

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 17, Number 11

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com Thursday, March 12, 2020

WideOpen contract OK'd at retreat

The Town Board Annual Retreat was last Thursday. It's when department heads outline their wants and needs in hopes of them becoming part of the budget – in this case FY 2020-'21.

Though business isn't typically done at Town Board retreats, this time as the last item on the agenda, business was conducted regarding the WideOpen Network contract.

The board voted 4-1 to accept the contract. Commissioner Mark Hehn voted against it.

"I had a lot of questions regarding the contract but also re-

• See WIDEOPEN page 6

• INSIDE THIS ISSUE •

Mayor on Duty	2	Ink Penn.....	11
Weather.....	2	Events	12
Obituary.....	5	Tax Matters.....	17
Investing at 4,118 Ft.....	7	Police & Fire Reports	19
Word Matter.....	9	Classifieds.....	22

Preparing for COVID-19 is crucial

Every institution and government agency in the country, state, county, and town is monitoring the Coronavirus.

By press time, no drastic measures have been initiated in Highlands or Macon County but on NC Governor Roy Cooper declared a state of emergency due to 7 confirmed cases in the state.

The declaration conveys to the public that the illness is enough of a threat that they should take protective measures against it, and it makes the state eligible for federal emergency funding.

The MC Health Department, the MC School District, HCA/Mission and the town of Highlands are suggesting people take personal precautions including curtailing visiting elders in

• See COVID-19 page 7



Eliza Tate performs a backflip on a beam at New Vision Training Center.

– Photo by Brian O'Shea

Plateau gymnasts strive for perfection

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Gymnastics is different from

other sports. Competitions are few and often far away, gymnasts

• See GYMNASTICS page 10

Rep. Meadows District 11 seat is officially vacant; next step is unclear

Meadows self-quarantines for COVID-19

By Brittney Lofthouse

After serving Western North Carolina in the United States House of Representatives, Congressman Mark Meadows will now transition into the President's cabinet to serve as Donald Trump's Chief of Staff.

"It's an honor to be selected by President Trump to serve alongside him and his team," Congressman Meadows said in a release shortly after President

Trump made the announcement via Twitter. "This President and his administration have a long list of incredible victories they've delivered to the country during this first term, with the best yet to come — and I look forward to helping build on that success and staying in the fight for the forgotten men and women of America."

Mick Mulvaney has been serving as the President's interim

• See MEADOWS page 16

More SANE nurse access needed in WNC

By Brittney Lofthouse

While there is room to debate when Angel Medical Center lost its SANE nurse position, the one thing that cannot be debated is the need for the services a SANE nurse provides victims of sexual

abuse.

A few months after REACH of Macon County's Assistant Director Jennifer Turner-Lynn spoke during a public forum about a victim of rape having to

• See SANE page 16

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Preparing for the Coronavirus

Just because we live on a remote and somewhat isolated mountain plateau, there is still a possibility that the coronavirus will appear and even spread. We are a tourist community and have many folks coming and going to multiple locations which makes us vulnerable to transmission of the virus. Also, as a retirement community, a significant portion of our residents could be vulnerable to coronavirus complications.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Our town staff is monitoring the situation. Staff members attended a strategy meeting with Macon County Emergency Services and the Macon County Public Health Department that was reported in last week's paper. I have also spoken with EMS Director Warren Cabe. There are protocols in place to address the spread and containment of the coronavirus. The same county system was in place when Ebola and SARS were public health concerns. Fortunately, no action was required in those situations. As of last week, there were no reported cases in Macon County.

I have also talked with Tom Neal, the executive director of the Highlands Cashiers Hospital. HCA is implementing protocols to control the spread of the virus at their facilities. They already screen visitors to the hospital to make sure they do not have cold or flu symptoms. This screening is a standard practice during annually occurring flu season. Tom has informed me that the hospital has all the equipment, materials and staff to deal with a coronavirus outbreak should one occur.

Tom emphasizes that the best line of personal defense against any virus is thorough hand washing. He stresses that folks sometimes forget to wash thumbs and between fingers, and that washing with a good soap should last a minimum of 20 seconds.

Be assured the Town of Highlands realizes this is a serious issue, and we will work with these agencies in a coordinated response. I will be meeting with a representative of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce to discuss the issue of the opening of the season which brings large events to the town. It is anyone's guess as to how long this virus will remain active. It may dissipate as warmer temperatures return.

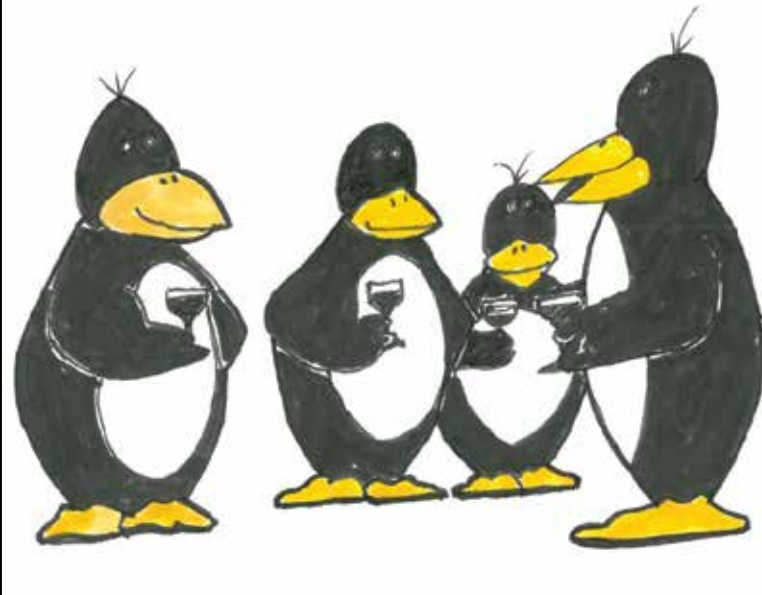
I do have the authority to declare a state of emergency if a situation warrants it. As with other emergency declarations, I depend on guidance from experts in the county to advise me as to when to take such action. County officials are in constant contact with state and federal officials who are tracking and analyzing the spread of the coronavirus.

A real problem with this medical crisis is unwarranted fear and misinformation. The spread COVID 19 virus has without a doubt impacted the world economy, the civil, social and cultural infrastructure. There are no easy solutions such as putting up gates and closing off Highlands to the outside world.

