

# Highlands Newspaper

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Volume 17, Number 31

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

Thursday, July 30, 2020

## MC Virtual Academy details outlined

By Brittney Lofthouse

The 2020-2021 school year will undoubtedly look very different than in years past.

With Macon County announcing their second COVID19

death last week, and the number of positive cases in Macon County increasing by more than 100 since July 13, many parents are hesitant to send their students back to school.

For those parents, there are two options – traditional home-schooling done outside of the support of the Macon County School System or the new option,

• See VIRTUAL page 16

## Candidates turn out for 'Back the Blue' rally in Franklin

By Brittney Lofthouse

Hundreds of people gathered in downtown Franklin on Saturday for the first annual Back the Blue event. The event, which was organized to show law enforcement and their families support, saw around 1,000 people from across Western North Carolina donning signs of support and encouragement, large thin blue line flags, and countless "thank you" posed to law enforcement and their families.

Law enforcement from every department in Macon County were in attendance including Highlands Police Chief Andrea Holland and former Highlands Chief and now Chief of the Franklin Police Department Bill

• See CANDIDATES page 11



Highlands School Teacher of the Year Dave Cashion with Principal Brian Jetter.

– Photo by Annette Jenkins

## Highlands School names 'Teacher of the Year'

Every year, before the new school year starts up, school personnel in the Macon County School system name a co-worker Teacher of the Year.

This year, Highlands School picked Dave Cashion who is the

Vocational and Industrial Technology Teacher

Dave tells his story:

"What an honor to be voted teacher of the year by the faculty of Highlands School. I have

• See TEACHER page 15

### • INSIDE THIS ISSUE •

Mayor on Duty .....	2	Investing at 4118 Ft. ....	8
Weather .....	2	Obituary .....	9
Dining .....	4	Word Matter .....	13
Letters .....	5	Police & Fire Reports .....	19
Ink Penn .....	6	Classifieds .....	22

## Highlands native is struggling with COVID

We are bombarded daily with Covid statistics globally, nationally, statewide and locally. Yet people in Highlands ask, "Does anyone actually know someone with Covid?"

The answer of course is yes, as more and more people have a family member diagnosed or know a person who knows a person ....

In Highlands, the Terry and Karin Potts family is well known as are their children Ryan, Christopher and Brittany who are all married with families of their own living far and wide.

Christopher and Kelly Potts and their two children live 45 minutes north of Tampa. They are both nurses; he is a surgical nurse and she now teaches nursing at a local college. But suddenly their lives took a turn for the worse.

Christopher, 37 with no underlying health conditions, recently contracted Covid from a patient he treated in the surgical center in Tampa where he works. After four negative tests while seeking medical help, he was hospitalized and is finally, slowly recovering.

Christopher went from part-time to full-time at the facility in May, but his

health insurance doesn't kick in until August. Now he has been out of work for more than a month and the family is facing mounting hospital bills. They are seeking financial help through a GoFundMe page.

Kelly tells their story.

Up until a little over a month ago, Christopher Potts spent almost every night on a stationary bike for close to an hour, and on the nights he didn't do that, he was running a 5K through the neighborhood but on June 24th all of that changed, as well as our family dynamic as we know it.

On June 24th, Christopher took care of a patient who soon after tested positive for Covid. I am not really sure how we felt when we found out that information – scared, sad, mad, mostly

• See COVID page 14

## Macon County Reports Third Death Related to COVID-19

– See story on page 9

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Zooming our way along

COVID-19, the census and the future of Highlands are several big things on my mind. All three are now in play and will be for the coming months. What will be their lasting impacts?

The coronavirus has changed life across our nation, state and in local communities like Highlands. Our school will open soon, and extraordinary changes will be implemented to protect and educate our children. After the virus subsides classrooms will return to some form of past normalcy, but I suspect some practices implemented during the pandemic, like current distant and online learning options, will impact schools from here on out.

A similar impact will be with how local government meetings are conducted. The ZOOM/WEBEX formats aren't going away. For the short term, I have an idea how we can meld the August digital town board meeting with an in-person component. The primary delivery system will be ZOOM. But, I and a small cadre of staff will be on ZOOM at the Highlands Con-



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

ference Center. Anyone who wants to make an in-person public comment will have the option of coming to the conference center and making the comment in front of a ZOOM camera that will be broadcasted to all the commissioners and folks on the ZOOM meeting. The only provision will be that social distancing, masking, and limited capacity will be required. The masks will not be required when one is making a

comment.

The U.S. Census will also impact Highlands. I have encouraged all Highlanders and Macon County residents to respond. What is interesting will be the number of full-time residents in the town limits. In past censuses that number has been steady at between 900 to 1,000. I suspect that will be the case for 2020.

The takeaway for some will be that we need to grow our businesses and population. Incidental information from the real estate community suggests home sales are robust, even in this state of emergency. The speculation is that folks want to live in a beautiful, remote community that has all the services of a large city, such as water, sewer, healthcare access and broadband, to name only a few amenities.

Some folks bet that short-term rentals will be a major part of our future economy. That may be so to some extent. But, with world-class broadband access let me propose an alternative. Like distance learning for school children, there may be a lasting movement toward working from home as

•See MAYOR page 12

## • NOTICE •

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

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

## • HIC'S VIEW •



## • WEATHER •

Thu, 30-Jul	Fri, 31-Jul	Sat, 1-Aug	Sun, 2-Aug
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by Old Edwards

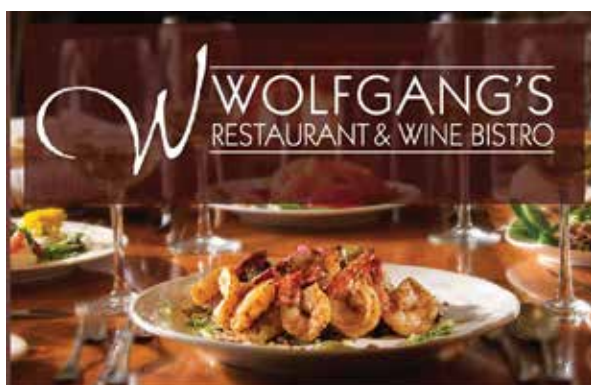
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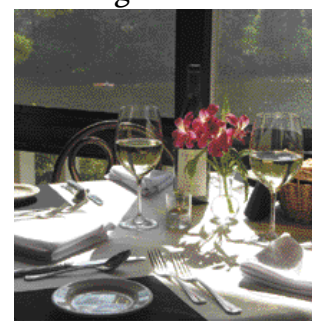
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# • LETTERS •

## Ultimate Vision?

Dear Editor,

I always read the weekly real estate column "Investing at 4,118 Ft." with a sense of foreboding. I realize it is the *raison d'être* for the real estate people to sell as many houses as possible in Highlands and its environs, just as it is the *raison d'être* for chamber of commerce people to sell Highlands itself.

