

Highlands Newspaper

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Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020

A slew of candidates to appear on the Primary ballots March 3, 2020

By Brittney Lofthouse

The long list of candidates for North Carolina Elections was just finalized a few weeks ago, and it is already time for early voting to begin.

On Monday, Jan. 13, absentee by-mail ballots were sent out to voters across the state who re-

quested them.

Any registered voter in North Carolina may vote absentee by-mail. Primary Election Day – when voters select the political party nominees to appear on the ballot in the November 3 General Election – is March 3, 2020.

To vote absentee by-mail,

voters must complete a 2020 State Absentee Ballot Request Form. For the 2020 primary, the form must be received by the voter's county board of elections by 5 p.m. Tuesday, February 25, 2020.

There are changes to the absentee voting process this year,

• See **CANDIDATES** page 15

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Voter ID or no Voter ID... that is the question

By Brittney Lofthouse

Just before flipping the calendars to 2020, a Federal court ruled that voters in North Carolina will NOT have to show their ID during the 2020 March Primary... beyond that, it is yet to be decided.

U.S. District Court Judge Loretta Biggs ruled that while a trial can still sort out the issues, it appears that parts of the law “were impermissibly motivated, at least

in part, by discriminatory intent.”

The North Carolina Board of Elections was in the middle of printing out millions of brochures to be mailed out across the state informing voters of the new ID requirement... however, a Federal Court issued the temporary block while the courts continue to battle it out.

The case – NAACP et al v.

• See **VOTER ID** page 11

‘Gun Sanctuary’ debate comes to Macon County

By Brittney Lofthouse

On the heels of state vs. federal gun rights debates, gun owners are demanding that their local government leaders establish sanctuaries for gun rights. The “sanctuary” movement began last year in Illinois and quickly spread to numerous states, including California, Colorado, New Mexico, Florida and most recently, North Carolina.

Gun owners are asking their local governments to consider resolutions, promoted heavily by Second Amendment groups, which vary from county to county, but most declare the intention of local officials to oppose any “unconstitutional restrictions” on the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. In the last two months, more than 100

• See **GUN** page 19

Highlands School Varsity Cheerleaders

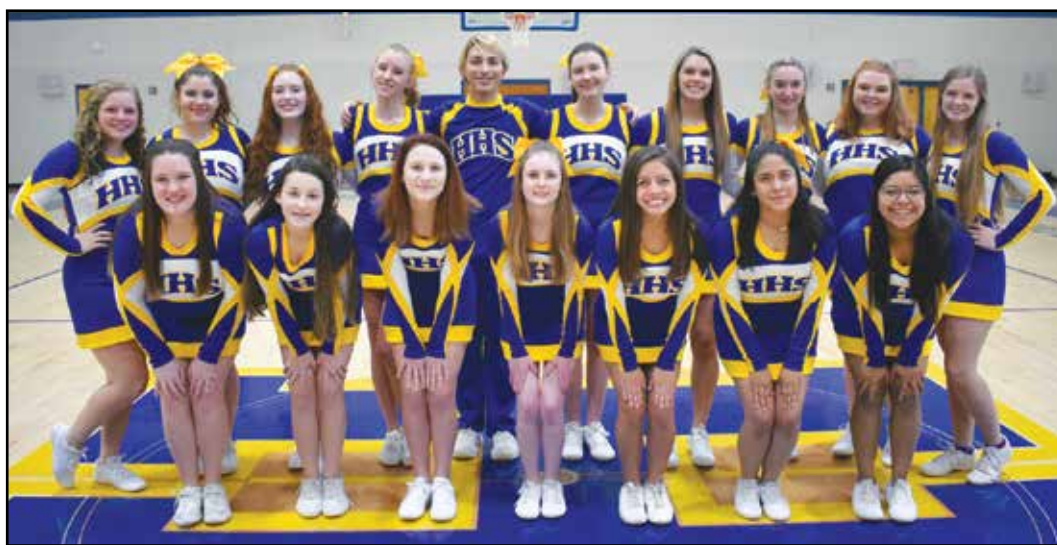


Photo by Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News

Team members are: Alexandra Clark, Ashlynn Wilson, Bailey Schmitt, Brianna Norris, Brittney Damian, Ellen Diehl, Emma Weller, Ghetsi Hernandez, Hadley Templeton, Haley Small, Jeslyn Head, Joana Jimenez Reyes, JordAn Powell, Maddie Coen, Marilyn Valerio, Rebekah Wiggins, Sydney Figel, Taylor Rickert, and Anna Stiehler. Cheerleaders are cheering at both home and away games as well as competitions. Their next competition will be on February 1st in Raleigh, NC. See more pictures on pages 6, 16, and 17.

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Using 'special purpose option sales taxes' to better communities

During the holidays I visited my daughter and grandchildren. Rebecca and her husband live in a large Atlanta metropolitan county. While there, I did my routine training run at a large community park across the street from their subdivision.

The large park was very impressive. It has an artificial turf soccer/football field, multiple baseball and softball fields, skateboard parks, and outdoor basketball courts. In addition, there were at least two child-play spaces and a long jogging/walking trail. The park has a trail network that connects adjacent subdivisions. Plans are underway to add an aquatics center.

As I was leaving the park, I saw a sign stating that the park had been built with SPLOST funds. That acronym means, "special purpose local option sales tax."



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Later I discussed SPLOST with my son-in-law who grew up in Rabun County. He said Rabun County had also built a great recreation facility with SPLOST funds.

I returned to Highlands and began researching the Georgia SPLOST, and whether North Carolina has the same option. Georgia county voters can approve a one-cent addition to local sales tax for designated special projects. The tax has a 5-year sunset. This additional

tax has to be earmarked for specific recreation, education and road projects.

I read an article about North Carolina local option sales tax that has been published by the North Carolina School of Government. While our state has a local option sales tax provision, it is much more complicated than the Georgia SPLOST provisions. There is no special projects provision in North Carolina. The North Carolina Legislature may want to consider creating a SPLOST which would give county voters more specific input in shaping local infrastructure.

For example, Macon County is being to review whether to build a new, or renovate, Franklin High School. Currently, the vehicle to fund such a project would be through property taxes, which would probably have to be increased. A SPLOST might be an option to fund such a project in part, or in whole. Road, sidewalks, and park improvements could be funded with this type of tax.

There are pros and cons to having a SPLOST. One benefit is that the tax burden is distributed to everyone who purchases goods and services in a county, including visitors and tourists. A SPLOST would take the burden off property owners and continuing millage rate increases.

