand the drive back and forth, I am willing to serve if the voters give me that honor."

• Highlands Newspaper will continue part 4 in candidate profiles next week with candidates for District Court Judge.

• *This is the third in a series of candidate profiles ahead of the March 3 Primary Election. Democratic candidates for District II were featured in Jan. 23 edition of Highlands Newspaper – Republican candidates for District II were featured in Jan. 30 edition. Both editions can be viewed online at [www.highlandinfo.com](http://www.highlandinfo.com). Click on News and go to the desired issue.*



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## HF&R Annual Award Banquet Fri., Jan. 31 at OEI's The Spring House



Tristan Petrone the new Junior Firefighter.



Photos by Kim Lewicki

Above: Officers from left: 2nd Lt. and Sec/Treas, Lenny Metrick, Captain Roger Lee Wilson, 1st Lt. Hunter Leffler, Rescue Lt. David Leffler, Rescue Capt. Eric Pierson, Training Officer Eric Fielding, and Chief Ryan Gearhart. Not pictured is Asst. Chief Robbie Forrester.



Roger Lee Wilson and Leah Dallmann were noted for perfect attendance.



Jason Tardo was recognized for earning 153 training hours.



From left: Chief Ryan Gearhart, 20 years; Travis Ramey, 15 years; Roger Lee Wilson, 30 years; Asst. Chief Robbie Forrester, 25 years; Leah Dallmann, 5 years; Chris Barden, 10 years; Hunter Leffler 10 years, Gary Ammons, 35 years and not pictured: Paul Corbin, 5 years.



Jim Tate retired from the force after 20 years.



## ...MONITOR continued from page 1

within the bounds of the purchase agreement. One way we find out if there are noncompliance issues is from what is bubbling up from the community. So that's what we're here for."

He said they speak to HCA every other week at the NC regional level, are due reports in April and May and though HCA wants to hear from community members it is encouraging people to speak to the local leadership because they have the machinery and ability to address issues themselves. For Highlands and Cashiers that CEO/CNO Tom Neal.

Gibbons as the Independent Monitor was hired by the seller of the Mission Health System with the consent of NC Attorney General Josh Stein who inserted things into the APA that HCA/Mission has to adhere to. Winters said Mission's current role is to assure high quality healthcare in WNC and as the seller, they wanted an independent monitor to participate.

Winters said there are 15 commitments outlined in the APA that span four

categories.

They must retain services in certain hospitals; invest in community health and well-being; invest in facilities; spend \$232 in five years within the system; \$25 million in an innovation and investment fund; keep material facilities open for at least 10 years; if closing allow other entities to bid on them; need to continue certain services for 10 years (and can only vary from that with the consent from the advisory committee); build a replacement hospital in Franklin; spend \$750,000 a year for 10 years in community contributions; continue a list of certain activities and service programs for at least year; not change the uninsured patient and charity care policy for 10 years; continue to fund graduate medical education at no less than the current levels for 10 years; and continue to operate within the Medicaid and Medicare programs for at least 10 years.

Highlands Cashiers Hospital is one of the material facilities mentioned in the 15 commitments. Specifically, its emergency services, surgical services, acute medical

services and the Eckerd Living Center must remain intact for 10 years.

Winters said Gibbons will be advising the six advisory boards [boards whose purview are specific areas/campuses] throughout the process.

"There are some things that can be varied over the 10 years without the boards' consent, and also some that the advisory boards will have to consent to," he said. "There are some things they can modify after five years, but only under special conditions. Regarding that, there could be a dispute as to those conditions and that's when we would get involved."

At the Highlands meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 29, Mayor Pat Taylor said he was glad to see "boots on the ground and glad Gibbons as the Independent Monitor will be meeting with all the different stakeholders in Mission and HCA

"I am very optimistic. I and others in the community went to AG Stein about the hospital's longevity of operation and we wanted a monitor so we were really

• See MONITOR page 17



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# First snow of 2020 - Jan.31 ... and first snow of note since first day of winter, Dec. 21, 2019



Photos by Jim Lewicki, Kim Lewicki, Rachel Lewicki, Brian O'Shea and one submitted.







# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

## Ongoing

- Movies at the Playhouse Fri & Sat 1, 4, 7; Sun. 1 & 4; Tues-Thurs 1, 4, 7.
- Ice Skating at K-H Founders Park -Thurs., 1-8p; Fri. & Sat 1-10p; Sun. 1-5p..
- The Bascom is open Friday - Monday 10am-5pm (Sundays 12pm - 5pm). Visitors are welcome to enjoy the newly updated Story Walk Trail throughout the week.
- At the Highlands Recreation Dept. pool. Public Swim Monday-Thursday 11a-7p Friday and Saturday 11a-6p and Sunday 1-6p.
- Fibber Magee's Clothing Thrift Store on Laurel Street is open Tues.-Friday 10a to 4p and on Saturday from 10a to 2p.

## First Mondays

- Shortoff Baptist Church non-denominational Men's Mtg at 7p.

## Mondays

- At the Rec Park, Dance2Fit classes with Tori Schmitt at 5:30pm.

## Mon.-Wed.

- Hip Hop classes with Tori Schmitt 5:30-6:30.

## Mon. & Thurs.

- The Joy Program at HUMC 11:30a to 1:30p. Includes a free lunch and a variety of programs and games. All seniors are welcome. For more info, call Kristy Lewis at 526-3376.

## Mon. & Fri.

- Gentle Yoga at the Rec park at 9:15-10:15 a.m.. All levels welcome.

## Mon., Wed., Fri.

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

- Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9a.

## Mon., Wed., Thurs.

- Pickle Ball at the Recreation De-

partment Gym 10:30am - 1pm

## Tuesdays

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

- The Highlands Writers Group meets Tuesday, at 3pm in the downstairs boardroom at The Bascom. Writers at all levels of proficiency are welcome. For additional information, contact Bud Katz, 828-526-3190 or budandlynn@me.com.

- The Humanist Discussion Group meets from 10:30-11:30 am in the Meeting Room at the back of the Hudson Library.

## Third Tuesday

- The Macon County Poultry club meets to discuss topics related to raising backyard chickens. For more information please call 828-349-2046 or 828-369-3916.

- Highlands Area Indivisible Group meets at 5 pm in the Meeting Room at the back of the Hudson Library.

## Tuesday and Thursdays

- At the Rec Park, Dance2Fit with Tori Schmitt at 7:30am.

- Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with many different styles of exercise at Rec Park.

## Wednesdays

- At Community Bible Church, 5-5:30p - Dinner - Free (Donations Appreciated) 5:45-7p - G.R.O.W. Get Real on Wednesdays - Classes offered on money management, addiction, discovering your spiritual gifts and personality type, studying the bible, evangelism, parenting, marriage, grief, and more. All are welcome! Visit [www.cbchighlands.com](http://www.cbchighlands.com).

- Power Flow Yoga with Nalicia Allio a certified Yoga Instructor 12-1pm and 6:30-7:30pm.

## First 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.

## Wed. & Fri.

- Highlands/Cashiers Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. Open meetings are held in Highlands @ the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., at noon. And held six times a week in Cashiers at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Rte

107, Cashiers. For meeting times in Cashiers go to website [www.aawnc80.org](http://www.aawnc80.org) or call (828) 349-4357.

- Duplicate Bridge 12-4pm at Rec Park.

## Thursdays

- Storytime at Hudson Library, 10:40 am. Open to the public

- NAMI Support Group for individuals dealing with mental illness and the family members of individuals dealing with these challenges from 7 - 8:15pm at First United Methodist Church Outreach Center on West Main Street in Franklin Call Donita (828) 526-9510.

- Hip Hop classes with Tori Schmitt at 6:30-7:30 at the Rec Park.

## 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.

- Highlands Town Board meeting at 7p in the Community Building on US 64 east and Poplar Street.

## 4th Thursday

- At the Hudson Library, Kids Zone LEGO Club. Intended primarily for kids in grades 1-5, LEGO Club allows creativity and STEM skills to develop together as kids enjoy making LEGO creations.