Highlands is not the only small town to periodically debate the relative merits of progress vs. preservation and how to achieve a fair balance between the two, which I personally believe is wishful thinking if not actually mutually exclusive. It's the old argument of having your cake and eating it, too. You can't really have it both ways simultaneously, can you?

But that's not the reason I am writing this letter.

The July 16 "Investing at 4,118 Ft." column was particularly disturbing to me. The author was giving us glad tidings that changes are coming to our town and they are coming "at a much faster rate than in the past..." Besides the intrinsic attractions of Highlands, he suggests that this acceleration may be due to the viral pandemic across the country and the social upheaval occurring in the cities. He is probably right.

It was the last sentence of his column that seriously disturbed me. Quote, "Even with the growth, I think it will be a long while before we meet the requirements

• See **LETTERS** page 18

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## ALL ABOUT BOOKS

# • INK PENN •

## Back Porch Reflections

### A spell on the back porch

Who doesn't love hanging out on comfy porch? Jackie Layton, another cozy mystery author, hosts a blog and invites authors to drop by <http://jackiesbackporch.blogspot.com/> to sit a spell.

My husband and I added a screened porch to our home in Georgia ten years ago, and this time of year, you can find me there most mornings with Banjo and Puddin'. Only after a relaxing hour or so drinking coffee and reading the paper do we three head upstairs to my office to write.

These two inspire the personalities of the dog and cat in my Dickens & Christie cozy mystery series: Bells, Tails & Murder and Pumpkins, Paws & Murder plus a third book due out in August. Of course, they helped me answer the interview questions Jackie posed. I invite you to sit a spell and enjoy the conversation. (To read interviews

with other authors, visit her blog.)

### How did you choose the Cotswolds for the setting of your books?

I've been an Anglophile my whole life, and I can't recall a time when I wasn't reading books set in England—from historical fiction to mysteries. When I majored in English, I always chose British literature courses first. And finally, after I retired, I got to visit England—for three weeks. The week we spent in the Cotswolds was my favorite.

It helped that I took copious notes while we traveled, mainly because I write a weekly newspaper column. You can find the columns I wrote about our trip to the Cotswolds, Dartmouth, and Oxford on my website (<https://kathymanospenn.com/category/this-and-that/>.) When I decided



Kathy Manos Penn

in 2019 to write cozy mysteries, those notes came in quite handy.

### Tell us more about Banjo and Puddin'.

Banjo is a 70-pound lovable lugger—part Great Pyrenees, part Golden Retriever, and part Australian Shepherd—but his personality is pure GP. That means he's a bit of a layabout, a gentle giant who wants nothing more than to be touched by anyone who comes near him. Like

Dickens in my books, he lives for belly rubs, and he's a Mama's boy who rarely leaves my side. Dickens is a dwarf GP, and you can't just go out and find one. They're anomalies. I googled mini Pyrs, thinking that would be the right size dog for my character, only to discover there was no such thing. That's how I stumbled across dwarf Pyrs.

Now, Puddin' is a feisty calico cat who

rules the roost around here. Christie, in my books, started out as a calico, but honestly it was tough to find pics of calicos to use for my covers, so she turned into a black cat. Since she's named for Agatha Christie, black is probably more fitting. Puddin' spends lots of time in my office—atop my desk or curled up in the file drawer—just like Christie. And, like my fictional cat, Puddin' expects a puddle of milk in her bowl when I get my coffee and is very picky about her dabs of wet food.

### Do the people in your real-life show up in your writing?

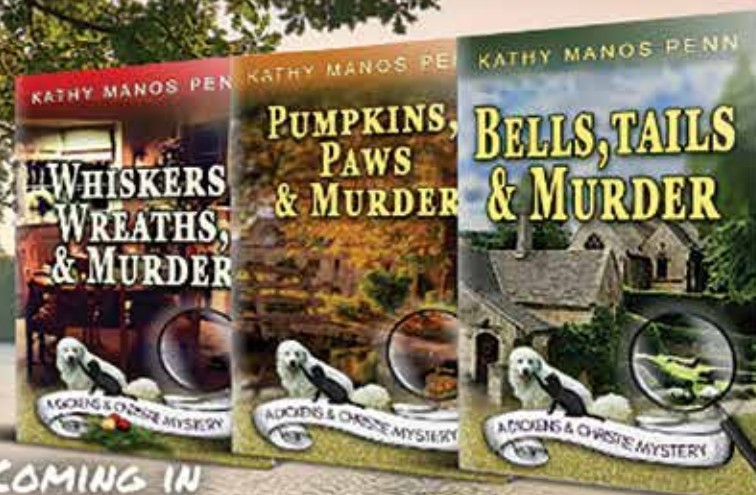
Absolutely! They say write what you know, and I do. Names have been changed to protect the innocent. I do have two sisters, and though exaggerated, their personalities are recognizable. Belle, the octogenarian who's one of the main character's friends, was inspired by a ninety-year-old

• See INK PENN page 18

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# • INVESTING AT 4,118 FT. •

## Suppose we had a pandemic, and everybody came

In the 1960s, the anti-war slogan “Suppose they gave a war, and nobody came,” was possibly first made by James Newman. The original inspiration, however, came from a line of a poem by Carl Sandburg. “Sometime they’ll give a war and nobody will come.” The analogy of war and a pandemic may be far off base...but is it?

Another saying, written by Bob Dylan and said in a song lyric, “The times, they are a changin’,” and maybe that is a little easier to mesh with the year 2020, even though he wrote them in 1964.

What does all of this have to do with real estate, not only on this plateau, but similar hamlets all over the world?

Highlands has seen changes over the years, and most of the changes have been brought by development. Kelsey and Hutchinson had a dream of making Highlands a destination spot for tourists way back in 1875. I wonder if they thought it

would “take off” like small shore towns in the northeast, or a thriving destination like St. Augustine or Charleston?

Whatever their original ideas were, a seed was planted, and Highlands is thriving today, not unlike some other towns in America, but most people think Highlands has something other towns don’t have.

What is the “it” factor that draws so many people here? Maybe it’s not the “it,” but the “what all” there is here that draws people.

It is obvious that everyone that owns property here likes something about being here. For some, it is “in their blood” they say. They love the natural beauty and they love being on the same land their family has owned for generations. For



**Jeannie Chambers**  
Chambers Realty & Vacation Rentals

newcomers over the last 15-30 years, it may be the natural beauty, but also the quaintness of the town itself, the unhurried, laid-back atmosphere.