On the other hand, we can use best personal practices to mitigate this potential crisis. I recommend visiting the websites of the American Red Cross or the World Health Organization. Both websites identify practices that can minimize exposure.





- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- <https://www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-safety-and-readiness-tips-for-you.html>

• HIC'S VIEW •



"Another cruise ship is due tonight. We moved the navigation buoys so it will be interesting."

• WEATHER •

Thu, 12-Mar	Fri, 13-Mar	Sat, 14-Mar	Sun, 15-Mar
			
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Mostly cloudy	Cloudy with a few showers	A thunderstorm in spots	Rain
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Digital Media/Circulation - Jim Lewicki

Locally owned and operated by

Kim & Jim Lewicki

Adobe PDF version at

www.HighlandsInfo.com

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

Highlands, N.C., 28741

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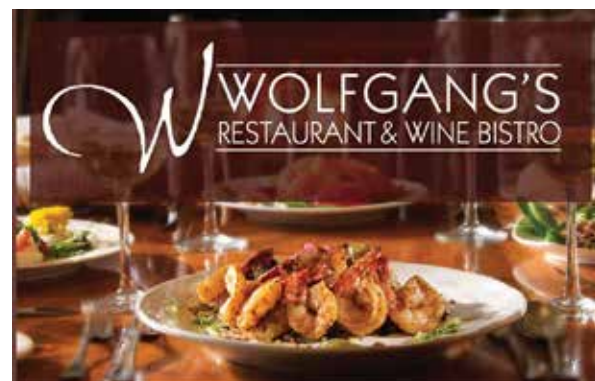
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Lola Mae Stiwinter Stewart



Mrs. Lola Mae Stiwinter Stewart, 82, passed away March 6, 2020 in Highlands, NC. Mrs. Stewart was born January 14, 1938 in Jackson County to the late L.C. Stiwinter and Ruby Fox Stiwinter. She was married to the late Odell Stewart who preceded her in 2016. Lola was a care giver for 15 years for several people and she worked for Cashiers Plastic for 19 years. She was a member of the Yellow Mountain Baptist Church and in recent years she attended the Cashiers Church of God. Mrs. Lola loved to garden, go to flea markets, and thrift stores. She loved spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Survivors include her son, Jay Stewart (Laura) of Cashiers, NC; two grandchildren, Julie Stewart Bennett and Karl Stewart (Malori); 8 grandchildren, Jordin Dominique, James Madden, Marisa Cole, Justine Dominique, Evan Pressley, Maddox Stewart, Garett Stewart, and Evelyn Bennett; a sister, Ronnie Dean Lowing of Franklin; and a brother, Jack Stiwinter of Charlotte.

In addition to her husband and parents Mrs. Stewart was preceded in death by a brother, T. W. Stiwinter.

A funeral service was held Monday, March 9 at the Cashiers Church of God with the Rev. David Hall and Rev. Ricky Potts officiating. Burial followed in the Evitt Cemetery. Online condolences can be left at www.bryantgrant-funeralhome.com.



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...WIDEOPEN continued from page 1

garding the necessity of completing this project. It seems to me providers in the area have upped their game over the last few years," he said after the meeting.

MIS/GIS Director Matt Shuler said though the contract was accepted by the Town Board, the process isn't complete.

"The Town Board did approve the WideOpen contract, but now it will be sent back to WideOpen for their approval," he said. "If WideOpen approves it, then it is a completed deal, but if they have any changes, it will be brought back to the board."

About five years ago, when legislative windows opened to allow municipalities to get into the broadband business, the Town of Highlands jumped through. Subsequent legislative changes have initiated the town getting into business with WideOpen, but the ball was rolling, and plans for the fiber highway were in the works.

"The Town Board and staff have been working on this project for five years. We are about five years ahead of most rural communities in North Carolina. All these communities see access to this technology as an economic survival issue," said Mayor Pat Taylor.

Taylor said the fiber highway the town is building at its own expense is about more than broadband.

"The fiber network is a unified communication system," said Taylor. It does not use copper lines but all seamless fiber optic, glass cable lines. Since it is not copper, it is resistant to outages caused by lightning. At this point, there seems to be no limitation to bandwidth that a single fiber can carry. This network will provide a single strand of fiber to each home and business that is on the network which

means each customer will have dedicated, secure fiber to use."

Linking every residence and business within the town limits is a good thing, but many outside the town limits still lack reliable broadband -- going with satellite providers instead. Even that is difficult since geography and tree cover dictates where and if a satellite can be targeted.

Town staff has long said that the fiber highway built to the edges of town may help providers supply services outside of town.

"The network goes to every parcel of property in the town limits. Also, it goes to residents who are on town electricity outside the town limits, like in Horse Cove," said Taylor. "By expanding the in-town highway outside of town, WideOpen will be able to run the fiber anywhere it sees a need. Then, providers leasing fiber from WideOpen can provide service anywhere the network is located."

The town has taken a \$4.6 million loan out to build the network and it expects the fiber network to be a viable operation for 40 to 50 years.

WideOpen will eventually own the fiber highway installed by the town as a private business and will manage and operate it.

The money WideOpen pays the town for operating the network and leasing the fiber will go to paying the loan back.

"It is a 15-year loan, but it will take 23 years to fully recover the cost of the loan," said Taylor. "If NC House Bill 129 allowed the town to negotiate a 20-year lease with WideOpen, this network would already be built. We can only lease the fiber to them for just under 10 years. At that time, a new lease with WideOpen or another provider will have to be negotiated."

Such legislative time constraints made it hard for the town to secure a partner for the project.

Unlike its enterprise funds -- electric, water and sewer -- the town isn't trying to make money for the town, but rather ensure Highlands has a world-class fiber network, said Taylor.

"It is a long-term investment that will have intangible benefits such as insuring a viable real estate market and business environment because people can work from home full-time, part-time, day or night," said Taylor.

Taylor has long said such reliable technology may entice people to live in Highlands and work long-distance.

But what of the relationships residents and businesses have with current providers like Altitude and others? Will they be dissolved? Who will absorb those contracts?

According to Taylor and Shuler, Altitude and its two employees will be acquired by WideOpen. WideOpen will continue to operate Altitude and convert current customers over to the fiber network.

"There should be no change in service," said Taylor. "In fact, the wireless operations of Altitude may be extended to more areas outside of the town limits. That decision will be made by WideOpen."