## Thurs., Feb. 6

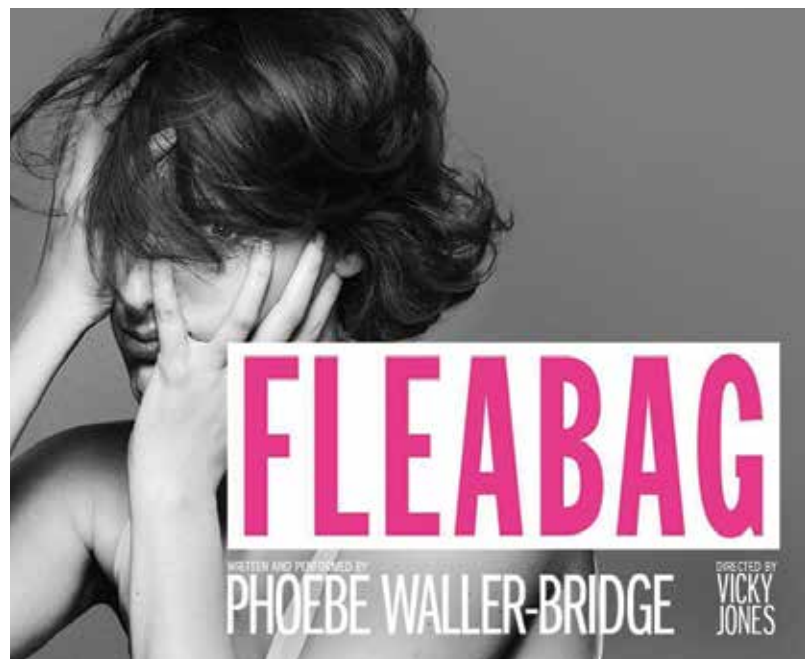
- At Hudson Library the sixth annual Harry Potter Book Night celebrated throughout the world, including Hudson Library. In collaboration with The Bascom, we're getting ready to host an unforgettable Harry Potter Kids Zone event themed around - you guessed it - Harry Potter! The fun kicks off at 3:30 PM. Come in costume or in your Muggle clothes - either way we'll be delighted to see you.

## Sat., Feb. 8

- PAC presents the National Theatre of London's production of Fleabag at 1 p.m. Tickets available online: [www.highlandspac.org](http://www.highlandspac.org) or [www.highlands-performingarts.com](http://www.highlands-performingarts.com) or at the door. Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC.

- Experience the Full Snow Moon at the Nature Center 6-8 p.m. If cancelled due to weather, Feb. 14.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will



The Highlands Performing Arts Center will present the National Theatre of London's production of Fleabag on Saturday, February 8 at 1pm. Fleabag was captured live from London's West End. Written and performed by Phoebe Waller-Bridge (Fleabag, Killing Eve) and directed by Vicky Jones, Fleabag is a rip-roaring look at some sort of woman living her sort of life. Fleabag may seem oversexed, emotionally unfiltered and self-obsessed, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. With family and friendships under strain and a guinea pig café struggling to keep afloat, Fleabag suddenly finds herself with nothing to lose. See the hilarious, award-winning, one-woman show that inspired the BBC's hit TV series Fleabag. Tickets available online: [www.highlandspac.org](http://www.highlandspac.org) or [www.highlandsperformingarts.com](http://www.highlandsperformingarts.com) or at the door. Highlands Performing Arts Center, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC. This is rated R.



# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

take a moderate-to-strenuous 7-mile hike, elevation change 900 ft., from Long Branch to Rock Gap in the Standing Indian Recreational Area, starting at the backcountry parking lot, up Long Branch to the Appalachian Trail at Glassmine Gap, then north to Rock Gap, and returning by a Forest Service Road. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 11 am, Drive 32 miles round trip. Call leader Katharine Brown, 421-4178, for reservations. Visitors and dogs on leash are welcome.

## **Mon., Feb. 10**

- CLE class: Best Health and Medical Apps for seniors. 10:30-3:30. \$75/\$85. Instructor is Loraine Smith. Location is the CLE Classroom in the Peggy Crosby Center on Fifth Street, Highlands

## **Mon. Feb. 13**

- There will be a Macon County Board of Commissioner Candidate Forum Monday at the Macon County Public Library beginning at 4:30. While the forum will focus on Commissioner Candidates, ALL candidates running for office from District Court Judge to Congress have been invited to attend to meet with voters and will have an opportunity to speak. Commissioner candidates will take part in a Q&A beginning at 5:30.

## **Sat., Feb. 15**

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 8-mile hike, elevation change 1100 ft., from Camp Branch to the Bartram Trail, then down Locust Tree Branch, a loop exploration of very old logging roads. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 9 am, drive 16 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for

reservations. Visitors welcome.