The converse argument is that a sales tax is regressive, and folks on limited incomes are impacted the most. Also, there

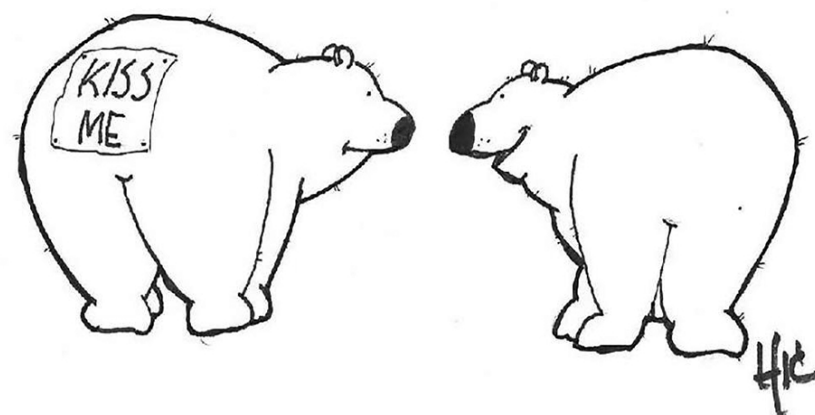
is the concern of a tax drain on a county imposing a SPLOST. Some believe consumers would simply take their business to adjacent counties that do not have the tax.

SPLOST may not be a tax panacea, but I think state leaders should consider this option.

The January Highlands Town Board





meeting is tonight at 7pm at the Highlands Community Center. First on the agenda will be an update by the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation. Representatives of nonprofit organizations focused on the wellbeing of the community, may want to hear this important presentation.

• HIC'S VIEW •



BEAR PRACTICAL JOKES

• WEATHER •

Thu, 16-Jan	Fri, 17-Jan	Sat, 18-Jan	Sun, 19-Jan
			
54°F 26°F	45°F 29°F	42°F 27°F	42°F 17°F
A thick cloud cover and mild	Sun, then clouds	Cloudy with showers	Mostly sunny
RealFeel® High: 52° Low: 36°	RealFeel® High: 46° Low: 28°	RealFeel® High: 36° Low: 29°	RealFeel® High: 42° Low: 21°

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• LETTER •

Highlands' age of innocence is gone

Dear Editor,

Cyberstalking, burglary, breaking and entering, destruction of property, drug violations, assault on a female, larceny, embezzlement, drunk driving, trespassing and weapons violations. All of the aforementioned activities were in last week's police reports in both of our local newspapers. They make lewd emails and texts, as well as littering, which were also in the reports, hardly worth mentioning.

It wasn't too long ago that reading the police reports made me smile because of their innocence and simplicity. For instance, the dog that was constantly getting stuck in a hole and had to be rescued by the police. The same dog was in the police reports more than once. Another one said "Police responded to a report of suspicious activity on Bowery Road" but didn't elaborate on the nature of the activity. If you ask me, almost all of the activity on Bowery Road is suspicious and I should know, I live there.

The reports aren't funny, entertaining or innocent anymore; no more small-town flavor to them. It's not hard to see the escalating seriousness of the offenses being committed in Highlands. The only recent "offense" reported that made me smile was the case of the husband who allegedly pushed his wife out of bed. Seems more likely that it would be the other way around. Just saying.

Anyway, it was with a sinking feeling that I read the Police Reports this week. I miss the innocence and simplicity of our once small town.

Alice Nelson
Highlands

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CNIPM to provide workshop for landscapers, nursery trade

The Coalition for Invasive Plant Management (CNIPM) will provide a half day workshop for landscapers, the nursery trade personnel, and herbicide applicators on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. (registration begins at 8:30) at the Highlands Community Building next to the baseball field. The workshop has been approved by the Pesticide Section of NCDA&CS for 3 Recertification Credits in the categories D, G, H, N, O, and X for licensed pesticide applicators, dealers and consultants.

Principal speaker is Johnny Randall, Ph.D., Director of Conservations Programs at the North Carolina Botanical Garden and an adjunct faculty member in the UNC-Chapel Hill Program in Environment, Ecology and Energy since 1998. Dr. Randall is a member of the NC Plant Conservation Program Scientific Committee, past president of the NC Invasive Plant Council, a member of the NC Pesticide Board of Advisors, and has lectured world-wide on aspects of plant conservation and the effects of invasive plants on the environment. His topic for this workshop is "In my lifetime: From introduction and lag phase to invasion".

The program moderator will again be James Costa, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Highlands Biological Station and Professor of Biology at Western Carolina University. Dr. Costa is an evolutionary geneticist and historian of science with an interest in native plant conservation and invasive insects. He and his students and collaborators are most recently studying the spread of fire ants on the Highlands Plateau, and new methods of controlling hemlock woolly adelgid.

Additional faculty will include demonstrations of invasive control methods by experts from Mountain True, a Conservation organization whose mission champions resilient forests, clean waters and healthy communities in WNC; Equinox Environmental, a consulting firm with a focus on conservation, sustainability, and environmentally responsible land development projects; and the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust whose mission is to protect valuable natural resources for all generations.

Cost for the workshop for those seeking CEUs is \$50

per person payable by credit card online or by check or cash at the door. The workshop is free for those not seeking CEUs, but a donation is appreciated. Although the workshop is principally aimed for landscape personnel, nursery trade personnel and herbicide applicators, the public is invited. All who wish to attend must register through the website <https://highlandsbiological.org/invasive-plants/>. An accurate count will help with plans for lunch which will be provided by the Laurel Garden Club members and to assure workshop materials for all attendees.

CNIPM is composed of the following organizations: Highlands Biological Station, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, Highlands Audubon Society, Highlands Greenway, Highlands Historical Society, the Town of Highlands, and the Land Stewards of the Highlands Plateau, the conservation arm of the Laurel Garden Club. The Coalition was formed in 2015 and will offer its 4th seminar for property owners in the summer of 2020 to promote the use of native plants in landscapes.



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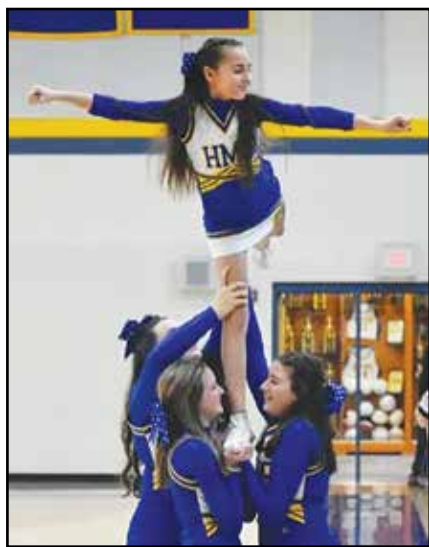
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Highlands
Playhouse

Highlands Middle School Cheerleaders



Pictured are: Allie Buck, Anna Fox, Annamaria Silverthorn, Bria Taylor, Brooke Fogarty, Darby Templeton, Evangelina Silverthorn, Gavin Small, Hailey Wardwell, Jasmine Oakley, Katie Earp, Lathea Watts, Lillian Rutter, Lilly Cambrook, Nicole Taylor, Sara McDonald, Savannah Bozeman, Shirley Diaz, Soraya Lopez and Tate Wilson.