The latest newcomers of the last five-to-fifteen years may have fallen in love with all the above, but some of them seem eager to change, or upgrade the way of life on the plateau.

What’s wrong with an upgrade? Nothing, as long as the original Highlands doesn’t get so caught up in its new “do” that she loses her

charm.

I’m a relative newcomer to real estate in Highlands. I’ve only had my license since 1992, but in just those 28 years, I’ve seen a several “gold rush” periods, and of course,

a couple of “depression” times too.

It’s all cyclical. The stock market, real estate, life, all of it.

The period of mid-1990s to mid-2000s were very good years in Highlands real estate, then the bottom fell, and now it’s back, but this time, it’s different. The difference is the pandemic.

The usual suspects: the stock market is good, the economy is still relatively good, the interest rates are better than ever, things that normally drive our real estate market are in place.

Move over normal, the pandemic has opened up a whole “nother can of worms.”

This is my first pandemic that I can remember (although we’ve had other ones that didn’t hit the best seller chart like Covid 19).

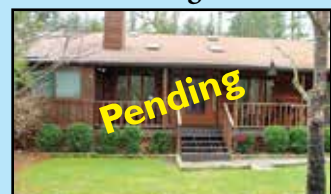
What I’ve noticed in 2020 is a rush to buy in Highlands with a different under-

• See **INVESTING** page 9

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*“Highlands is calling and I must go.”*





# • BIZ.ORG NEWS •

## Library launches Dial-a-Story program

The Children's Department of the Macon County Public Library in Franklin, NC has launched an exciting new program called "Dial-a-Story." Parents can call (828-634-1128) to hear a story read by one of our children's librarians.

This program was designed with our community in mind and is perfect for families who are trying to avoid extra screen time or do not have internet at home. Stories will be around three minutes long so they are great for bite-sized listening and are completely free!

This week's story is "Friends" by Eric Carle and will begin playing automatically right after the last ring when you call.

The children's librarians encourage you to leave requests, feedback, or comments in our voicemail after the story is through. If you have any questions or would like more information please call the Library at 828-524-3600 or visit our website at [www.fontanalib.org](http://www.fontanalib.org).

## ...INVESTING continued from page 8

tone. Highlands has always been a haven and refuge, but those words have taken on a new meaning in 2020.

I've said this many times in the last two months, so forgive me for the repetition, but suppose all the second-home-owners decided to move to Highlands full-time? Would it be like July 4th all year long? Could our town support such an event? Would our water supply last? Would our stores start staying open until eight-nineteen o'clock? Would we see more Dollar Generals, getting closer and closer to Main Street? How about our schools? Our hospital? Our roads?

I'm not one for doomsday, as I generally stay positive no matter what, but how can we be so two-faced to say, "Yes, please come, buy this property, you'll love

it!" then say out of the other side of our mouths, "But, you'll be closing down your house for the winter, right? I mean, you're just coming up on weekends, or a month or two in the summer? Yeah, sure, you can rent it, but not too much. No, we need to look at each home built and sold as a potential year-round household." That's a lot to take in, isn't it?

Highlands is growing, and just like life, the only way to stop growth is if death occurs. Let's continue to love and nurture Highlands and other 'getaways' destinations. Let's not kill the goose. Take care of yourself, and those you love.

• Jeannie and Tucker Chambers are owners/brokers with Chambers Realty & Vacation Rentals at 401 N. Fifth Street. [Highlandscalling.com](http://Highlandscalling.com)

## Macon County Reports Third Death Related to COVID-19

A Macon County resident diagnosed with COVID-19 has died. The person was over the age of 65 and had underlying health conditions. To protect the family's privacy, no further information will be released about this patient.

"This individual's family and loved ones are in our thoughts and prayers," stated Kathy McGaha, Macon County Health Director. "With our second and third death occurring within a week of each other, our urgent message to the community continues to be: wear a mask, wash your hands, and wait 6 feet from others. Continue to practice social distancing and limit your trips outside your home to help to slow the spread of COVID-19."

The entire state of North Carolina is under a "Safer at Home" executive order, currently under phase two with masks required to be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained.

As of press time, Wednesday morning, Macon County has a total of 445 cases; 68 of those cases are in Highlands and now there are 3 deaths and

– Submitted

# • OBITUARY •

## John Eugene Rymer

John Eugene Rymer, of Highlands N.C. passed away on July 27, 2020. He was born May 21, 1928 in Fairy Valley, GA to Albert Taylor and Francis McCamy Rymer, the 6th of 7 children. His father died when he was 2, and his family moved to Old Fort, TN. John was raised in Old Fort and graduated Polk County High School. John attended the University of Tennessee before enlisting in the Air Force in 1948. The time he spent while stationed in Oxford England, considerably broadened his worldview.

He married Beverly Staples Rymer on April 11, 1955 in Fort Lauderdale. John spent most of his career at Florida Power and Light where he worked for more than 30 years. John was one of the first computer programmers and eventually became a systems analyst. John and Beverly lived in in South Florida until retiring to Highlands in 1990. They had three children and a wonderful marriage for 60 years until her passing in 2015. Over the past several years he gratefully shared his life, home, family and much love with his "undocumented wife" Jane Jerry.

In retirement, John was an active member of the Highlands Art League, the Western Carolina Woodturners and the Franklin Computer Club. His hand-crafted bowls are in several art collections and two are in regular use at the First Presbyterians Church of Highlands. As a board mem-



ber of several groups he installed computer systems and served as Treasurer.

John was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather. He also had experience as a professional photographer. He enjoyed making annual family Christmas cards that are still cherished by his family to this day. His favorite sport was fishing and he was an accomplished angler in fresh and salt water. In addition to his vocational volunteer work, John was very active with the First Presbyterian of Highlands, and the Rotary Club in Highlands. He was always eager to help others, to think, and to laugh with his family and friends.

John is survived by Jane Jerry; his siblings: Mary Dougherty and Robert (Bob) Rymer; his children: John Taylor and his wife Donna, Todd and his wife Michelle, and Ann Brady; four grandchildren: Jessica Steinhart, Valerie Toth, Andrew and Gwyn Brady, and two great-grandchildren, Bennett and Collins Toth.

John asked that we all remember him in our private thoughts and prayers. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to The First Presbyterian Church or to Wolfgang's, where, he said with a chuckle as he launched into the first verse of his newest song My Woman Done left Me, "you could all have a party!"

John asked that we all remember him in our private thoughts and prayers. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to The First Presbyterian Church or to Wolfgang's, where, he said with a chuckle as he launched into the first verse of his newest song My Woman Done left Me, "you could all have a party!"



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# A SPECIAL EVENT for 10 People at PAC!

The PAC is opening this Saturday for a special event for 10 lucky people, a showing of the National Theatre of London's encore presentation of The Lehman Trilogy.