Once the fiber highway is completed and WideOpen takes over, the town will not be in the broadband business. WideOpen will take over the billing of Altitude customers, and they will operate an office here in Highlands.

At that point, residents and businesses will have the opportunity to select a provider from a list WideOpen has.

Those providers will drop a line from the highway directly to residences or busi-

nesses.

"As best as we can determine at this time, WideOpen will begin operations in Highlands sometime this summer," said Taylor and Shuler.

Like Hehn suggested, over the years during which the town's fiber highway plan has been in the works, some providers in town have upped their game -- likely to get a jump on the town's and WideOpen's plan.

This means the whole issue of supplying broadband will get down to private business competition.

"If a provider wanted to be available to every residence and business in Highlands in a very short time, leasing fiber from WideOpen and dropping lines would be the best way to accomplish that goal," said Taylor.

But if people are happy with the providers they now have, they can continue with them without being hindered by WideOpen.

"If a resident likes their provider, they can continue with them," Taylor said. "I do think we are seeing major changes in the industry. The old cable or satellite system of acquiring TV is on its way out and streaming services are on the way in. Copper phone lines are going away, too. For instance, with the fiber highway, a person can have a 'landline' on the fiber network with full speed and clarity."

The network should be completed in late May or June.

WideOpen said it will offer highly reliable gigabit fiber connections throughout the town of Highlands where people can use all the bandwidth they want without worrying about slowdown, overage charges or data caps.

Numerous TVs, laptops, computers, tablets, printers and servers can be used at the same time "at the speed of light," it says.

It will offer a choice of service providers and services and a competitive marketplace with the ability to support a wide range of services including home security, data backups, telehealth, video on demand and more.

Finally, it says they will offer a wide range of very high performance "business class" services including Gig, 10Gig, 100Gig and wavelength services.

In their promo pieces WideOpen says it's bringing better, faster and cheaper Internet to Highlands.

— Kim Lewicki



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Coronavirus the Stock Market and the Plateau

As I am writing this, the Coronavirus is the major news item, along with the stock market decline and the “circuit breaker” that was tripped because of the massive sell-off of equities. Who knows what will happen by the time this article is printed on Thursday, but it did get me thinking about how thankful I am to live on the plateau and some of the insulating factors that are provided by living here.

We are not immune to the virus coming into our area, as it already is in North Carolina. However, our likelihood of coming in contact with it is greatly decreased, as in any rural area as compared to a metropolitan or urban area. Here are a few of the things that could occur on any normal day, and which would you prefer?

- Stop by the chain coffee shop on a busy corner in a city or visit a independent local coffee shop for a latte?

- Work in a high-rise office building, sharing the elevator with many or share an office with a few others workers?

- Have lunch in the chain restaurant know for turning its tables or eat at one of the local joints that prepare fresh food on a daily basis?

- Work out at a gym that you share with hundreds of others or take a walk around town or a hike on one of our trails?

- Attend a mega-church with a parking lot so big they need a shuttle bus or a church with a few hundred other people?

- Shop at a locally owned hardware store, grocery or boutique shop, or stop by the big box stores where hundreds or thousands go in and out daily.

- Go to the Playhouse for a movie where there are 30-50 patrons or go to the multiplex theater.

- Send your children to a K-12 school that has fewer students than most grades in urban schools.

These are just a few examples, but I'm sure you see the point. On a busy day, we may come in contact with several hundred people here, but in a metropolitan area that number would easily be in the thousands, possibly 10s of thousands depending on



Carl Romberg, BIC
Landmark Realty Group
Cell: 678-936-9309

where and how you live. These are generalizations, as I know we have a chain grocery and we all go “off the mountain” for certain services and other reasons. Regardless of a pandemic, these are the same reasons so many people buy second homes or move here as year-round residents. The lifestyle on the plateau doesn't exempt us from exposure, but does lower the chance and provides a quality of life not offered in many places.

Changing to the stock market issue, it is also relevant to us on the plateau. Any good money manager will stress the importance of diversification of a portfolio. A good investment portfolio would not only be diversified into stocks and bonds, but different types of stocks – large cap, small cap, emerging markets, etc. Real estate portfolios should also be diversified. If you own a property in an urban setting, consider a second home in a rural setting like the plateau. Perhaps you own a vacation rental property as an investment at the beach. Diversify and add one in the mountain's which would attract different types of renters. Or you may want to invest in other types of real estate. A commercial property, multi-family property, long-term rental or vacant land would diversify your portfolio. All of these are available on the plateau.

It is too early to tell if the recent stock market decline will impact real estate sales or values, in urban or rural environments. There are still buyers and sellers, and the mortgage rates are at all time lows, so it may be a good time to diversify into something else.

History shows us that eventually the Coronavirus will not be the news headline and the stock market will return and set new highs. Until that happens, I'm glad to ride out the storm here on the plateau.

• Carl Romberg is the Broker-in-Charge of Landmark Realty Group's Highlands Office. Landmark has been the firm with the largest volume of sales on the plateau each of the past 7 years. Carl can be reached at 678-936-9309 or carl@landmarkerg.com.

...COVID-19 continued from page 1

nursing homes and urging people who feel sick or who display flu-like symptoms to stay home.

According to the CDC, patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and include fever, cough and shortness of breath. The CDC says to call your healthcare professional if you develop symptoms and have been in close contact with a person known to have the disease or if you have recently traveled from an area with widespread or ongoing community spread of the disease.

At last Thursday's Town Board Retreat, Commissioner Dr. Amy Patterson, who made it clear she is not an expert or a “human” doctor said she has been in contact with a human pathologist who has imparted knowledge and had suggestions.

“It's great to have all our government agencies telling us what to do, but we can do automatic things ourselves: don't shake hands, open doors with your hips or your elbows and if you use gloves to open doors, pitch them after you use them,” she said.

Patterson said the Coronavirus virus targets lung cells. That's the only place it replicates but it's not the only place you can get it. You can get it from person-to-person infections, so if someone coughs on you and they have it that cough, those droplets, is how it is transmits to you.

“The other way people get it is community transmission,” said Patterson. “If I put my hand down and I have it, that virus is now right there. You put your hand right there, you can get it. The other thing is humans put their hands to their face somewhere in the neighborhood of 90 times a day and that's how you get it. So, what they

talk about now, is simple things. Don't shake hands -- if they have it on their hands, you'll get it on your hands and you immediately put it to your face.”