## **Sat., Feb. 22**

- At The Farm at OEI, Chef, restaurateur and author Hugh Acheson of 5&10 in Athens, GA. For more information, call 787-2620 or 787-2619

## **Sun. Feb. 23**

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a strenuous 6-mile hike, elevation change 1000 ft., on the Bartram Trail from Wallace Branch to William's Pulpit for lunch with a great view of Albert Mtn., then to a spur of a Forest Service road, and bushwhacking up to Gibson Ridge, scrambling over and through blow downs to return by the Bartram trail. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 11 am, drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader Katharine Brown, 421-4178, for reservations. Visitors welcome, also dogs.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.5 mile hike, elevation change 200 ft., on Lakeside Trail, around the Sheriff's department and through the Environmental Resources Center to see if there are wildflowers beginning to appear. Meet at the Health Dept. on Lakeside Drive at 2:00 pm. Call leader Kathy Ratcliff, 526-6480 for reservations. Visitors and dogs are welcome.

## **Sat., Feb 29**

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 6-mile hike, elevation change 800 ft., from Sawmill Gap, following Forest Service RD 7134 to Rocky Bald Ridge, then to Wine Springs on the Appalachian Trail and down the Bartram Trail to Sawmill Gap. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 9 am, drive 40 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

## **Macon Community Funding Pool application cycle now open**

Macon County non-profit organizations have until February 13, 2020, to apply for county funds through the Macon County Community Funding Pool (CFP). Application forms and instructions are available on the Macon County website, [www.maconnc.org](http://www.maconnc.org). Hard copies may be made available at Macon County Public Library on Siler Farm Road in Franklin, the Hudson Library on Main Street in Highlands, and the Nantahala Public Library on Nantahala School Road, please call ahead to make sure a copy will be ready for pickup.

Organizations applying for CFP funds must provide financial statements such as budgets and federal tax-exempt reports, organization goals and objectives, and program/service descriptions. First-time applicants must contact Karen Wal-

lace, 524-3600, or Bobbie Contino, 342-7872, to discuss their proposal. Groups not incorporated as non-profits may enlist an established non-profit to serve as their fiscal agent. Collaborative agency proposals are encouraged to leverage limited funding and to share resources.

The Community Funding Pool was established to help the Macon County Board of Commissioners allocate tax-generated funds to local non-profits in a fair and efficient way. The CFP Task Force is composed of citizens chosen by the Board of Commissioners to consider applications and make recommendations to the Board, who make final funding decisions. The Community Funding Pool is a separate entity from the Macon County Community Foundation.

## **Experience the full Snow Moon Sat., Feb. 8 at the Nature Center**



Explore the winter forest under the light of the Full Snow Moon on Saturday, February 8th from 6 - 8 PM! The 2nd full moon of the year is named after the heavy snowfall common in February, and we are opening the Botanical Garden to allow the public to explore the grounds under its light. Bundle up and bring your flashlight to wander through the garden on this one night only. After your stroll, join us for hot drinks and warm up by our fire in the Meadow by the Valentine House (888 Horse Cove Rd). All are welcome to participate in this free event. In the event of rain or severe weather, the event will be held on Friday, February 14th. The Highlands Botanical Garden is part of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University. For more information, please call (828) 526-2623.

## **..HF&R continued from page 1**

me at that age. And now, thanks to all of you in this room, I am part of a team that saves people's lives."

Fire Chief Ryan Gearhart presided over the affair first recognizing and thanking the retired and founding fathers of the department, many who were present at the banquet with their spouses.

He recognized the number of training hours logged by the department — 2,128.25 hours, which is a crucial part of the job. Jason Tardo was recognized for earning the most training hours at 153 hours.

"I know this takes a lot of time out of

your life and means time away from family and friends and I appreciate that this is a sacrifice you are willing to make," he said.

Gearhart said the number of calls the department responds to increases each year. When the founding fathers were on call, 100 calls a year was a lot, he said. "We are growing every year."