In this Covid-19 world, PAC has reconfigured the auditorium seating arrangement into a cabaret style setting. Two chairs and a small table separated 6-ft. from the next two chair grouping, front, side and back.

There are strict Protocols and Procedures in place. Everyone will be required to wear a mask/face covering; have their temperature taken upon arrival; purchase their tickets ahead of time online; and remain 6-ft. apart from the next patron. Gloves, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes are available.

The entire building will be disinfected before and after the screening.



The Lehman Trilogy by Stefano Massini adapted by Ben Power and directed by Sam Mendes.

All across the globe, audiences have responded to the story of 150 years of Western Capitalism told through a single family.

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of where we are and how we got here. This is about a family and a country losing its faith.

This adaptation is only one possible route through the vast reaches of the original. In rendering the spirit and the heart of Massini's play into English, it was attempted to preserve the ambitious scope of his vision, his wit and his humanity.

The Lehman Trilogy will be shown Saturday, August 1 at 1pm. IF this showing sells out – 10 tickets – there will be a second showing at 6pm – 10 tickets. The US rights to show The Lehman Trilogy has ended. This will be the last chance to see this brilliant work presented by the National Theatre of London.

AGAIN...all tickets must be purchased online: [www.HighlandsPerformingArts.com](http://www.HighlandsPerformingArts.com)

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## ...CANDIDATES continued from page 1



Candidate Moe Davis, who is running for the District 11 Congressional seat vacated by Mark Meadows when he left to pursue his career with President Trump, addresses an enthusiastic crowd.

Harrell.

After reading the names of law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty in North Carolina this year, Chief Holland and Chief Harrell laid a memorial wreath in their honor.

Among the hundreds who lined the street to support local law enforcement were both candidates of the District 11 Congressional seat, left open when Mark Meadows resigned to assume the position of Chief of Staff for President Donald Trump.

Democrat Morris "Moe" Davis and Republican Madison Cawthorn not only both attended the event, but each of them spoke to the crowd offering their support to law enforcement and their families.

"You've got my undying support for law enforcement in Western North Carolina," said Moe Davis. "When we did the Pledge of Allegiance earlier, the most important line to me was, 'one nation --indivisible,' because we are all in this together, [we are] part of one community."

Davis' remarks were not political, and rather focused on showing his appreciation for the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers.

Cawthorn followed Davis' address to the crowd and began by reading a letter from President Donald Trump he received last week while meeting the President in Washington D.C.

"I was going to keep this peaceful, but that's not my style," Cawthorn said to a roaring crowd. "Because right now the mob is pretty loud and they want to take our men and women in blue down and I say, 'no' to that!"

Davis has been selective of his campaign events hosting virtual town halls and "Chats with Moe" on social media due to the COVID19 Pandemic. Cawthorn is taking a very different approach to campaigning during a pandemic, participating in multiple events a day across the district.

Davis has often been critical of Cawthorn's campaigning events, calling them irresponsible and counterproductive to slowing the spread of COVID19.

Early voting in North Carolina is set to begin on October 15 and run through October 31. The General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 3. The deadline to request an absentee ballot for this year's election is October 27 and according to Macon County Board of Elections Director Melanie Thaibult, more than 600 people have already requested absentee ballots. Absentee ballots are expected to be more popular across the country as citizens remain hesitant to go to the poll as COVID19 cases continue to rise.



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## ...MAYOR continued from page 2

we have seen during this pandemic. For many professional workers this is a viable option, and I think this trend will mushroom here. We are strategically poised to capitalize on this growing trend. While tourism will continue to play a major role in our economy, the increase of permanent, full-time residents doing telecommuting and work from home would have very positive, social, economic and, yes, environmental impacts for Highlands. An economy with diverse options would also be sound insurance from future economic setbacks.

The impending comprehensive plan will certainly examine Highlands' future economic and social trends. I look forward to what our community envisions and embraces.

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## • BIZ/ORG NEWS •

### Nantahala Health Foundation launches NIMble grant program: Calls for proposals

Nantahala Health Foundation has announced a call for grant proposals directed at regional nonprofits and governmental agencies with immediate needs, especially those magnified by the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Applications for Needs Immediately Met, or NIMble grants, of up to \$10,000 will be accepted through August 5 and are intended to support one-time critical purchases, as well as immediate needs for stabilization or crisis response, said Lori Bailey, NHF's executive director. It ensures Nantahala Health Foundation can act quickly to meet their partners' most crucial needs.

A growing body of evidence supports the idea that an individual's health is influenced by factors beyond the clinical framework of doctors' offices and hospitals. Known as 'social determinants of health,' factors such as housing, education, transportation, access to healthy food, and social supports are known to significantly influence the health of individuals, families, and entire communities.

In addition to NHF's identified priorities around social determinants of health, the organization signaled its desire to support nonprofit and public agencies impacted by the coronavirus pandemic by establishing its COVID-19 Impact Recovery Fund in April. That is when the foundation launched a community support campaign and opened funding opportunities. To date, nearly \$50,000 has been raised, said Lisa Duff, NHF's advancement officer.

"We are grateful to those community members who have stepped up so far to support this effort," Duff said. "We realized that launching a major fund-raising campaign so early in our existence was a risky proposition. The immediate need for COVID response, however, forced our young foundation to evolve quickly."

While it's true that Nantahala Health Foundation is new to Western North Carolina's nonprofit landscape, the organization's regional roots run deep, said Jane Kimsey, who chairs a 10-member volunteer board with representation from each of the six counties served by NHF, as well as the Qualla Boundary.

Collaborative partnerships are an important part of NHF's strategy to address

health disparities in our region, and something they are modeling through COVID response efforts, said Kimsey. Examples of NHF's COVID response measures include a growing list of partnerships intended to leverage funds and expand the potential for needed relief. NHF has most recently partnered with United Way of Buncombe County and the State of Franklin to distribute more than 30,000 face coverings, just as N.C. Governor Roy Cooper issued a mandatory order on June 24 making masks mandatory in public places where social distancing is difficult.

A partnership in April with Dogwood Health Trust and other Mission Health System legacy foundations was established to source vital personal protective equipment for medical professionals, first responders and essential front-line workers throughout the region. Additionally, NHF partnered with the Community Foundation of WNC to establish an Emergency Disaster Response Fund that has since distributed some \$1.3 million in grants. NHF has also served as a vital conduit of information for critical communications related to resources available to support the service organizations that are so vital to our communities during this time.

Prior to their swift response to the current global crisis, NHF conducted community listening sessions throughout Western North Carolina to learn from nonprofit service providers how they could best work together to improve health outcomes by addressing the region's social determinants of health. The NIMble grant, along with a second grant to be announced later this summer, are direct results of those sessions, said Bailey.