Highlands High School cheerleaders finish up a stunt during the Highlands vs Nantahala game.



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Photos by Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News

• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft. •

The Dreaded Home Inspection

What a great year in real estate 2019 was on our plateau! We saw a surge of buyers and prices are on the increase for homes that are updated and priced at fair market value. We also found it more difficult to get homes closed with most of that being related to home inspections.

Good brokers always recommend a home inspection so you know the overall condition of the home you're purchasing. This is done during your due diligence period. If the inspection reveals serious issues then you, the buyer, can terminate and your earnest money will be refunded. So how do you decide whether to move forward or not?

Home inspectors should never make that decision for you. Their job is to examine items that have to do with safety issues, such as old or bad wiring, improper venting, receptacles that overheat etc. and report defects. Leaks from hot water heaters, or water standing in the crawlspace, or mildew in closets due to excess moisture and humidity are a few items of the 40-60 page reports buyers and brokers receive. I always tell my buyers and sellers to be prepared because there will always be issues!

Home inspectors are all different in their outlook and interpretation of facts and reporting. Some in our area tout themselves as "deal-killers!" and many actually are. The seller always dreads the day of the home inspection and usually the buyers are there to observe and get an explanation of issues that may arise. It is NOT the duty of the inspector to voice his or her opinion as to whether he or she would buy the home or not.

The normal inspection takes 4-6 hours depending on the size of the home. Once the report is sent to the buyers the panic sets in! With 40-plus pages the first reaction is: "No way will I buy this house!" Their broker should sit down with the buyers and go through the entire report to alleviate their stress. A prime example is a notation that a light is not working and an electrician should be consulted when it was simply that the light bulb had burned out!

There are things a seller should do before the inspector arrives. Check for



Pat Allen
Broker-in-charge
Cell: 828-200-9179

faucet leaks, check door locks that may need repair, check light bulbs, change the furnace filter, re-grout the shower if it is chipped, clean the debris from the gutters, if water is coming into the crawl space correct the drainage, check the plastic and make sure all dirt is covered so moisture doesn't penetrate the house. All of these things will come up in the inspection and will add to the 40-plus pages. Once you have decided to sell do your preliminary "home-

work."

Buyers also need to understand that you are buying a "used" home, just like buying a used car—everything is not new. You may want to replace appliances that may be older but if they are still functioning it is not up to the seller to buy new ones for you. If you don't like the pink tub that still provides a bath it is not up to the seller to buy you a new one. Factor the changes you want to make into the offer and don't try and make it part of due diligence asking for a price reduction after inspection.

Once the inspector sends the report, the buyer can ask for items of concern to be repaired or for a credit at closing. The seller can either fix or repair selected items or decline the request. Keep in mind that the contract to purchase says the house is being sold in "as is" condition. This is when an experienced and knowledgeable broker can help negotiate and create a win-win solution. I always advise that any safety issues or those related to the integrity of the home should be done by the seller. Cosmetic and "nit picking" are simply a matter of choice. So be open-minded, don't panic, and be reasonable on both sides.

• *Pat Allen is owner of Pat Allen Realty Group and a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist and is certified in Resort and Second home properties. She chooses to remain an independent firm, allowing for personalized service and decision making. Her professionally trained brokers sell in any price range. Her firm was recently selected as a Leading Real Estate Company of the World. She is consistently a top producer and award-winning broker on the plateau. Visit her on the web at Pat Allen Realty Group.com, call 828-526-8784, or 828-200-9179. The office is conveniently located at 295 Dillard Road across from Highlands Decorating Center.*

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PRINCESS PUDDIN'

• CATSPEAK •

Dogs, Doors, and cats

If you've ever been owned by a cat, you know about cats and doors. Yes, you read that sentence correctly. Anyone who has a cat at home realizes it is the cat who does the owning and not vice versa.

We cats simply cannot abide closed doors, and I, Puddin' Penn, am a perfect example of that phenomenon. The last few months have been quite trying for me because Mum began closing the bedroom door at night to keep the dog in.

You've heard about Banjo's doggie dementia and his new habit of going downstairs several times a night to bark at his water bowl in the kitchen until someone—that would be Mum—goes downstairs and escorts him back to the bedroom. She solved that problem by locking him in the bedroom at night, but the door being shut was an issue for me.

It's not that I want to be in the bedroom all night. It's that I want the ability to come and go as I please. Mum thought it was entertaining to see my little white paws appear under the door as I tried to open the darned thing. Once she turned out the light, she assumed I'd given up, but no!

One night, I startled her awake from a sound sleep when the door banged against the wall in the wee hours. Mum hadn't latched it well enough, and I pushed and pushed



until it opened. She sat up in bed, and I leaped onto her legs meowing indignantly. I very clearly asked, "What were you thinking?"

She tried shutting the door more firmly, but I broke in another time or two. Finally, Mum figured it out and left the door cracked open with a shoe in front of it to keep it from opening wide. That was fine by me because I can squeeze through most tiny spaces.

As if that weren't enough, my trials and tribulations began anew when my pet parents finished remodeling the guest bathroom on the main floor. Looking ahead to aging in place and the possibility of one of them needing a walker, they enlarged the shower and put in a pocket door to provide a wider entrance.

The construction didn't bother me, but I had an issue with the new sliding door to the shower being closed. How dare they close the door? I rattled and rattled the

thing until finally Mum got the message. Another problem easily solved by sliding the door slightly open.

Next, it was the pocket door that irritated me. When Mum and Dad crank up the wood-burning stove during cold spells, they close the doors to the bedroom, dining room, and bathroom on the main level. The dining room doors are small French doors, and I've learned to push them open an inch or two, but the bathroom door was something new.

Again, I had to make my displeasure known. I had to push and rattle the pocket door with my paws and nose. I mean really, how hard would it have been for Mum to see it needed to be opened just a few inches?

With the door issues handled, I've now shifted my attention to the new television and chest in the living room. Dogs, doors, and cats are living in harmony—at least for now.

• Princess Puddin' Penn resides in Georgia with her dad, her mom Kathy Manos Penn, and her canine brother Lord Banjo. Please send comments, compliments, and questions to inkpenn119@gmail.com. She appears in "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch," a book that can be found on Amazon, at Books Unlimited in Franklin, and at Mountain Paws.

• HS SPORTS •

with Kedra McCall

This week both middle school boys and girls defeated Nantahala. Their next home game will be tonight, January 16th. They will play Towns County with girls starting at 4:30 boys following. On January 23rd they will play Rabun Gap at home to celebrate their 8th graders.

High school basketball played Robbinsville this week. JV girls pulled out another win to continue their undefeated season. JV boys nor Varsity girls were able to finish with a win. Varsity boys did finish



on top. Their next home game will be on January 22nd. They will again play Robbinsville. JV girls will begin at 4pm, followed by JV boys, then Varsity girls and finally Varsity boys.