Patterson said Highlands is a community to which a lot of people are coming to from Atlanta where Hartsfield is one of the biggest airports in the world and people are flying in from all over the world. A lot of those people come up here. So, don't open doors with doorknobs, she said.

“If a person opened a door last night and had it on their hands and I open it today, I get it on my hand. That's community transmission. You don't have had to be in contact with that person, because basically the virus only replicates or lives in lung tissue, but it can be on inanimate objects that we touch,” she said.

Using soap and water for at least 20 seconds is good but carrying soap and water around isn't reasonable. So, authorities say to use a hand sanitizer that contains over 60% alcohol many times a day.

“If you use gloves to open doors, they are contaminated so you can't reuse them. If you cough, cough into a tissue and throw that away; don't reuse it. If you get it on your hands you put it other places. Turn on light switches with your knuckle, things like that. Open doors with an elbow. It's not just about you preventing yourself from getting the disease, it's about preventing the spreading of it,” said Patterson.

How long it lives on inanimate objects depends on temperature and humidity. But the virus cells can only replicate in the lung tissue of the body.

“Sneezing – though it's technically not a lung function – you use air from your

• See COVID-19 page 8



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...COVID-19 continued from page 7

lungs to create that sneeze, Coughing, obviously. Any air that comes from your lungs could be contaminated," she said.

Patterson finished by saying masks aren't always to keep you from getting the virus, it's to keep people from touching their mouth. She said a bandana, a scarf, anything that will remind you not to touch your mouth and face.

The American Red Cross and the World Health Organization are closely monitoring the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and are following the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Those agencies are highlighting some everyday health and preparedness steps that people in the U.S. can take now. There are also special recommendations for people who may be at a higher risk — those over the age of 60 with underlying health problems.

Limit the Spread of Germs and Prevent Infection

The Red Cross recommends

following common sense steps to help prevent the spread of any respiratory virus.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- Stay home when you are sick.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and throw the tissue away after use. If a tissue isn't available, cough or sneeze into your elbow or sleeve, not your hands.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

- Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your

stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

- Clean and disinfect door-knobs, switches, handles, computers, telephones, bedside tables, bathroom sinks, toilets, counters, toys and other surfaces that are commonly touched around the home or workplace.

- To the extent possible, avoid touching commonly used surfaces in public places like elevator buttons, door handles and handrails and avoid handshaking with people. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.

- Follow the CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.

- CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.

- The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care

of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

Get Your Household Ready

There are things you can do right now to be ready for any emergency, and many of these same tips will help you prepare as the coronavirus situation continues to evolve in the U.S.

- Have a supply of food staples and household supplies like laundry detergent and bathroom items, and diapers if you have small children.

- Check to make sure you have at least a 30-day supply of your prescription medications, and have other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes and vitamins.

- Know how your local public health agency will share information in your community and stay informed.

- Learn how your children's school or daycare, and your workplace will handle a possible outbreak. Create a plan in the event of any closings, event cancellations or postponements.

- If you care for older adults or children, plan and prepare for caring for them, should they or you become sick.

- Help family members and neighbors get prepared and share the safety messaging with those who may not have access to it.

Who is at a Higher Risk?

COVID-19 is a new disease, which means scientists and public health experts are still learning how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes and to what extent it may spread in the U.S.

Early information shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this virus. This includes older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease.

If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or a serious medical condition, it is extra important for you to take actions to avoid getting sick.

- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others.

- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.

- Avoid crowds as much as possible.

- Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms. Most people will be able to recover from COVID-19 at home.

Up-to-Date Information

For the latest information, please visit the CDC website at [cdc.gov/covid19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19).

— Kim Lewicki

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Funeral Notice

The celebration of life gathering for John Evan Norton previously scheduled for Saturday, March 14 at the Community Building near the ballfields has been postponed until further notice. The family thanks everyone for their prayers and good thoughts and hopes to reschedule soon.

•WORD MATTER•

A Clear Choice for Democrats



Bud Katz

ance at work. Older voters, who vote in very large numbers, already have Medicare, or can see it coming. Free college tuition? Aimed at the young and likely would never make it through Congress. Older folks have been there and done that. Student loan forgiveness? Aimed at the young, and again, a tough sell in even in a Democrat- controlled Congress, which is no sure thing.

In truth, there's nothing wrong with pitching young people; Barack Obama got elected doing it in 2008. But you can't forget middle aged and older Americans who tend to vote in higher numbers than young people.

Joe's positions, not to beat a dead donkey, are entirely mainstream. As far as healthcare is concerned, Joe wants to add a public option to Obamacare, not eliminate it. Eliminating Obamacare is a Republican platform plank. He wants to provide two years of free college, not four. He favors background checks on guns, some restrictions on late term abortions, clean energy solutions, etc. As I said, mainstream.

Newsflash, Bernie supporters, the young can't be counted on to vote in huge numbers; at least they haven't since 2008. The party's leadership isn't sabotaging Bernie's campaign. If anyone is doing it, it's Bernie's own campaign. And, aside to Bernie, saying nice things about Fidel Castro won't win over non-Mexican, Latino voters, a growing and important constituency if Democrats hope to defeat Donald Trump, especially in Florida.

If Bernie prevails, Biden's people will likely get on board. Not necessarily so if Biden wins the nomination. Many of Bernie's supporters are of the 'all or nothing'

variety, willing to sit out the election if their man doesn't get the nomination. Sorry, that's just dumb.

The Democratic Party's 2020 nominating process began as a model of age, gender, racial and ethnic diversity. It's boiled down to a battle between a mainstream moderate and a radical progressive/democratic socialist, personified by two late-70s white men.

There's a lot of politics still to come before we know who will live in the White House from 2021-2025. Republicans and Donald Trump are not going to sit by and let the contest between Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden dominate the conversation.

Democrats, who traditionally can't seem to get out of their own way, if they're going to win, must, for once, coalesce behind either Bernie Sanders or Joe Biden, and leave the ideological purity tests at the door.



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BOOK SIGNING with Amanda Wilbanks



SATURDAY
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Meet author Amanda Wilbanks, sample her pies and purchase some to take home. Amanda is the author of *Southern Baked: Celebrating Life with Pie* and the creative entrepreneur behind the wildly successful Southern Baked Pie Company.

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...GYMNASTICS continued from page 1

often compete as individuals instead of a team, and there is no off season.