Working as a catalyst for innovation and collaboration, Nantahala Health Foundation seeks to partner with nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon, Swain counties and the Qualla Boundary. For more information about how to apply for Nantahala Health Foundation's NIMble grant or donate to their COVID-19 Impact and Recovery Fund, please visit [nantahala-healthfoundation.org](http://nantahala-healthfoundation.org) or connect with them on Facebook and Instagram.



# • WORD MATTER •

## The Zoom Economy

My youngest daughter lives in western Connecticut but works in New York City as an executive with an international creative services agency. She told me recently that having worked from home for the last four months, her company is reviewing how many and which team members will ever have to come into the city again to do their jobs. They “meet” every day, more than a dozen of them, via an app called Zoom.



**Bud Katz**

Her company currently leases almost 90,000 square feet (two acres) on the west side of Manhattan that houses hundreds of people assigned to their corporate office. At \$77 per square foot (average price for midtown Manhattan commercial space), the company pays rent of almost \$7 million every year.

In business, that’s called overhead.

Her company is a trend-setter in their space. Other companies look to hers to understand what’s happening in the industry.

This isn’t me bragging on my kid. I’ll happily do that. This is me considering what might be the single biggest shift coming to the American workplace out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It’s just speculation now but what this will mean for those considered knowledge workers is seismic in its implications. And, it will trickle down to every ground-level retail operation surrounding all that potentially soon-to-be vacant office space.

If you’ve not experienced Manhattan, you might not understand or be able to consider all the banks, law offices, advertising agencies, accounting firms, architectural shops, engineering businesses, investment brokerages ... the white-collar nucleus of the world, all five million of them, descending onto a geography of less than a dozen square miles.

Three million people commute into Manhattan every day. It’s possible most of them will no longer have to drive or take buses or trains into the city because they’ll be working from home.

Couple this with what it might mean for the over one and a half million people who currently live in Manhattan. Will they stay and pay those rents, or, given the

choice, will they locate someplace more spacious and affordable?

And what about all the people, those essential, front-line workers – police, fire, EMS, healthcare, transportation, sanitation and courier/delivery folks? What happens to them and their jobs when businesses decide big-city rents aren’t necessary?

There’s a sizable swath of jobholders all over America, who every day sit in an office, cubicle, or workstation, light up a screen, put on a headset, punch keys on a computer, and go to work. These people count beans, practice law, market products and services, move money, move merchandise, design buildings, buy and sell all kinds of stuff to all kinds of people.

Covid-19 is proving that these things are getting done right now from the relative comfort of a person’s own residence.

Masks? These folks may not be wearing pants!

They’ll take a break, go to their kitchens instead of the nearby Starbucks, and make their own caffeinated concoctions. They’ll pick flowers from their gardens instead of picking them up from the nearest florist. They’ll eat lunch at their dining room tables instead of in a crowded restaurant, in the company of family instead of strangers who may or may not be coughing and feverish.

It’s happening as you’re reading this. And, not only in New York. Our economic system demands businesses run both effectively AND efficiently. Millions of Americans, in Atlanta, Asheville, Greenville, Charlotte, Knoxville, pick a place, are already working from home, getting their groceries and their prepared meals delivered, buying most of what they want from on-line retailers, getting most of their entertainment on big screens in comfortable rooms just down the hall.

Whether we like it or not, American life is changing in the wake of the pandemic. How people shop, dine, are entertained, educate their children, obtain healthcare services, are all already in the throes of change. Some of it will last for a time before returning to a more comfortable past.

• See WORD MATTER page 18

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## ...COVID continued from page 1

fearful. We wondered whether his case would be short-lived with minimal symptoms, but we soon found out we would not be so lucky.

On June 27th Christopher developed a fever of 103, but we still prayed for the best. For the next week, he spiked high fevers which were not alleviated with Tylenol and Ibuprofen. He had body aches, cold sweats, sleepless nights, numb toes and fingers and toward the end of the week he had trouble breathing when ambulating from one room of the house to another.

The second week was worse, and we were losing hope that this would be a simple case of Covid.

During the second week with oxygen levels still decreasing, Christopher started to hallucinate and struggled to even get out of bed. We knew that we had to go

to the ER so we took him and after another Covid test, chest x-ray, and lots of lab work we were discharged home and told "You are young, you will recover fine at home, you can follow up if symptoms get worse."

We went home and two days later his oxygenation dropped down to a dangerous level so we went back to the hospital. This time he was admitted with pneumonia, shortness of breath, and a slew of other diagnoses. He would be discharged two days later because they needed the bed and he was again told, "You are young, we will get you some oxygen and you will recover at home."

The next week came and went, he was not getting better, he was slowly declining and was a shell of the man that I met more than 13 years ago.

On July 18, I woke up to my husband crying, clutching his chest,

struggling to breathe stating, "This is it; I am going to die." He was rushed to the hospital where he was again admitted, finally getting a confirmed Covid diagnosis after four negative ones. He also had another case of pneumonia on top of the one that he still had not recovered from before, his oxygen levels were dangerously low, and every night I worried this would be the night they would call me to tell me he needed to be put on a ventilator.

He received antibiotics and steroids and we waited patiently for the antiviral Remdesivir and a plasma donor who would match his blood type who had previously been diagnosed with Covid.

On Tuesday night, July 21 Christopher received his first dose of Remdesivir. We would later find out the hospital he was in only received 16 doses of the medication that is continuously on backorder when there were easily triple that amount of patients who needed



Greyson, 9, and Declan, 6, with their parents Christopher and Kelly Potts before COVID.

the medication.

The Remdesivir is a new treatment for Covid and is technically considered a clinical trial and patients have to meet certain criteria to even be placed in the candidate pool. That same night they found a plasma match, so Christopher received his dose of plasma with Covid antibodies.

The next few days were touch and go. His symptoms didn't change and the social isolation was becoming a terrible side effect on its own. As a society, I do not think we place enough emphasis on how hard it is for these patients to be socially isolated for weeks, sometimes months without the hug of a loved one, or just their presence in the room.

However, we finally started to see a change on Saturday, July 25th, a little over one month from the start of symptoms. He smiled during Facetime, he posted on Facebook, he was hopeful, positive that the Remdesivir and plasma were finally working their magic! There is talk of discharge as soon as he is well enough and we could

not be more thankful. However, it will probably be at least another month before he will be able to return to work, and that is a guess -- it could be longer. No one has a clear picture about the long-term effects of Covid.

We realize there are a lot of families fighting Covid, and even though we had a rocky road, we are so thankful that we did not lose the person my two boys and I love most in the world. We will get to live so much more of this life with him and I am forever grateful for that.