Cheerleaders are cheering at both home and away games as well as competitions. Their next competition will be on February 1st. They will compete in Raleigh, NC with their time determined closer to competition date.

Come out and support all your Highlanders!

• TAXING MATTERS •

Seeing 20/20 in 2020

Bringing in another year offers all of us the opportunity to review last year's finances. A fresh look at our finances is beneficial and can be an eye opening experience.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) went into effect in 2018 so most taxpayers are well aware of the impact that had on their 2018 income tax returns. For the most part the same rules applied to the 2018 tax returns will also apply for the 2019 returns. If you realized that not enough tax was paid throughout the year you may have been left wondering what changes you should make so that doesn't happen again. While it is too late to make any changes for 2019, you can make some changes for 2020 and stop the cycle of owing the IRS and State.

Starting in 2020, the IRS has a new Employee's Withholding Certificate (Form W-4). This is the form that employees complete and provide to their employer that lets the employer know certain information about the employee such as whether the employee is single or married or head of household. All of this information given on the Form W-4 helps the employer know how much tax to withhold from the employee's paycheck. The form

is simpler than it used to be in that it is no longer necessary to figure out how many dependents or withholding exemptions, you intend to claim. Some taxpayers in the past have indicated they are married but want the employer to withhold tax at the single tax rates. That has disappeared from the new form and now if you would like additional tax withheld one option is to mark a box indicating that you have multiple jobs or that you have a spouse who works. This will cause additional taxes to be taken out of your regular paychecks so that you may avoid owing taxes at year end.

For the 2018 tax returns after the TCJA went into effect, many taxpayers claimed they were receiving less in refunds or they had to pay for 2018 when in prior years they received refunds. Recent statistics from the IRS based upon tax returns filed during tax season 2019 indicate that the prior year average refund of \$2,778 decreased by only \$49 for 2018 returns filed. The concerns over the tax act changes were not as much



Robbin Brophy, EA

of an issue as previously thought. The reasons some taxpayers owed for 2018 is likely due to the elimination of certain deductions as well as the elimination of deductions for dependents.

Another thing to contemplate for 2020 is whether you are saving for retirement and if so will it be adequate to support you when you retire? There are multiple types of retirement plans that mostly carry an income tax advantage by reducing taxable income thereby reducing overall tax. If you have an employer-sponsored retirement plan, consider increasing what you already contribute by a small percentage in the new year with the goal to meet at least what your employer matches for you. For an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) you have until April 15, 2020 or the filing date of your 2019 tax return to make a contribution. The contributions for 2019 for an IRA are \$6,000 for wage earners and self-employed individuals with a \$500 catch-up contribution for taxpayers

over the age of 50. Should you receive a year end bonus from your employer, consider setting some of that aside to fund an IRA contribution. Most IRA contributions are tax deductible although there are income limitations and other limits relating to whether you and your spouse have access to an employer-sponsored plan.

Finally, throughout my career I have seen many instances of a lack of planning for death. While that is an uncomfortable topic for most of us the fact remains we all will die someday (death and taxes are the only absolutes). Consider meeting with an estate planning attorney to have a Will and possibly a Trust setup to ensure that your finances and assets are protected when you die. Failing to adequately prepare for this can end up eating into the inheritance of beneficiaries due to legal, accounting fees and court costs.

• Robbin Brophy is an enrolled agent, licensed by the US Dept of the Treasury to represent taxpayers before the IRS for audits, collections and appeals. She is currently accepting new clients for tax preparation, based on the principles of professionalism, responsiveness and quality for each client. Call (828)558-4300.

'Bark & Branches' Jan. 28 at the Nature Center Jan. 28

Don't let the lack of leaves scare you. Join the Highlands Nature Center on Tuesday, January 28th from 1-2 p.m. for our Nature 101: Bark & Branches event to learn how to identify common trees in the winter. We will review a few tricks before exploring the Botanical Gardens and putting our sleuthing skills to work. All are welcome to participate in this free event at the Highlands Nature Center, 930 Horse Cove Road. The Highlands Biological Station is a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University. For more information, please call (828) 526-2623.



All My Sons by Arthur Miller

starring
**Sally Fields &
Bill Pullman**

**Live via Satellite
Saturday,
January 18
1 pm**



**National
Theatre
Live** of
London

Highlands Performing Arts Center 507 Chestnut Street

Tickets available online: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspacperformingarts.com at the door

National Theatre of London's 'All my sons' live via satellite Jan. 18 at PAC

The Highlands Performing Arts Center will screen, captured live via Satellite, the National Theatre of London's production of *All My Sons* on Saturday, January 18th at 1 pm.

Academy Award-winner Sally Field (*Steel Magnolias*, *Forest Gump*, *Brothers & Sisters*) and Bill Pullman (*The Sinner*, *Independence Day*) star in Arthur Miller's blistering drama *All My Sons*, filmed live from The Old Vic in London.

It's America, 1947. Despite hard choices and even harder knocks, Joe and Kate Keller are a success story. They have built a home, raised two sons and established a thriving business. But nothing lasts forever and their contented lives, already shadowed by the loss of their eldest boy to war, are about to shatter.

With the return of a figure from the past, long buried truths are forced to the surface and the price of their American dream is laid bare.



Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspacperformingarts.com or at the door at 507 Chestnut Street.

• WORD MATTER •

Who Cares About Poor People?

The question hit so hard that on some level I actually felt it. I know the person who asked the question. It's someone I respect, even admire; someone I hold in high regard.

"Why should I care about poor people?"

The question deserves an answer.

Forget Judeo-Christian platitudes. Instead, let's examine that question through a lens of pragmatism.

Our capitalist system is aimed at rewarding capital risk, as well as hard and smart work. That said, no successful entrepreneur does it alone. He or she relies on a dedicated, competent, fairly compensated labor force.

We hear a lot about income and wealth inequality. We hear the wealthiest 1% in the U.S. now own more than the bottom 90%. This datapoint comes from a so-called 'think tank' representing those in public life who like to opine about the unfairness of it all. It does nothing at all to address the root causes of poverty, and doesn't put a calorie into, or a blanket over, the mouth or body of a poor person.

Poverty has a lot to do with ZIP codes, in other words, it matters where someone grows up. It also has a lot to do with lack of a quality education, the unavailability of health care, no access to employment. In other words, an absence of genuine opportunity.

So, back to the question at hand; why should we care about poor people? Well, one reason might have to do with easy access nearly anyone has to obtaining a firearm. There are approximately 393 million guns, both legal and illegal, in the U.S. That amounts to 125 guns for every 100 men, women and children. A poor person, a hungry person, a sick person, a person so discouraged, so unhealthy, so literally unseen my most not poor people — a person who feels he or she has nothing to lose — might find it easier to obtain a firearm in order to survive, then to beg on the streets.