Charlotte Bumgarner, 8, of Cashiers; and Eliza Tate, 15, of Highlands travel to Franklin several times a week to train at New Vision Training Center, each practice session lasts four hours. Both gymnasts began when they were 1.5 years old. Tate said the sacrifice is worth it to do something you love.

“Gymnastics is a big commitment, but it’s worth it because it teaches me so much more than anything else,” said Tate. “It’s also really unique because some of the girls and boys I practice with at the moment range from 2nd to 12th grade.”

Bumgarner said there’s a draw to gymnastics that keeps her coming back to the gym to train.

“I like gymnastics because I like to do crazy things, and I want to show people that girls can do anything boys can do,” said Bumgarner. “Gymnastics encourages girls to do that.”

During competitions, gymnasts perform on the vault, beam, floor routine, and

bars; Bumgarner and Tate strive for improvement at each station. Competitors are scored based on leg, feet, arms, hands, head, creativity, presentation, amplitude, and skill level (how difficult is the routine).

Tate recently took first place in vault at The Charleston Cup in South Carolina on Feb. 29. New Vision Coach April Ostojic said Tate wasn’t happy with her performance but ended up taking first.

“Eliza is very dedicated, 4-5 times a week all year round, she has strong goals and a great work ethic,” said Ostajic. “She is a leader on our team and pulls us all together, and she’s confident in that role.”

Bumgarner said she gets excited before competitions but calms down once she begins her routine.

“Sometimes competitions are really intense,” said Bumgarner. “And sometimes the judges can be really hard, but I don’t blame them, they’re just doing their job.”

New Vision Coach Alanna Peavy said Bumgarner’s dedication for someone her age is impressive.

“She works very hard and puts in a lot



Charlotte Bumgarner working the uneven bars.

— Photo by Brian O’Shea

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Thursday—Saturday, March 26, 27, 28
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2020

of effort in the gym every time she’s here,” said Peavey. “She always has a positive attitude and she shows improvement with each meet she competes in.”

Bumgarner remembers when she was competing one time and due to a schedule mishap, had to perform on the floor with very no notice.

“It was my third competition and I was backstage and suddenly I had to go on with no preparation,” she said. “Then they said I won first place and I thought, oh my gosh this is amazing!”

Tate said the dedication required for gymnastics has an effect on her social life.

“I get a social life at the gym,” said Tate. “Going to a public school rather than being home schooled gives me friends there, too. It just effects my inability to hang-out with them a lot. I’m also at the gym all summer, so hanging out then really isn’t an option either.”

Tate’s mother, Allison, said Eliza’s participation in gymnastics has been a family commitment since they began a Mommy and Me class when Eliza was a baby. She said the number one reason it’s worth it is because gymnastics is Eliza’s passion, and watching your child do something that she loves is enough.

“Eliza is learning about failures and successes,” said Allison. “She is learning about setting goals and how to work for them. Imagine setting a goal and literally failing time and time again, like days upon days, before you nail that tumbling pass or dismount. Also, when she is competing one small bobble can cause a fall on an event and she has to make quick decisions how she can make up for a mistake. There is so much pressure in the spotlight of gymnastics and she is learning huge life lessons about how to handle pressure, stress, nerves, etc.”

Bumgarner’s mother, Katie, said she first enrolled her daughter into gymnastics as a fun activity and a chance to socialize. After Charlotte chalked up her hands once, she was hooked.

“At the time, there was a shortage of Cashiers-local activities for very young kids, so driving to Franklin was one of the only options,” said Katie. “Charlotte took to gymnastics immediately and has loved it ever since. The amount of practices within the week have increased with her joining the competition team and also increasing in level, and definitely can be inconvenient and overwhelming at times. But seeing her smile out on the gym floor while she’s giving it all she’s got makes every mile worth it.”

• THE INK PENN •

The inspiration for Dickens the dog

In my cozy mystery series, the main character owns a Great Pyrenees named Dickens, but not just any Pyr. Hers is a dwarf, and they do exist, just not in great numbers. You can't go out and find one at a pet store or at a breeder's. They're anomalies.

Because my dog Banjo is part Pyr, I've grown to love the breed's temperament, and I've learned a lot about their traits. Banjo may weigh only 70 pounds and have a black coat instead of a white one, but his personality is pure Pyr. As I thought about my books, I knew I wanted a dog and a cat as sidekicks for my character, and I thought, "Why not a Great Pyrenees?" That way, I could use Banjo as the model for the fictional dog's shenanigans.

The answer to that question is they're just too darned big. My books are set in the Cotswolds, and I wanted Leta, the protagonist, to be able to take her dog everywhere she went by train or by car. At 140 pounds,

a full-bred Great Pyrenees seemed a bit too much to handle. What about a mini-GP? I thought. And that's how I discovered there's no such thing. There are miniature poodles and mini-doodles, but no mini-Pyrs. I did, however, stumble across the existence of dwarf Great Pyrenees.

Breeders don't set out to breed smaller Great Pyrenees, but occasionally a dwarf Pyr is born from a healthy set of parents. In years past, these smaller dogs were hidden or culled.

Everything I read about these smaller versions of the majestic breed made me smile. They range in size from 13" to 18" at the shoulder and can weigh 35 – 50 pounds. Some of the dwarfs have hearing problems or are completely deaf. I had to laugh at one owner who said he wasn't sure whether his



Kathy Manos Penn

little one was hard of hearing or simply had the breed's tendency toward selective hearing. Banjo has that tendency, and he's only part Pyr.

As you might expect, they can also have skeletal and/or joint issues, but then so do many labs and goldens and other large breeds. I've read everything I can find about these small dogs, but I don't pretend to understand the science behind the study underway to de-

termine the cause of dwarfism in Pyrs. I've been more interested in the unbelievably cute photos I've found on Facebook.

I corresponded with one or two owners on Facebook and was able to get permission to use a photo of one little guy as the model for Dickens. His name is Bailey, and I think he's precious. Naturally, in my book, Dickens is a huge hit. Everyone who meets

him recognizes he must be a Great Pyrenees, and then they wonder how he can be so tiny. Is it any wonder that Dickens has a bit of a complex about his size and is quite sensitive about "little" comments?

And yes, in case you're wondering, Dickens talks to Leta a la Dr. Dolittle, but she's the only one who can understand him. He's a happy go lucky little guy who likes everyone he meets, and he adores long walks and car rides and belly rubs. I did mention he has Banjo's personality, right? Get to know him better in "Bells, Tails & Murder" available on Amazon.