Whatever money is donated to our GoFundMe will be used to pay bills and the rest will be put aside for the incredibly high medical bills we know we will be acquiring as Christopher was uninsured due to a recent status change at his job as a nurse in a surgery center in Tampa.

The GoFundMe link is [https://www.gofundme.com/f/christopher-potts?utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_campaign=p\\_lico+share-sheet](https://www.gofundme.com/f/christopher-potts?utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet)

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## ...TEACHER continued from page 1

taught at Highlands School 37 years. I had previously taught at High Point Central (NC) after graduating Western Carolina University in the Fall of 1980. I taught there for a year and a half before coming back to the mountains.

"Since being at Highlands I have taught several subjects, woodworking, drafting, electricity, ceramics, basic automotive and graphic arts.

"When I first started here, there was one long hallway starting with the Office and ending with the Kindergarten classrooms. A fond memory is of Larry Brooks calling down the hall to load the buses. The intercom was often not working properly. The population grew and we added portable classrooms. The High School wing and Middle School building were built, and later the Annex where the Social studies and Science classes are. A track and soccer fields were added and a new gym.

"Sports were a large part of my early career. I coached wrestling and soccer in High Point. After coming to Highlands, I started out assisting softball, and then I started coaching baseball in 1984. I later coached JV basketball and soccer.

"The biggest change in the educational system has been the digital world. Walkman and basic TR-80 and Apple computers in the '80's were high tech. Now most of our students have iPads for class. Where homeroom attendance was taken with pencil and sent to the office daily, it's now a push of a button. Parents have access to their children's grades at any time, not just at report card time. Snow day communication has changed also. Long gone is the manual phone tree where the principal started calling and hopefully everyone received a call within 45 minutes. Now we receive phone calls, texts and emails, and hope everyone receives the message.

"The best part of teaching

is of course the kids. It has been a unique experience watching kindergarteners come through the doors with huge excited eyes, and 13 years later exit across the stage at graduation, ready to tackle the world.

"This will be my last year teaching at Highlands, and I will certainly miss all aspects, but it is time for someone younger to take over the program. I hope the lessons and skills taught throughout the years will last my kids for a lifetime."

The following is the list of the "Teacher of the Year" selections in the Macon County School System's 11 schools.

• Union Academy: Rachel Alford who was also selected at MC Schools 2020 Teacher of the

Year

- Macon Middle School: Scott Burns
- East Franklin Elementary School: Ciera Gregory
- Highlands School: Dave Cashion
- Mountain View Intermediate School: Jennifer Nation
- Cartoogechaye Elementary School: Katrin Rhoetter
- Iotla Valley Elementary School: Sheena Hughes
- Nantahala School: Jenny McMahan
- South Macon Elementary School: Christy Passmore
- Franklin High School: Bob Kupperts
- Macon Early College: Gary Brown

## • EVENT CHANGES •

### Bel Canto

The annual Bel Canto concert whose proceeds support the Highlands School music program as well as The Bascom exhibits has been cancelled for 2020.

It's the first cancellation in 28 years and its due, of course to the Covid outbreak.

Director Stell Huie asks that folks please contributions, regardless, so Bel Canto can still fulfill its mission this year.

Meanwhile, Bel Canto is scheduled for September 12, 2021.

### Highlands Twilight 5K and 10K

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

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

### Mountaintop Art & Craft Show

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

### Highlands F&R Annual Open House

Due to COVID-19, the Highlands Fire & Rescue Department will not be having its annual Open House this year. The event may be scheduled for later in the fall, but no plans have been made as of yet.



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## ...VIRTUAL continued from page 1

the Macon County Virtual Academy (MCVA).

The MCVA was launched specifically this year to provide 100% remote instruction for parents not wanting their child to return for in-person instruction as a result of COVID19. Governor Roy Cooper required every district in the state to offer 100% remote instruction for any families who wanted it – which is why Macon County launched the virtual academy.

The MCVA will keep students enrolled in the school system, which means that Macon County Schools will receive funding from the state based on their enrollment like usual.

According to Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin, MCS receives around \$8,000 per year in funding per student. If parents remove their children from the school system to homeschool independently, the district does not get that funding – which would be problematic if that child chooses to return to school mid-semester or in the Spring.

Students enrolled in the MCVA will still be counted toward the district's Average Daily Membership (ADM) totals which is what determines the total funding amount for the district.

MCVA students will also receive technical support from the school system including an iPad as well as a jetpack if a student needs help with internet access. The MCVA will be staffed with Macon County teachers who will be available for tutoring, in-person conferences and help, and other specialized attention depending on a child's needs.

"Instruction for these courses may be provided by MCS teachers, NCVPS or other avenues," said Dr. Baldwin. "First, we need to know how many students request these courses through the virtual academy as well as how many teachers are willing, or need to teach these courses virtually. Once we get this information from the surveys, we can better determine how the instruction

will be provided."

Survey were sent out last Wednesday and results and decisions made due to answers on the surveys will be discussed tonight at a special-called Board of Education meeting.

Students enrolled with the MCVA will also be allowed to participate in sports or club activities, assuming they are permitted under COVID19 restrictions, with the school they attended prior to virtual learning. This is not available with traditional home-schooling programs.

The administrative structure of the MCVA will depend on the number of students who sign up as well as decisions made by North Carolina Department of Instruction (NCDPI).

"NCDPI has had a high volume of requests for virtual schools and cannot guarantee an administrator for Macon County's virtual academy at this time," said Dr. Baldwin. "If there is not a dedicated principal for the MCVA, we would have a central point of contact for parents to reach out to for questions."

Students who begin the school year in the virtual academy must remain enrolled in the virtual academy for the entire semester (9 weeks). However, students who begin with in-person instruction will be permitted to switch to the virtual academy at any time.

If a senior chooses to enroll in MCVA, they will still be permitted to graduate with the school they attended prior to COVID19 and their diploma will be from their original high school.

Parents who selected the Virtual Academy option on the parent survey have done everything necessary for their child to be enrolled this Fall.

However, if a parent filled out the survey and did not select the Virtual Academy, but now wishes to enroll their child, they need to contact the school their child last attended and make

• See VIRTUAL page 18



# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

## Our changing world



**Rev. Steve Ridenhour**  
Lutheran Church  
of the Holy Family, Highlands

In recent months, our way of life has been turned upside down. Living in a Covid-19 world has forced us to evaluate how we live and interact with our families and our community.

We understand that for the safety of those around us, we must remain separated from one another. We remain separated to avoid the possibility of sharing the virus with others, if by some chance we are asymptomatic. We practice social distancing, separating ourselves from one another by six feet or more. We wear masks to keep tiny particles of aerosol separated from others.