Another reason might be that we, the not poor people, already pay to keep poor people healthy. Maybe if we could figure out how to cover everyone's basic health care needs, including poor people, without the health insurance industry raking off perhaps a third of every health care dol-



Bud Katz

lar, poor people might become healthier, less discouraged, more employable. It's hard to imagine the same country who put men on the moon can't figure this out.

A third reason for us to care about poor people has to do with education. Over time, we've allowed our once world-class education system to fall into catastrophic disrepair. We

don't pay our teachers enough and we're losing them to higher paying careers. We don't consider the sizable number of subsistence-level families with two low-paid, wage earning parents, who can't see a path away from overcrowded, underfunded schools for their children.

These children will grow into young adults who won't attend college, won't qualify for better jobs, won't be able to provide for their own families. In short, they will have no shot at whatever still passes for the American Dream. The cycle continues.

Sadly, much of America is no longer empathetic when it comes to the survival needs, never mind the hopes and dreams of others. Many can't help in any tangible way, but many others can; they simply don't care to. I call these people zero-sum Americans. If someone else has or receives help, typically someone other than them personally, or their cohort, then that's something they don't have and therefore don't want others to have.

The original question turned out to be rhetorical. It wasn't dismissive or disrespectful. It was asked in order to stimulate a conversation about how individuals with a mind for solving problems and a heart for helping others, could help close the gap between the super-rich and abject poor. For me, it's a simple calculation. All it takes is a political apparatus that really, truly wants to fix something that's broken, and solve a real problem.

Help ensure children at all levels have a home and feel safe within it, have enough decent food to eat, have access to a quality public education that prepares them for a competitive future, receive fundamental health care without insurance skimming a trillion or more from the system, to breathe clean air and drink clean water, and, finally, to live without fear.

In my humble opinion, this is an excellent place to start.



HUGH ACHESON Saturday, February 22

Chef, restaurateur and author, Hugh Acheson of *5&10 restaurant* in Athens, GA—as well as *Empire State South* and the new *By George* in Atlanta—will be at The Farm cooking up his favorite dishes. Hugh has developed a style of his own, forging together the beauty of the South with the flavors of Europe. Join us for a delicious evening!

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...VOTER ID continued from page 1

Cooper – filed in North Carolina's Middle District, is one of at least two current lawsuits challenging the state's voter ID law.

The president of the North Carolina NAACP chapter, the Rev. T. Anthony Spearman, said during a news conference Friday that the group is "overjoyed that the federal court will intervene to halt this illegal photo ID" law. He called the law "the latest bad faith attempt in a string of failed efforts by the North Carolina General Assembly to impede the right to vote of African Americans and Latinos in this state."

While as of today, no Voter ID will be required for the March Primary, that could change for the November general election, pending a successful appeal. The North Carolina Republican Party immediately issued a statement calling on the North Carolina State Attorney General's Office to issue and appeal of the decision.

Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein's office issued a statement saying it

would review the court's decision to issue a temporary injunction before deciding whether or not an appeal would be appropriate, but believes that the state will challenge the ruling in an appeal.

North Carolina's Voter ID debate began in 2013 when lawmakers passed the first law requiring a photo identification card be presented at the polls. Over the next seven years, there has been back and forth and legal challenges on the law. In 2016, a federalists' appeals court ruled that the 2013 law "targeted African Americans with almost surgical precision" and "imposes cures for problems that did not exist."

After the federal court's appeal of the state law, lawmakers made the move to put the vote on the ballot to let North Carolina voters decide. In 2018, just over half, about 55 percent, of North Carolina voters approved a state constitutional amendment that would require photo ID to vote.

The legal battle continued, as North Carolina Democratic Governor Roy Cooper vetoed the bill in December 2018 claiming the amendment would disenfranchise the state's minority, poor and elderly voters. With the majority in the state Legislature, Republicans overrode Cooper's veto and Voter ID became law of the land... until the most recent federal interference.

North Carolina is the only state in the southwest portion of the country without some sort of Voter ID requirement and while in the south, North Carolina is in the minority for not having some sort of requirement, there are 18 states in the country that do have a photo ID requirement and another 16 states that require identification, albeit not a photo.

As it stands, voters will NOT have to show a photo ID for the March 3 primary, but all of that could change prior to the November General Election, so stay tuned!



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• 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 Department 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.
- 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 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.

Fri., Jan. 17

- The High Mountain Squares will host their "Rags to Riches Dance," Friday night, from 6:15 to 8:45 PM at the Robert C Carpenter Community Building, GA Road (441 South), Franklin, NC. Mr Randy Ramsey from Royston, GA will be the caller. We dance Western Style Square Dancing, main/stream and plus levels. We will start classes February 3rd. Everyone is welcome. For information

The African Children's Choir returns to CBC on January 24



The African Children's Choir will perform Friday at the Community Bible Church at 6:30 p.m. highlighting their new program "Just As I Am." The children melts the hearts of audiences with their charming smiles, beautiful voices and lively African songs and dances. The program features well-loved children's songs, traditional Spirituals and Gospel favorites. Concerts are free and open to all. A free-will offering is taken at the performance to support African Children's Choir programs, such as education, care and relief and development programs. No tickets. Donations appreciated.

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

call: 828-787-2324, 828-332-0001, 727-599-1440 or 706-746-5426.

Sat., Jan. 18

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a rambling moderate 4-mile hike around Wallace Branch, up the Bartram Trail, across a stream to a lovely trail through the pines and coming back on a Forest Service road, elevation change 500 ft. Meet at 9:30 at Westgate Plaza in Franklin, drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader Irene Brewi, 772-263-3478, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Fri., Jan. 24

- The African Children's Choir returns to CBC at 6:30 p.m. For the program, "Just as I am." Free but donations accepted.

Sat., Jan. 25

- Fireside chat and book signing with Bitter Southerners and Chefs at Art's at the Lodge, noon to 2 p.m. Open to the public.

- Chefs in the House at Half-Mile Farm. Chef Joe Kindred of Kindred and Steven Satterfield of Miller Union. Reserve Dinner Seats by calling 828-787-2635 or 828-787-2816.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 4-mile hike up Rabun Bald, elevation change 900 ft., on the Georgia Bartram Trail, hiking from Beegum Gap to the summit (second highest point in Georgia) and to a platform with 360 views of the surrounding area. Meet at Smoky Mtn. Visitor Center at 10 a.m. Drive 40 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Sat., Feb. 1

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4-mile hike to Siler Bald on the Appalachian Trail, elevation change 700 ft., for 360-degree views of Nantahala Lake. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 10 am, drive 24 miles round trip. Call leader Robert Barnable, 369-1565, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Sat., Feb. 8

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to-strenuous 7-mile hike, elevation change 900 ft., from Long Branch to Rock Gap in the Stand-

ing 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.