• Author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her books 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/.

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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

• New Guided Botanical Garden Tours: A Garden in Every Season. 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. Meet at the Highlands Nature Center Free, All ages welcome.

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

Mondays

• At the Rec Park, Dance2Fit classes with Tori Schmitt at 5:30pm.
• Rotary Club of Highlands Mountaintop meet every Monday at the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation on Main Street, across from Mountain Fresh Grocery 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 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

• American Legion Post 370 meets in the 9:09 Chapel of the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in Highlands for Breakfast at 9AM followed by the meeting at 10AM.

• 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.

Fridays

• Knee High Naturalists at the Nature Center 10a - 11a. Free, chil-

dren of all abilities welcome.

3rd Saturday

• Highlands American Legion Post 370 meets every month (weather permitting) at 9AM for breakfast followed by the meeting starting at 10 AM. at the Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in their 909 Chapel.

Fri., March 13

• The Rotary Club of Highlands Mountaintop will host its annual Taco Dinner at the Highlands Recreational Park on Friday from 5-8pm. This project will help fund Polio Plus and CART, a project that donates money to Alzheimer's research. The tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased from any Mountaintop Rotary member, or the tickets can be bought at the door. No family pays more than \$50, immediate family members only, and you can have all you can eat, including taco salad, hard shell tacos, soft shell tacos and chili, both with meat and a vegetarian option.

Sat., March 14

• The Highlands Performing Arts Center will broadcast live via satellite the MET Opera's production of Der Fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman) by Wagner on Saturday, March 14 at 12:55pm. Sir Bryn Terfel returns to the Met for the first time since 2012, as the mysterious seafarer searching for salvation. Director François Girard, whose mesmerizing production of Parsifal recently wowed Met audiences, returns to stage Wagner's eerie early masterwork. Tickets available: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspacperformingarts.com or at the door. 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

Sat., March 14

• At Acorn's at 212 S. 4th Street, Highlands, there is a booksigning with author Amanda Wilbanks with her book "Southern Baked - Celebrating Life with Pie" from 12-2 p.m. She will have pies to sample and purchase.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 7-mile hike, elevation change 950 ft., on Ridge Trail at Coweeta Hydrological Lab, starting behind the wet lab and hiking to Dyke Gap, with views

MET Opera's production of Der Fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman) Saturday, March 14



The Highlands Performing Arts Center will broadcast live via satellite the MET Opera's production of Der Fliegende Holländer (The Flying Dutchman) by Wagner on Saturday, March 14 at 12:55pm. Sir Bryn Terfel returns to the Met for the first time since 2012, as the mysterious seafarer searching for salvation. Director François Girard, whose mesmerizing production of Parsifal recently wowed Met audiences, returns to stage Wagner's eerie early masterwork. Tickets available: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspacperformingarts.com or at the door. 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

of Albert Mountain fire tower. Descend on the old Gage Trail to Shope Fork and return to the office complex. Meet at Westgate Plaza in Franklin at 9 am, drive 16 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Sun., March 15

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 2-mile hike with very little elevation change in the woods at the west end of the Macon County Library in Franklin, following the bicycle path to the Greenway, walking along Cartoogechaye Creek to the Community Garden and returning. Meet at the library at 2 pm. Call leader Mary Stone, 369-7352 for reservations.

Tues. March 17

• Catch up on all the spring buzz! Join the Highlands Nature Center as we get to know our native bees a little better. Through a short introduction and a walk around campus, we'll find out what "weeds" are actually perfect for pollinators and discover some tricks for being bee-friendly. To participate in this free event, from 1-2 p.m., meet at the Highlands Nature Center, 930 Horse Cove Rd. The event is weather dependent. The Highlands Biological Station is a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University. For more information, please call (828) 526-2623.

Thurs.-Sun., Mar. 19-21

• Highlands Cashiers Players are proud to present our annual dinner theatre show. We are happy to have 4 amazing local directors: Matt Eberz, Lynleigh McLain, Mandy Houston, and Elizabeth Gordon! Come out and enjoy some amazing talent, as well as some great food! Tickets are \$45 plus tax. Please call our box office at 828-526-8084

Fri., March 20

• Senior Dinner at the Highlands Civic Center at noon. Senior Dinners are the third Friday of each month November-April.

Sat., March 21

• 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 Standing Indian Recreational Area, starting at the backcountry parking area, hiking up Long Branch to the Appalachian Trail at Glassmine Gap, then north to Rock Gap, returning by the Forest Service Road. Meet at Westgate Plaza at 11 am, drive 32 miles round trip. Call leader Katharine Brown, 421-4178, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Sun., March 22

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 2-mile hike to Mud Creek Falls, despite its name, a beautiful waterfall in Sky Valley, GA. Follow an old logging road with a small incline along Mud Creek to a picnic area at the falls. Meet at Smoky Mountain Visitors Center at 2 pm, drive 30 miles round trip. Call leader Kathy Ratcliff, 526-6480, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

Thurs.-Sun., Mar. 26-28

• Highlands Cashiers Players are proud to present our annual dinner theatre show. We are happy to have 4 amazing local directors: Matt Eberz, Lynleigh McLain, Mandy Houston, and Elizabeth Gordon! Come out and enjoy some amazing talent, as well as some great food! Tickets are \$45 plus tax. Please call our box office at 828-526-8084

Wed., March 25

• The Highlands Performing Arts Center will present Frida: Viva La Vida at 5:30. Live via Satellite. Tickets available: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspacperformingarts.com or at the door. 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

Sat., March 28

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 5-mile hike, elevation change 400 ft., from Jones Gap to White Rock on the NC Bartram Trail, a leisurely hike with interpretive signs along the way and spectacular views from White Rock of the Nantahala Mountains and Tennesse Valley. Meet at Bi-Lo parking lot in Franklin at 9 am, drive 24 miles round trip. Call leader Gail Lehman, 524-5298, for reservations. Visitors welcome.

• Chefs in the House dinner with Bill Smith and Justin Burdett of Crooks Corner at Half Mile Farm, 6:30 cocktails, 7:15 dinner. Eat and stay at Half-mile Farm. \$155 per person, plus tax and gratuity.

For reservations, call Call: 828-787-2635.