We refrain from mass gathering. The Baseball season opened without stadium fans. Family and community gatherings have been canceled. Worshipping communities are re-imagining opportunities for worship but gathering is a part of our worshipping DNA.

Separation from family and loved ones who are sick and hospitalized, living in nursing homes, or senior living communities is especially difficult. We need to hug our loved ones. But Covid-19 keeps us separated.

During this time of separation, I am reminded of the words from St. Paul, *<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not*

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 18

### Holy Family Lutheran Church

We social distance and wear masks  
**Please join us for worship  
this Sunday 10:30 AM**  
Pastor Steve Ridenhour will officiate

2152 Dillard Road Highlands, NC

### Looking for a church home?

Wayfarers Unity Chapel is a non denominational, inclusive church located at 182 Wayfarer Lane, off Highway 246 in Dillard, GA, just 1.7 miles from Highway 441

Social time begins at 9:30 and services begin at 10 a.m. on Sundays

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

## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

### BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

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

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

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

### 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

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

Sundays: 10 a.m.; Worship

Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011

464 US Hwy 64 east, Cashiers

9:30a Early Service; 11a Worship Service;

### 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.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447,

Pastor Gary Hewins

Worship: Sun. 9 a.m., with Holy Communion the 1st & 3rd

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

### EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. W. Bentley Manning • 526-2968

Monday-Friday: Morning Prayer at 8:15a. Sundays: 8 am

Holy Eucharist Rite I; 9 am Sunday School; 10:30 am Holy

Eucharist Rite II. Childcare available at 10:30

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • [www.fbchighlands.org](http://www.fbchighlands.org)

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

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

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

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors

526-3175 • [fpchighlands.org](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

### GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

### GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS

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[www.gracecashiers.com](http://www.gracecashiers.com) • Pastor Steve Doerter: 743-9814

Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

### HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville, NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson

Sunday: School 9:45a, Worship 11a & 7p, Bible Study 6p

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

### HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed, Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street

Sundays: Worship: 11

### HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson

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

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

Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

### HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Pastor Randy Lucas 526-3376

**Virtual Service Only**

**10a Sunday**

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Chaplain Margaret Howell • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Worship/Communion: 10:30

All are welcome.

HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

### MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

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

Pastor Zane Talley

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11, Choir: 6 p.m.

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

### MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

at St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin • 828-524-9463

### MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church,

4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

### OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

### CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone - 526-2418

Mass: Thurs. 12:10; Fri. 9am; Sun: 11 a.m.

### SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

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

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

### SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

### SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

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

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

### ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Thurs. 9am, Fri., 11am; Sun. 9am

### THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 S., Office: 743-2359 • Rev. Rob Wood

June-Sept: Sunday Services: Rite I, 8a, Rite II, 9:15 & 11a

Nursery available for Rite II services

Sept 6-Oct 25- Informal Evening Eucharist: 5:30 p.m.

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive, Franklin • [uufranklin.org](http://uufranklin.org)

Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am



## ...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 17

*withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will be not with him also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

*"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:31-35, 37-39. NRSV.*

I am also reminded of Jesus departing words for his disciples, "And remember, I am with you always to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20. (NRSV)

God has promised to be with us always. Nothing in all creation, even a global pandemic, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Assured of Christ presence and love for us, we are called to share the love of Christ with others. In this Covid-19 world, we may share Christ love with our neighbor as we practice social distancing, wear masks, wash our hands, and offer radical grace and extreme patience with others. And in so doing, we will share with our neighbors the unifying and sacrificial love of Jesus.

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## ...VIRTUAL continued from page 16

them aware by Friday, July 31.

Parents who want to enroll their child in the Virtual Academy and do not plan to complete the

survey, may do so by also contacting the school their child last attended.

Macon County Schools will

be announcing final plans for the Fall school year on July 30, the day before the virtual academy enrollment deadline.

## ...INK PENN continued from page 6

friend who never slows down.

As for Leta, the protagonist, like me, she's Greek and she's a retired banker. Her cooking, the books she reads, her addiction to Words with Friends — all of those traits come from me as does her love of bicycling. I had to laugh when my editor inquired about Leta's age. She thought Leta was probably in her 50s and wasn't sure she'd be bicycling if she was. I sent her a photo of me and my husband cycling in the Greek Islands — when I was in my 50s.

By the way, my real-life husband is very much alive and none too pleased that I'm a widow in the books. I keep reminding him I say lovely things about Henry, Leta's husband, and all those compliments are references to him.

**Do you write with a theme in mind?**

I don't know that I'd call it a theme, but there are certain things that I plan to always include in the

books. My real-life girlfriends are hugely important to me, so the camaraderie among Leta, Wendy, and Belle plays a big part in the series. I don't belong to a book club, but I'm an avid reader, and each book includes a scene at the Book Nook, the village bookshop. When a book is read by the book club, you can be assured I've read and enjoyed it. And you'll notice that books and authors are mentioned throughout. That's the way conversations go with my girlfriends here in Atlanta.

**What's the most meaningful thing a fan has said about your books?**

The statement that made me glow was from a woman who said that Belle reminded her of her grandmother.

After that, I'm delighted that two things show up time after time in my reviews. One is that readers appreciate the relationship among the friends in the books and that

the women are well-rounded and intelligent. One review described them as "full-throated." Another is that people are pleasantly surprised they love the talking animals, that they add an interesting element to the book. Yes, Dickens & Christie talk to Leta, and she understands them. She's the only person who does.

**Any parting words to leave with us?**

Of course! We writers always have words. First, thanks again for the invitation. And, second, I hope readers will grab a copy of Bells, Tails, & Murder and get to know Leta and her friends—including the four-legged ones!

• *Author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her cozy mysteries on Amazon. Locally, "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch" is available at Highlands Mountain Paws. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com, and follow her on Facebook, www.facebook.com/KathyManosPennAuthor/.*

## ...LETTERS continued from page 5

that the chain restaurants and box stores need to make their business models successful, which will help our town maintain the charm that makes us unique."

Maybe I am reading that sentence wrong, but it seems to imply that chain restaurants and big box stores are inevitable in Highlands and that they get to make the decision whether to establish themselves here, or not. It is my contention that it is not their decision; it is

the decision and/or the choice of the people of Highlands. We get to decide whether we want them here or not, not the other way around.

What, exactly, is the ultimate vision of our local Realtors and our Chamber of Commerce when they are dreaming of Highlands' future?

**Alice Nelson  
Highlands**

## How to relax

Dear Editor,

If you truly want to relax, I mean truly, truly relax, it's easy. All you have to do is on a beautiful day, sit outside in a comfortable chair and watch the clouds. And if you really, really want to relax, while watching the clouds start counting some of your many, many blessings. Be careful, it is contagious plus it works every time.