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 11:00 am, drive 6 miles round trip. Call leader Katharine Brown, 421-4178, for reservations. Visitors welcome, also dogs, but be aware that water is scarce on the trail.

- 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.

'Bark & Branches' Jan. 28 at the Nature Center



Don't let the lack of leaves scare you. Join the Highlands Nature Center on Tuesday, January 28th from 1-2 p.m. for our Nature 101: Bark & Branches event to learn how to identify common trees in the winter. We will review a few tricks before exploring the Botanical Gardens and putting our sleuthing skills to work. All are welcome to participate in this free event at the Highlands Nature Center, 930 Horse Cove Road. The Highlands Biological Station is a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University. For more information, please call (828) 526-2623.

National Theatre of London's 'All my sons' live via satellite Jan. 18 at PAC



Sally Field in "All My Sons."

— Photo by: Johan Persson

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Academy Award-winner Sally Field (Steel Magnolias, Forest Gump, Brothers & Sisters) and Bill Pullman (The Sinner, Independence Day) star in Arthur Miller's blistering drama All My Sons, filmed live from The Old Vic in London.

It's America, 1947. Despite hard choices and even harder knocks, Joe and Kate Keller are a success story. They have built a home, raised two sons and established a thriving business. But nothing lasts forever and their contented lives, already shadowed by the loss of their eldest boy to war, are about to shatter.

With the return of a figure from the past, long buried truths are forced to the surface and the price of their American dream is laid bare.

Tickets are available online: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandsperformingarts.com or at the door. Highlands Performing Arts, 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

Faith of Our Mothers

By Milton Ready
Contributor

I grew up in Texas in a kind-of Baptist family, Missionary one year, Free Will another, Independent at times, and by default, Southern, but always with distinctions. Baptists have those, you know. Yet my Mother forever reminded me that, as a Texas Baptist, we weren't like "the others." Sooner or later we were going to take over Texas and then the world, just as soon as a good Texas Baptist like Ted Cruz became President. Maybe next time.

What did it mean to be a Texas Baptist? No fuzziness in Mom's thinking. Evolution? A bunch of hooley. Think creationism instead but you had to distinguish between several kinds, quick, seven-day, timeless, and don't worry about intelligent design since I wasn't. Baptism? Full immersion in a flowing stream.

Sunday School? That happened every day of the week at home. Original sin? When I asked her for an explanation, she reminded me that my constant questioning proved its existence.

Although my Mother only went to the sixth grade, she easily explained theodicy to me, the philosophy of why there was so much "bad" in the world and its justification. A college professor later clarified my mother's theory. Her answer? My father.

In Texas, Dad might be called "one helluva fella," a hard working, hard drinking, blaspheming, and Willie Nelson son-of-a gun. Yet why could Dad do all those things and I couldn't? Simple. He was "an Assemblyman," not a Texas Baptist, and, like many of "the others," he would transgress on Saturday night, seek forgiveness on Sundays, and be revived in their spirits and redemptive in their actions until next Friday's

payday.

Sinners, my Mother maintained, made the best preachers and witnesses but not Sunday school teachers. My Mother battled Dad for 55 years with undying love, forgiveness, and the constant commandments, especially the first two, until he became a genuine Texas Baptist. He never had a chance.

Why all this about my Mother and Texas Baptists? In a time when we all wring our hands and fret about the declining state of Christianity, about how fewer attend church on Sundays or anytime, about the dissolution of the family and of morality in general, and about why our children do not follow the faith of their fathers, I always, always return to that of my Mother's. Whether romanticized or realized, sanitized or sanctified, whether memed in my mind or hymned in my heart, my Mother, the stoic Swede that she was, somehow managed to provide all her boisterous, mischievous boys with nutritious meals, a Scandinavian clean if sparse home, and even a little dollop of social responsibility along with passages from her Swedish Bible, den heliga Biblen, the older Gustav Vasa version. I still have that Biblen.

My Mother lived through the Great Depression, World War II, Korea, Sputnik, the atomic bomb, and the eternal threat of Communism. Oh, yes, she found more leisure opportunities than ever in the 1950s, mainly a car to drive, soaps on TV, and cafeterias on Sunday after church. Moreover, she weathered such cultural shifts as the pill, sex, drugs, rock and roll, and the anti-Christ himself, Elvis, all without threatening her

faith. You see, Mom knew that you were not born a Christian, you learned Christianity mainly from your parents and your church.

As Margaret Thatcher of England once noted, the biggest threat to the survival of the church came not from external forces both social, political, and cultural, but from the failure of one generation to pass on its spiritual assets to the next.

Yet in order to secure that transmission from one generation to another requires just a bit of insistence and supervision, perhaps even a little bit of friendly persuasion, and the subordination of an individual to a family, group, or congregation. That's difficult yet indispensable. Still, it's not something wildly popular in an age that celebrates the individual.

My mother uncomplainingly worked almost daily as well, taking any job from waiting tables to working an evening shift at a local plant, all to keep the family together since Dad's construction jobs came and went. Did the competitiveness of a capitalistic, free-for-all, Social Darwinist society outside the home intimidate her? The brawling, belt-buckle masculinity of rural Texas change her? Did my Father? Her doubting Thomas sons? Did her fragility and soft nature make her more vulnerable to a "reality" outside our hermetic home? Did all her son's accomplishments and degrees threaten her in any way? Did she think "the pill," sex, drugs, Elvis, communism, TV, the atom bomb, and rock and roll harbingered "end times?" Not really.

Mom's generation lived

through the Great Depression, World War II, Korea, Sputnik, and all the changes therefrom, but, to her, it was simply an imperfect age leading to a more perfect one. You see, my Mother was a post-millennialist, someone who believed that you had to make a better world through universal love before Christ came again to reign for a thousand years. She couldn't be a pessimist if she tried, nor, through her faith, or even throughout a depressing year of political upheaval.



Milton Ready, Professor Emeritus of History at UNC Asheville, lives and writes amidst the beauty of western North Carolina. Author of regional histories, fiction, and essays, Milton attended both Rice and the University of Houston before earning a PhD from the University of Georgia. His work is informed by a childhood spent in rural, rough knuckle Texas, a stint in the Army, and a love for the history of humble places.



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The African Children's Choir at CBC Jan. 24

The African Children's Choir will perform Friday at the Community Bible Church at 6:30 p.m. highlighting their new program "Just As I Am." The children melts the hearts of audiences with their charming smiles, beautiful voices and lively African songs and dances. The program features well-loved children's songs, traditional Spirituals and Gospel favorites. Concerts are free and open to all. A free-will offering is taken at the performance to support African Children's Choir programs, such as education, care and relief and development programs. No tickets. Donations appreciated.