All tolled there were 540 calls — 14 fires, 269 first-responder calls, 26 hazard conditions with no fire calls, 43 calls for service, 75 good intention calls, 109 false alarms and false calls, 2 severe weather and natural disaster calls, and 2 special incident

• See HF&R page 22

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## ...MONITOR continued from page 11

pleased when he put these stipulations in his approval of the APA," said Mayor Taylor. "The fact that we have a monitor makes this a better situation for not only the community but HCA, and the health foundations. Everyone will benefit from having this process in place."

Mayor Taylor said the charity care promise was an AG stipulation that HCA embraced as well as the commitment to reinvesting and contributing to the community.

"That 10-year commitment is so important, and services and the quality of services will be really critical," he said. "The charity case and community commitment is very positive, not just for the community but also for HCA. I'm very impressed about the \$750,000 a year that HCA will be putting into community services and community activities that we can all benefit from."

Winters said he didn't know what the ramifications of noncompliance by HCA

will be.

"I believe the contract calls for them to comply; calls for the seller to enforce the compliance and allows the AG to go in and enforce the obligation on behalf of the seller if the seller doesn't do it," he said.

Regarding the mention of "surgery continuing" at H-C Hospital, though the surgery unit was shut down about seven years ago, Winters said "surgery" is described in a general way so, colonoscopies would fit in that category.

A retired doctor of 50 years who lives full-time in Highlands said it was critical that HCA do something to bring in providers to generate revenue. Without them there is no reason to have a hospital other than emergency services, he said.

"The ER is great, the hospital facility is great, but it's a ghost town over there. It's really sad. It looks like the hospital has abandoned the community, not that the community has abandoned the hospital,"

• See MONITOR page 19

We  Locals

### WINTER SPECIALS

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# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



## On the Angels

**Father Jason Barone**  
Promoter of Vocations,  
Diocese of Charlotte  
Parochial Administrator,  
St. Jude Catholic Mission and  
Our Lady of the Mountains  
Catholic Mission

Angels are seemingly everywhere in Scripture, not to mention popular culture, and their role in salvation history is momentous: an angel, albeit fallen, tempted our first parents into disobedience with God; an angel announced the Incarnation to the Blessed Virgin; an angel was first in heralding the Good News of the Resurrection to Mary Magdalene; angels will trumpet in the Second Coming. Such being the case, a deeper understanding of their nature, mission, and how they interact with humanity assists us in our spiritual lives.

Like man, angels were created in the image and likeness of God, meaning they possess an intellect and free will; therefore, they can know and love. Unlike man, however, angels are pure spirits, lacking a body or any physicality. Interestingly, this means they are outside of time, since time is a measure of change, and only physical reality can change. Furthermore, they were situated in a hierarchy of nine choirs: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.

At the moment of their creation angels were tested, like Adam and Eve. They were presented with the will of God along with a choice to accept or reject it. While the precise test is not known with certainty, the Church Fathers speculate it was in reference to the Incarnation. For angels being superior to man by nature, the idea of worshipping God in human form demanded humility. To this test the brightest of the angels, Lucifer, gave his non serviam (I shall not serve). Tradition tells us, and Scripture suggests (Rev 12:4), that he swayed a third of the angels to join his rebellion. These fallen angels are called demons.

As for their mission, angels are not separate from the physical world, but are part of a broader spectrum of creation, including man and the rest of the visible world. Their task is guiding this world in accord with God's di-

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

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Visit our website [www.wayfarersunity.org](http://www.wayfarersunity.org) for more information, or call 706-746-3303

## Proverbs 3:5

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

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

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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

### CHAPEL OF THE SKY

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### CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

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

Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

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

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

[www.cbchighlands.com](http://www.cbchighlands.com) • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC

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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### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

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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](http://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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# • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

### HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

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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

Pastor Dan Robinson

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

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

Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

### HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Randy Lucas 526-3376

Sun: School 9:45a.; Worship 9:09, 10:50.; Youth 5:30 p.

Wed: Supper: 5:15; youth, & adults activities: 6; Handbell

rehearsal, 6:15; Choir Rehearsal 7. (nursery provided); 7pm

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8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah

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

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743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

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Rev. Marty Kilby

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

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### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am



**From Highlands Police Chief****HPD requests information**

An investigation by our department has led to multiple embezzlement by employee charges.

Twenty-one (21) felony charges have been secured and warrants have been issued for Kristeena (Kristi) Byrd Gray of Franklin NC.