**Kenny Youmans  
Highlands**

## ...WORD MATTER continued from 13

Other aspects will change completely, forever.

The American workplace is ripe for a major reimagining. HVAC systems will be redesigned to address concerns for workers' health. Some physical distancing

will factor into floor planning. And then, there's working from home.

Technology provided the means for a kind of 2.0 version of the American economy. The coronavirus presented the impetus to develop models necessary to meet

the future.

This. Is. Happening. Instead of "going back," we're moving forward, and entering what I think of as America's Zoom Economy.



# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from July 13. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

## July 13

• At 10 a.m., officers received a report of a breaking & entering with larceny at a residence on Holt Circle where tools valued at \$900 were taken.

## July 14

• At 2:49 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on NC 106 near Upper Buttermilk Road.

## July 16

• At 9:18 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident on US 64 east near Sherwood Forest Road.

## July 20

• At 7:30 a.m., officers received a report of destruction of property valued at \$200 at the skate park at the Rec Park.

• At 2 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at the entrance to Highlands Mountain Club and NC 106.

## July 21

• At 11:59 a.m., the embezzlement of more than \$30,000 was reported from Brunch HQ in Wright Square.

• At noon, officers received a report of the unauthorized use of a vehicle at Brunch HQ in Wright Square.

## July 23

• At 8:30 a.m., Lyndsey Alicia Gonzalez, 24, of Cullowhee, NC was arrested on warrants for offenses committed in another jurisdiction. He was issued a \$2,500 secured bond. His trial date is Aug. 18.

• At 3 p.m., officers received a report of larceny of lawn chairs from a residence on Wyanoak Road.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from July 20.**

## July 20

• At 1:39 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.

• At 3:03 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance to a location on Main Street.

## July 21

• At 10:42 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Dendy Orchard

Road.

• At 6:55 p.m., the dept. responded to the call of a gas leak at a residence on Wyanoak Road.

## July 23

• At 1:06 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

## July 24

• The dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street and a possible structure fire.

• At 12:56 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of an electrical fire smell at a residence on Holt Circle.

• At 10:40 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west. It was cancelled en route.

## July 25

• At 10:05 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Flat Mountain Road.

• At 2:31 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident at Holt Road and NC 106.

## July 26

• At 6:21 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

## July 27

• At 7:53 p.m., the dept. responded to a medical alarm at a residence on Western Rhodes Road.

• At 8:35 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Cottage Lane.

• At 7:12 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Chowan Drive.

## Highlands Police Dept. Seeks Information

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

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

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

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

## Notice of Unclaimed Property

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

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

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

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

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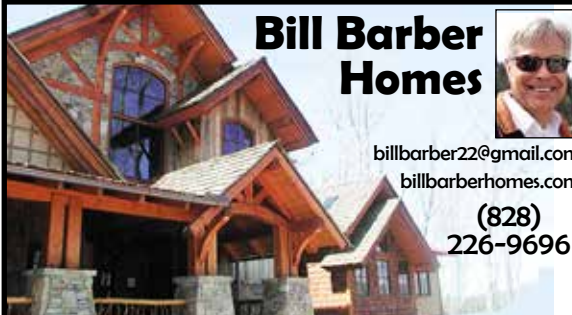


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Call Sandra La Jeunesse at 828-371-2214.

## HELP WANTED

## WOLFGANGS

is looking for a Sous Chef with a solid track record. for dinner prep and service. Need to be creative. Also waitstaff, backer.

Best award of Wine Spectator. Please email mindygreen@me.com for either position. (st. 5/28)

## THE LOG CABIN

restaurant, downtown Highlands, is hiring all positions including sous chef, front of house manager, servers, line cooks and handyman/landscaper to start immediately. Call 828 526-5777 or email jason@logcabinhighlands.com. (st. 6/11)

## LUXURY LODGE

**MANAGER** needed for live in position. Prefer a local couple/individual to entertain, offer cooking classes and maintain facility while enjoying living in an exceptional facility. Must have impeccable references and some experience in hospitality/maintenance.mrpaulkrk@yahoo.com. (st. 6/11)

## LOCAL TREE COM-

**PANY HIRING** – Jesse's Tree Service, LLC, local to the Highlands, NC area is seeking both tree climbers and grounds/cleanup crew. Pat experience a plus but company will train. Salary is based on experience. We are looking for reliable, drug-free, hard working individuals. Driver's license and a clean driving record a plus. If interested, please call owner, Jesse Finley at 828-342-1974 to set up an interview. (st. 6/4)

## NOW HIRING PART-

## AND FULL-TIME AS-

## SOCIATES FOR RETAIL

**STORE.** Must be willing to work weekends and holidays. Call Shannon at 526-8864 or email Shannon@dutchmans-designs.com (st. 6/4)

## NOW HIRING AT

**WILDTHYME.** We are looking for a sous chef, waitstaff,

dishwasher and hostess. Must have positive attitude and reliable transportation. Apply in person at Wild Thyme Gourmet in Town Square on Main Street in Highlands. Please no phone calls. (st. 5/28)

## AT OEI

– Servers, Host/Hostess, Bartenders, Bussers, Asst. Pastry Chef, Pastry Cook, Cook, Dishwashers, Reservationists, Bellman, Front Desk, Night Auditor, Housekeepers, Turndown Attendants, Houseman Cosmetologist, Certified Massage Therapist, Spa Attendant, Part-time Marketing & Administrative Assistant, Gardener's Assistants (Full-time year round, full-time seasonal, part-time seasonal) Please apply online at www.oldedwardsinn.com/careers

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## CHESTNUT HILL

is an upscale Assisted Living Community in search of a Dietary Cook, CNAs, Med Techs, Wait Staff and Housekeeping. Send resume to Lindabtiff@aol.com or call 828-526-5251. (st. 2/13)

## RANDEVU

now hiring waitstaff, hostess and expediter. Call 828-743-0190. (st. 2/27)

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## HIGHLANDS-CA-

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## MAN

– Can fix anything inside or out. Carpentry, Interior and exterior painting, pressure washing, lawn care, hauling, and will monitor house during winter. Free Estimates. References. Call Tony. 828-200-5770 or 828-482-0159. (st. 3/26)

## GUTTER CLEANING,

## METAL ROOF & FABRI-

## CATION

roof repairs, chimney flashing, debris removal, pres-

sure washing. Call 371-1103. (st. 6/27/19)

## HIGH COUNTRY

## PHOTO/KEVIN VIN-

## SON:

scanning photos, slides & negatives to CD or DVD for easier viewing. Video transfer to DVD. Everything done in house. Leave message at 828-526-5208. (st. 6/4)

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