Fri., May 1

• Chefs in the House Mini Rosé Dinner with Chadwick Boyd. 6:30 pm, cocktails and 7:15 pm Dinner. Chadwick is the host of "Reel Food," the first food entertainment series in movie theaters nationwide. \$145 per person, plus tax and gratuity. For reservations, call Call: 828-787-2635.

Sat., May 9

• Music concert in the Park. Drew Holcomb & the Neighbors to co-headline first-ever spring concert presented by Highlands Food & Wine. Tickets are \$60 for

General Admission and \$105 for VIP Admission, which includes prime stage viewing and hosted beer wine and spirits. Cash bars and food vendors will also be available. Tickets are available at <https://highlandsfestivals.com/>

Thurs., May 21

• Fox Brothers at The Farm at Old Edwards. 6:30 pm Cocktails | 7:30 pm Dinner. Join us at The Farm at Old Edwards for Fox Bros. BBQ, an award-winning Atlanta restaurant owned and operated by twin brothers and co-pitmasters Jonathan and Justin Fox. \$145 per person, plus tax and gratuity. For reservations, call Call: 828-787-

2635.

Thurs. July 30

• In an immersive atmosphere reminiscent of this decadent, carefree era, Atlanta Chefs Jeb Aldrich of Tiny Lou's and Pat Pascarella of White Bull will join Chris Huerta of Madison's Restaurant and Camille Cox of Laurent Perrier for a fun Paris-style pop-up at The Farm at Old Edwards. Kukuly & The Gypsy Fuego will fill the air with the vibrant sounds of French jazz throughout the evening. 7 p.m., \$165. For reservations, call 828-787-2635.

Highlands Food & Wine announces new spring concert event in Highlands is on May 9

Drew Holcomb & the Neighbors to co-headline first-ever spring concert

Highlands Festivals, Inc., the organization that produces Highlands Food & Wine, has announced a special spring concert to be held at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park in Highlands, North Carolina, the evening of May 9. Drew Holcomb & The Neighbors will co-headline the event with additional special guests to be announced.

"There has been such an incredible response to Highlands Food & Wine, and we felt there was a real opportunity to offer our fans more. Music has been a central part of the success of Highlands Food & Wine, so it seemed a natural direction to offer a music-focused spring event," said Casey Reid, partner of Eleven Events and Festival Director. "This concert will continue the tradition of a world-class event created in the unique and stunning location that is Highlands. This concert will work to further the work of Highlands Food & Wine as a catalyst to bring together locals and destination visitors in this beautiful moun-



tain town."

In addition to live music, attendees of the concert will be the first to know the lineup for November's Highlands Food & Wine.

Drew Holcomb & the Neighbors are an Americana band whose musical stylings draw from their Memphis and Nashville roots. With an impressive discography of six albums, including a live recorded album in Nashville, Drew Holcomb & the Neighbors have sold over 150,000 albums and have

performed in seven different countries. Their latest album, *Dragons*, which was released in August 2019, hit the U.S. top albums chart at No. 13.

This one night celebration of music promises to sell out quickly. Tickets are \$60 for General Admission and \$105 for VIP Admission, which includes prime stage viewing and hosted beer wine and spirits. Cash bars and food vendors will also be available at the event, which will be held on the evening of Saturday, May 9 (times TBA).

Tickets are available at <https://highlandsfestivals.com/>.

Highlands Festival's Drew Holcomb & The Neighbors with Special Guests is proudly presented by Highlands Festivals, Inc. and sponsored by Highlands Chamber of Commerce, The Laurel, The Lofts on Main, Lupoli Construction, MAC, Old Edwards Inn & Spa, Highland Brewing, High Dive, TJ Bailey's, Tito's Handmade Vodka, The Ugly Dog, and WHLC radio.

• BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION NEWS •



Dr. Patti Wheeler was the featured speaker for Highlands Rotary Club's February 25 meeting. Wheeler spoke to the club about "Hospital Highlights." She was introduced by Rotarian Wolfgang Green.

Jane Iredale Mineral Makeup Sale Monday, March 16th



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Jesus Damian-Clemente was the speaker at the March 3 meeting of the Rotary Club of Highlands. Damian-Clemente is a former Highlands School valedictorian and recipient of scholarships from the Rotary Club of Highlands and Highlands Scholarship fund. He gave an update on his freshman year at UNC Charlotte where he earned a 3.8 GPA and is also a member of the rugby team.

Highlands Community Supper on Tuesday nights continues to be a hit



On Tuesday, February 18 the Rotary Club of Highlands sponsored the Highlands community supper. The photo shows Rotary members lined up behind a table of guests young and old.

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— Richard Delany, OEI, CEO

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PAC Youth Theater delivers spooky performance of 'A Ghostly Slumber Party'

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

The Highlands Performing Arts Center's Youth Theater recently performed "A Ghostly Slumber Party" that tackled some serious themes from "The Slumber Party" by Luke Osteen, excerpts from "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Highwayman" by Alfred Noyes, and "The Troll" by T.H. White.

Actors in the Youth Theater played multiple roles in this production that included settings from a young girl's slumber party, a silent library, a countryside English inn, and a busy hotel in Scandinavia.

Director Megan Potts said the cast did a fantastic job.

"I was so pleased with their performance," said Potts. "They had a very short rehearsal period and a lot of them are new to this. First, they had to learn the vocabulary and then learn to act the parts. They got a grasp of timing and working with an audience, they did great."

Potts said the cast worked hard in the weeks leading up to opening night.

"I think the biggest thing they learned was to work together as team," said Potts. "When something goes wrong, we work together and support each other."

Fourth-grader Arabel Alusio would spend hours at rehearsal and then head home to work on her lines to make sure she was ready.

"The lines were difficult, but not too difficult," said Alusio. "And if someone messes up, we just go along with it, skip that part, move on and pretend it didn't happen."

Sixth-grader Vivian Kennedy has acted in several other PAC productions and said it's hard work, but worth it.

"I like hanging out with all of my friends," she said. "And when I get on stage, I'm kind of nervous but also excited."

She said plays sometimes have lines or scenes that actors stress more than other scenes. In the case of "A Ghostly Slumber Party," Kennedy said there was one line she dreaded.

"I was really worried when I had to stand up and yell 'That's not funny Avery,' but after that it was all good," she said.

The magic on stage doesn't happen simply through the powerful performances of skilled actors, there's a lot more to it. And 7th-grader Max Ballentine knows all too well the highs and lows of a show stationed up in the control booth.