Ms. Gray was employed by the 4th Street Market in Highlands from June 2019 to December 2019. We were contacted when the management of 4th Street Market realized the checks written for cash did not

match the amount of cash loaded into the ATM machine.

During the course of this investigation, it has been determined that 4th Street Market has suffered a loss of over \$31,000 in US currency.

If anyone has any information in regards to this case, please contact my office.

— **Chief W. Harrell,**  
**Highlands Police Department**  
**828-526-94321**

**...MONITOR continued from page 17**

he said.

He said the economic engine of a hospital is the providers. Without the providers there aren't patients.

"The hospital can't exist off revenues from Medicare and Medicaid. It has to have some private pay and some commercial insurance," he said. "Right now, the economic engine at the hospital is running on two cylinders -- it's sputtering. If you don't offer the services provided by the providers, it's going to be a self-fulfilling process that the hospital will die and dwindle. If people go to Gainesville and Greenville for services, it will be because there are no providers."

He said he hopes HCA can do something to bring in some providers and it's clear they are going to have to supplement the incomes to get young doctors to come and stay. He suggested pushing the quality of life aspect and understand that for years the income of young doctors will have to be supplemented until they get their patient-base built up.

"That's the only way we are going to get anything at the hospital," he said.

Mayor Taylor suggested forming a nonprofit healthcare hub to partner with HCA to populate the current Doctor Desert.

"Maybe form a partnership with our H-C Health Foundation, the Dogwood Health Foundation, and community leadership with HCA where we bring in a nonprofit organization that can address the issue of doctor shortages. Maybe the Jane Woodruff building could be the location for that type of operation. This is a great opportunity for us to advance through partnerships, not just with HCA but with all the different stakeholders and all the different groups. In the long run, if we can form these cooperative relationships it will be a positive outcome for HCA and the entire community."

Winters asked people to go to IndependentMonitorMHS.com to log complaints or suggestions.

— **Kim Lewicki**

**...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 18**

vine plan. Hence, all human beings receive a guardian angel. Conversely, this is also the reason for demons' interest in man at all: although created to assist man, their fall distorted this relationship such that they seek not man's salvation, but his destruction.

Angels, in virtue of their spiritual nature, can exercise influence over anything physical, including man's body, senses, emotions, and memory. This influence often explains those otherwise inexplicable moments when, for instance, a parent strongly senses danger approaching their child. The same type of influence is true for demonic temptation, although ordered towards committing sin.

Angels are truly glorious and even frightful creatures. Several times in the Book of Revelation, St. John describes how he began worshipping one, mistaking angelic glory for God's. Modern portrayals of angels as chubby, winged babies, while rightly reflecting innocence, do a disservice to our understanding of their real nature.

Given the nature and mission of angels, we should be filled with reverence, knowing that if we pulled back the veil and glimpsed their full glory, we too would be tempted to worship. We likewise should be humbled and deeply grateful, knowing that our own guardian angel, at the moment of his creation and upon seeing God's plan, a plan which included us, said, "Yes."

**• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •**

**Highlands Police entries from Dec. 7. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

**Dec. 7**

• At 1:50 p.m., officers were called about a vehicle parked in the travel land on South Street and owner of vehicle not paying the citation.

**Jan. 5**

• At 1 p.m., officers were called about the larceny of a firearm from a home on Upper Brushy Face Road.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Jan. 29**

**Jan. 29**

• At 6:41 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Harris Drive..

• At 5:24 p.m., the dept. investigated a call of smoke on Bobby Jones Road.

• At 6:41 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Flat Mountain Road.

**Jan. 31**

• At 9:57 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 east.

• At 11:38 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 28 south.

**Feb. 1**

• At 8:26 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hideaway Trail.

• At 10:09 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Country Club Drive.

• At 5:24 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Main Street.