...CANDIDATES

continued from page 1

including that an absentee request form is only valid if returned to the county board by the voter, the voter's near relative, legal guardian or Multi-partisan Assistance Team (MAT); forms cannot be emailed or faxed; and, if a voter needs help completing the request form due to blindness, disability or inability to read or write and a relative or legal guardian is not available, they can get help from another person, who must list their name and address on the form.

Voters who submit a valid request will receive a ballot from their county board of elections. The materials will include detailed instructions on how to complete and return the ballot.

Beginning next week, Highlands Newspaper will begin profiling candidates who will appear on the March 3 primary for local elections including Macon County Board of Commissioners, District Court Judge, US House of Representative District 11, and North Carolina Senate District 50.

While there are several local elections on the ballot this March, state offices are cluttered with candidates.

United States Senate Thom Tillis will face three Republican challengers on the primary ballot including Paul Wright, Sharon Hudson, and Larry Holmquist. Democrats running for the same seat who will face-off in the primary include Trevor Fuller, Steve Swenson, Cal Cunningham, Atul Goel, and Erica Smith.

Incumbent Democratic Governor Roy Cooper will have a primary opponent in Ernest Reeves and Republicans vying for a spot on the November ballot include Holly Grange and Dan Forest.

With current Lt. Governor Dan Forest running for Governor, the Lt. Gov post has more than a dozen Democrats and Republicans facing off during the primary. Republicans include Mark Robinson, Deborah Cochran, Andy Wells, Greg Gebhardt, Renee Ellmers, Scott Stone, Buddy Bengel, John Ritter, and Mark Johnson. Democrats are Bill Toole Terry Van Duyn, Yvonne Lewis Holley, Chaz Beasley, Allen Tomas, and Ron Newton.

Democrat Incumbent Attorney General Josh Stein does not have a primary, however Republicans challenging him include Jim O'Neil, Sam Hayes, and Christine Mumma.

One-stop, in-person early voting for the March 3 primary begins Thursday, Feb. 13 and runs through Saturday, Feb. 29.

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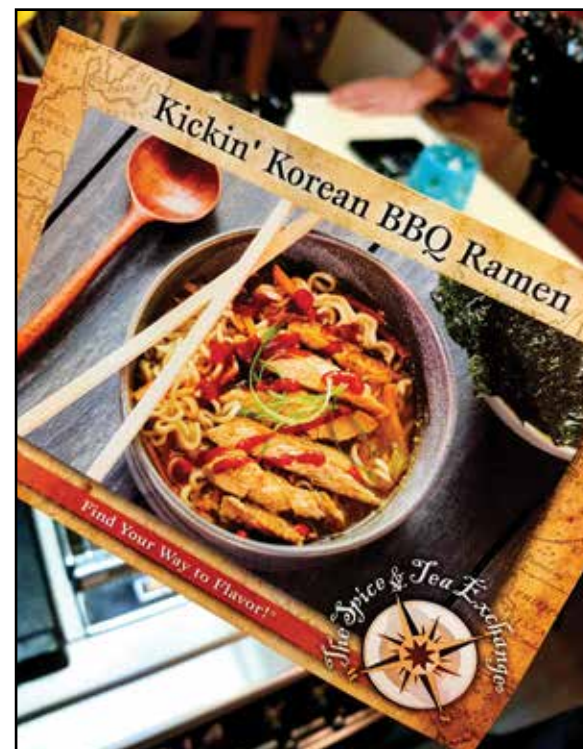
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follow step-by-step instructions on the
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Highlands School Winter Sport Teams

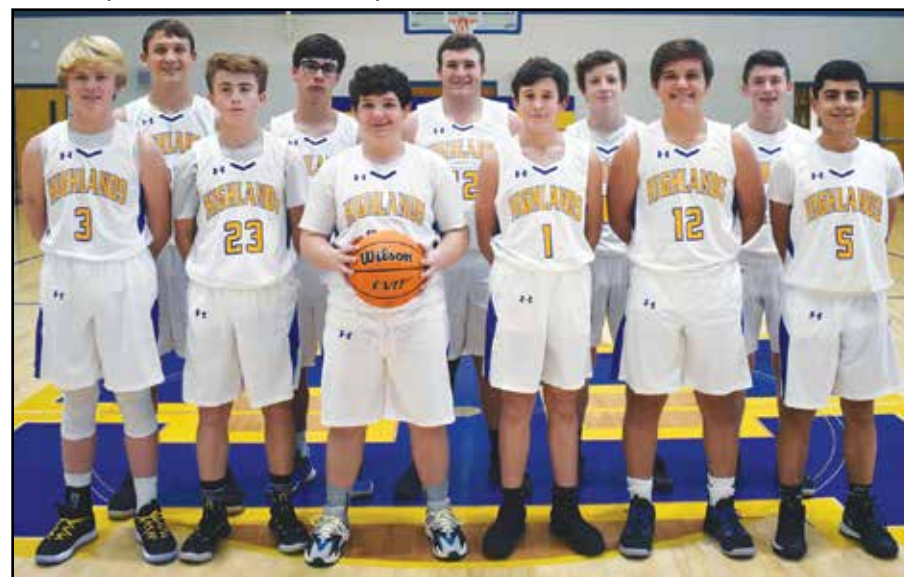


LEFT: VARSITY BOYS – Connor Briggs-0, Lane Tingen-1, Reid Carrier-2, Brent Sleight-3, Taj Roman-4, Logan Petrone-10, Patrick woods-13, Bill Miller-15, Ethan Tate-20, Gig Chalker-21, Dillon Schmitt-22, Nick Tucci-Caselli-23, Collin Stoltzfus-30

LOWER LEFT: VARSITY GIRLS – Reese Schmitt-2, Julia May Schmitt-4, Bella Branham-5, Lilly Kate Bryson-10, Hayley Boring-12, Beatrice Bryson-15, Ava Schmitt-20, Bailey Shcmitt-21, Jeslyn Head-22, Jordan Carrier-23, Brooklynn Houston-24, Ezra Branham-32, Kedra McCall-40, Managers Madi Webb and Sayla Roman

BELOW: JV BOYS – Mason Stoltzfus-1, Win Dyleski-3, Jeffrey Olvera-5, Mason Taylor-10, Trevor Reese-12, Davis Ingate-13, JJ Postell-22, Nathan Keener-23, James Earp-25, Lawson Shuler-30, Brandon Moss-42, Danny Lopez-4

Photos by Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News



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HOME VS TOWNS COUNTY

MSG 4:30 MSB 5:45

FRI., JAN. 17

HS BASKETBALL @ ROSMAN

JVB 5:00P, VG 6:15P,

VB 7:45P

Highlands School Winter Sport Teams



Photos by Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News

TOP: MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS – Lucas Ramos-2, Petyon Naron-3, JD Head-4, Landon Green-10, Isaiah Vilardo-12, Wyatt Wilson-14, Jesus Mendoza-15, Jim DeDios-22, Brian Colmaneros-23, Cooper Hall-33, Harrison Gates-42, Sam Stiwin-ter-44, Gavin Small-45, Henry Lopez-Manager

RIGHT: JV GIRLS – Beatrice Bryson-3, Alyson Dayton-4, Adisyn Westendorf-5, Ashlynn Wilson-10, Liv Lewis-12, Kaylee Oakley -14, Emily Briggs-22, Brandy Za-gal-24, Ezra Branham-30, Riley Conner-32

BOTTOM: MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS – Aislynn Luck-14, Alicia Chastain-24, Mackenzie Woods-12, Riley Logan-23, Abbie Doerter-11, Jaylin Raby-3, Hunter Con-ner -20, Birdie Sherwood -21, Courtney Logan -15, Olivia Corbin-10, Raquel Stiles-22, Margaret Cole-5, Cayden Pierson-2, Heidi Doerter-10

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

The Trusted Standard

"If you love Me, you will keep My commands."