**Feb. 2**

• At 3:24 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

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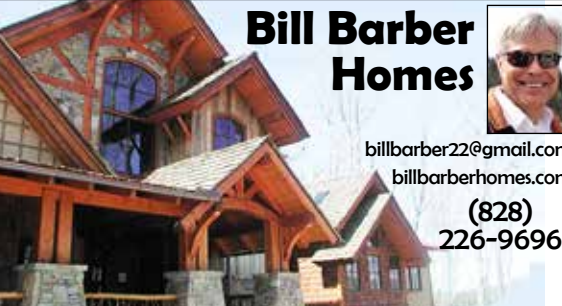
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**LANDS.** Small private development with paved streets, community water, community lake and pavilion, underground power and street lights. Gentle building sites with mountain views and streams at over 4,100' in elevation. Borders USFS. Offered for \$599,000 and MLS #88028. Call Cathy Garren at Highlands Sotheby's International Realty at 828-226-5870. (1/2/2020)

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**SIX ACRES ON BUCK CREEK ROAD** behind Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Sign on property. 843-460-8015. (st. 5/30)

**2/2 CLAYTON HOME IN LOWER CLEAR CREEK.** 1+ acre, Private. View. 118,000. 706.782.9728 (st. 9/5)

**1.21 ACRES FOR SALE BY OWNER - OTTO, NC** - \$28,000. Lot 12 Quail Haven Road. Otto, NC. Price not firm ... open for negotiation. Please email if interested to ddmars15@aol.com or call/text to 239-980-0531. Please leave a message. (st. 7/20)

**COMMERCIAL SPACE RENTALS**

**COMMERCIAL SPACE** at 640 Carolina Way, Highlands. +/- 1340 sq.ft. \$1,650/mo. 404-210-7979. (st. 12/12)

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**HOUSE FOR LEASE IN MIRROR LAKE AREA.** 2 BR/2 BA furnished. Full laundry, screened porch. No smoking, sorry no pets.. Long-term lease available \$1,900 per month. 404-630-8398. (2/6)

**FOR RENT IN SHELBY PLACE,** 2 bed/2 bath. Close to town. Newly renovated. Fireplace with gas logs. 6 or 12 month lease. Call 828-226-9696. (st. Dec 12)

**4BD 3.5 BA, 1 CAR GARAGE W/STORAGE,** large yard with backyard fenced, dogs negotiable. On the Atlanta side of Highlands, 5 minutes from the Post Office. \$2500 month. Offered unfurnished, one year minimum lease, references, credit check and deposit required. Call House in Order 828-484-1571. (st. 1/14)

**LUXURY APARTMENT INTOWN.** Walk to Main Street. 1BR 1BA. \$3,500 per month. 3 month minimum. Sorry, no pets, no smoking. Adults only. 828-421-1709. (st. 5/10)

## ...HF&R continued from page 15

calls.

Gearhart welcomed new junior member Tristan Petrone to the clan.

Each year for the 30 years he has been on the force, Roger Lee Wilson has earned the Perfect Attendance award. This year he was joined by Leah Dallmann who has been on the force for five years.

Also recognized for being on the force for five years, was Paul Corbin. Those on the force

for 10 years are Chris Barden and Hunter Leffler. Travis Ramey has been on the force for 15 years; Ryan Gearhart for 20 years; Robbie Forrester for 25 years; Wilson for 30 and Gary Ammons for 35 years.

Macon County Commission Chairman and Highlands Firefighter Jim Tate made 2019 his last year on the force, hanging up his hat after 20 years.

He joined the department Oct. 6, 1998, earned his EMT

certificate in 2002, his EMT Intermediate certificate in 2009, and was Rescue Captain 2002, 2004, from 2006-2009 and in 2012.

Tate was 2nd Lt. in 2005, Fire Captain in 2010, 1st Lt. in 2011, Rescue Lt. 2013-2014, and named Fireman of the Year in 2000.

In his farewell speech Tate said he remembered when Fire Chief Mike McCall pulled into his driveway and told him he'd make a good fireman.

"I thought about it for a few days and said, yeah, I think I'm

ready and besides asking Allison to marry me, it's probably the best decision I've made in my life," he said.

Tate said joining the department was a stepping stone to starting his business and even becoming a county commissioner.

"I haven't been a very good fireman in the last five years; not because I didn't want to be, but because my duties pulled me elsewhere. But as I look back at my time as a Highlands fireman, I look at the leadership skills it gave me," he said. "I didn't re-

alize at the time, but you build yourself up and sell yourself and learn to become a leader. Then once you become a leader it's all about building up the people beneath you and that's what the fire department has done. We had some great leaders that helped train me I appreciate each and every one of you."

For several years, the annual Firefighter Award Banquet has been held at OEI's The Spring House - this year, Friday, Jan. 31.

- Kim Lewicki



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