(John 14:15)



Pastor Sam Forrester
Whiteside Presbyterian Church,
Cashiers

Christians are called to live by grace. That means salvation is by grace alone. Jesus in John 14:6 says "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." There are no works that save your soul, only the grace of God can save. In John 14:15, we learn obedience to the commands of God are a clear evidence of salvation. It says nothing about a works salvation. It clearly lays the foundation for sanctification, which is the molding of you into the image of your Lord. There are those who take the position that since God's love is not conditioned on my works or obedience, then I'm free to live anyway I please. That is not living by grace. It shows those who believe this don't understand grace. What they call grace is really a caricature of grace.

Jesus says, if you love Him, you will obey His commands. To issue a command means to set up a direction for someone else to follow. We are told through His commands what we are to do and not to do. That leaves no doubt for us to get bogged down in. The commands in the Bible provide us with a clear moral standard, a trusted standard.

The opposite of this trusted standard is found in situation ethics. That is where men evaluate their actions based on feelings instead of a moral standard. Situation ethics knows of no external, objective standard of behavior. It responds to how things feel and what seems right at the moment. But what does the Bible tell us as Christians? It says "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jeremiah 17:9). Feelings start in the heart, therefore it is dangerous to follow the heart. The Word of God comes from Him alone and is secure, unlike the heart, and can be trusted, it never changes.

The danger Christians face in this is what Jerry Bridges calls Christianized situation ethics. Through this false ethic many sinful acts have been committed in the name of love. Christians have engaged in such things as illicit sex on the pretext they were acting in love toward someone who was lonely and in need. There have been people who had a loved one in pain and they wanted to help them die so they could be with Jesus. This is what happens even to Christians who fail to understand that love is learned only through God's commands. God's commands give us an objective standard and when we obey them it will guide us in the right direction in any and all of the circumstances of life. Trust in God's commands and in Jesus Christ, study the Bible and follow its wisdom and you will know the salvation of your soul.

Proverbs 3:5

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

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Wed: Choir: 6p

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John 3:16

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

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

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Jan. 4 Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Jan. 4

• At 6:46 p.m. officers responded to a motor vehicle accident at US 64 and Mir-

ror Lake Road.

Jan. 7

• At 3:30 p.m., officers responded to a motor vehicle accident at South and 5th streets.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Dec. 10.

...GUN continued from page 1

counties, cities and towns in Virginia alone have approved such resolutions.

The debate, however, isn't a new one. Gun control advocates want to strengthen restrictions and include universal background checks; gun rights advocates want to ensure that their rights are not infringed upon in the process.

A growing list of counties in North Carolina are becoming Second Amendment sanctuaries, and residents approached Macon County leaders during the public comment period of the monthly board meeting Tuesday night.

The already established sanctuaries are areas that have adopted resolutions where county leaders say they're standing up for the Second Amendment and won't enforce certain gun control measures. Many times, the moves are symbolic and show that officials plan to defy state or federal efforts to restrict gun rights. Cherokee County North Carolina was the first to pass such a resolution earlier last year.

Cherokee County has ruled that it will "not authorize or appropriate government funds, resources, employees, agencies, contractors, buildings, detention centers or offices for the purpose of enforcing or assisting in the enforcement of any element of such acts, laws, orders, mandates, rules or regulations, that infringe on the right by the people to keep and bear arms."

In theory, the declaration of a gun sanctuary county or city shows that area supports the Second Amendment, however in practice, the declaration carries little to no weight.

Most states such as Virginia who have had counties pass such resolutions are facing proposed state legislature that they believe would impose on their Second Amendment right. North Carolina does not have any such laws proposed, but counties view themselves as taking a proactive approach in case it was to happen.

The Macon County Board of Commissioners held Tuesday night's meeting in the large courtroom to allow the standing-room-only crowd extra space. Spectators lined the walls to show their support

of commissioners considering a resolution signifying Macon County as a gun sanctuary county.

Supporters were led by Donnie Holden who gave a presentation on the importance of such a resolution and asked commissioners to take up a vote on the matter in February during their next meeting. A handful of other residents spoke in addition to Holden, encouraging commissioners to consider the designation as a means of taking a proactive approach to protecting Second Amendment rights.

Sheriff Robert Holland said that he was happy to see citizens of Macon County bring the issue to the commissioners' attention and looks forward to the dialogue surrounding the issue.

"People have a right to voice their concerns and I always encourage people to get involved with their local government and the process," said Sheriff Holland. "The 2nd Amendment issue is incredibly important and if citizens are concerned their 'Gun Rights' are in jeopardy of being infringed upon then they need to let their local government know. We've seen resolutions passed regarding the Second Amendment in other jurisdictions and while people have been talking about their concerns locally, last night Mr. Holden actually did something about it... he got involved. I commend him and support his right to do so. I'm not sure exactly what will happen from here but one thing is for sure, because of his willingness to step forward the issue will now become a much greater topic of discussion amongst our local government leaders... and decisions will be made concerning it. Anyone that would criticize a persons right to voice their concerns related to the 'Second Amendment' obviously wouldn't feel the same if the 'First Amendment' was that being infringed upon."

The concept of gun sanctuary areas has become a platform for Republican candidates. Both Lt. Dan Forest, who is running for Governor and Wayne King, who is running for Congress, released statements on Tuesday in support of the symbolic measure.

Jan. 1

• At 1:21 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

Jan. 2

• At 11:53 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Cobb Road.

Jan. 3

• At 8:45 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Shortoff Road.

• At 6:01 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Harbison Orchard Road.

Jan. 4

• At 7:59 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 east.

Jan. 5

• At 9 p.m., the dept. responded to a

call of a dumpster fire at a residence on Winterberry Court.

Jan. 7

• At 8:47 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on NC 106.

• At 4:39 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clear Creek Road.

• At 5:29 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Pierson Drive.

Jan. 9

• At 3:02 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Sassafras Gap Road.

Jan. 11

• At 3:39 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a gas leak at a residence on Ridgewood Road.

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