"Things happen in a show, someone



Cast of PAC Youth Theater's production of "A Ghostly Slumber Party."

could be off their mark or they miss a line and we may need to skip to the next cue," said Ballentine. "So, we always have to be ready."

He added things really got tricky during scenes from "The Troll," a lot of moving parts, lighting cues, to say nothing of the make-up and wardrobe designers had to go through to put together a pretty horrific looking troll.

"I was really worried about the troll,"

said Ballentine. "That's a big part and it's so intense. There are a bunch of sound and light cues. It's just a really big thing."

The PAC Youth Theater is made up of area students from Blue Ridge School, Highlands School, Summit Charter School, and homeschoolers.

The Highlands PAC Youth Theater is possible through grants and aims to introducing children to the wonder of live theater.

Writer's Note:

For those of you familiar with Noyes, Poe, and White; think of the language used in those stories. Then picture those lines being delivered by a 10-year-old. These kids did awesome.



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*Der
Fliegende
Holländer*
Saturday,
March 14
12:55pm



*FRIDA:
Viva La Vida*
Wednesday
March 25
5:30pm

Highlands Performing Arts Center 507 Chestnut Street
Tickets available online: www.highlandspac.org or www.highlandspacperformingarts.com or at the door

... MEADOWS continued from page 1

Chief of Staff, however, when making the announcement about Meadows, Trump was careful in making it clear Meadows' role was not an interim position, and instead will be a permanent position with the White House. Congressman Meadows becomes Trump's fourth chief of staff in 38 months, the most of any president in the same time period.

Just days before the filing deadline for the District 11 seat, Congressman Meadows announced he would be retiring. In his initial announcement he did say he intended to continue working with the President, but that he wasn't sure in what capacity. Rumors have circulated for months that Meadows was a front-runner for the President's Chief of Staff position. Meadows has made a name for himself in national politics by serving as founder and Chair of the Freedom Caucus, the most conservative group in Congress.

The time of Meadows' announcement to retire from District 11 was a strategic one — by announcing so close to the filing deadline, it left little time for Republicans to make the decision to run for the seat. It also meant that prominent names in politics, such as NC House Representative Kevin Corbin, could not withdraw from other races to seek the seat in Congress. While most Republicans were left scrambling to throw a campaign together with 24-hours notice — Haywood County Republican Lynda Bennett — who happens to be close

friends with Meadows' wife Debbie — was ready to announce her campaign nearly at the same time. Furthermore, Meadows had initially said he would not endorse any candidate for District 11, however he ended up endorsing Bennett for the seat during the March Primary.

Bennett was unable to secure the seat outright and will head into a runoff election against 25-year-old Republican from Henderson County Madison Cawthorn. Unlike many of the Republicans who filed for office after Meadows announced his retirement, Cawthorn had planned to run for the office, presumably challenging Meadows. Cawthorn and Bennett will go head-to-head in a run-off election on May 12.

The run-off election will be structured the same as voting in the primary election, with early voting being held across the district beginning April 23 and running until May 5. Voting will vary in each county, as it is up to county Board of Elections to decide whether the run-off election will be held strictly at the county board of elections office, or across the district at all locations as it was held during the initial primary.

To complicate matters, the immediate future of the District 11 seat is still unclear. According to Macon County Board of Elections Director Melanie Thibault, in the event of a vacant seat, which is the case now that Meadows will transition to Chief of Staff, the Governor can decide to appoint someone to fill the seat until the next scheduled election. Because

it is an election year and there are already established front-runners in both parties seeking the seat, it's unclear if Gov. Roy Cooper will appoint someone to fill the seat or if he will decide to leave it vacant until someone is elected in November. With a contentious race himself, Governor Cooper is no doubt carefully considering his move in District 11 so his decision will not cost him votes in the Governor's race.

Meanwhile, Meadows has self-quarantined after possible exposure to a coronavirus patient at a recent Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) convention. Meadows has self-quarantine at his home after learning that he may have come into contact with a person who later tested positive for the novel coronavirus, his office said.

"Out of an abundance of caution, Meadows received testing which came back negative," Meadows spokesman Ben Williamson said. "While he's experiencing zero symptoms, under doctors' standard precautionary recommendations, he'll remain at home until the 14-day period expires."

Meadows is one of several GOP lawmakers who attended CPAC convention in Maryland last month to announce that they've gone under a self-quarantine.

Reps. Doug Collins (R-Ga.), Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.), Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) have said they were in contact with the individual at the convention who later tested positive for the virus.

In response to health officials' recommendations, they've all said they will stay home until 14 days had passed between their encounters.

The American Conservative Union (ACU) first disclosed on Saturday that a CPAC attendee had tested positive for COVID-19 at a New Jersey hospital shortly after attending the convention. The patient had been exposed to the virus before attending the convention and is now under quarantine in the hospital, ACU said.

Cruz and Gosar said in separate statements on Sunday that

they had interacted with the individual and shook his hand.

Gosar said that he and three members of his staff were with

... SANE continued from page 1

travel to Mission Health in Asheville for a 13-hour round trip just to receive a rape kit, HCA officials released a statement disputing the claim.

In a March 4 letter to NC Attorney General Josh Stein, Greg Lowe, president of HCA's North Carolina Division, addressed concerns about the lack of a sexual assault nurse examiner at Angel Medical Center in Franklin. Lowe claimed that cuts to SANE services at Angel and other rural hospitals occurred under Mission Health prior to its acquisition by HCA last year.

While the concerns surrounding the lack of access to SANE services occurred the same time HCA assumed operations of the Mission Health Systems, it is possible that the change was under Mission Health. Regardless of who or why the changes were made, the one thing that remains clear, the services are desperately needed in rural NC.

"REACH's primary concern continues to be the accessibility of forensic exams for survivors of sexual assault and strangulation at the local level," said Andrea Anderson, Executive Director of REACH. Anderson met with Karen Gorby, CEO of Angel Medical Center last Friday.

Although Gorby attended the initial meeting where accusations regarding the SANE nurse were made, she did not dispute the claims then, and has not publicly commented on the issue.

"We wholeheartedly believe it is in the best interest of survivors and their recovery to have these services available at our local hospital. Traumatized survivors should not have delays in receiving these services due to lack of availability of SANES/FNAs nor due to having to be transported out of the area to receive these services," said Anderson.

HCA officials said the cur-

rent practice is for a SANE nurse to be available to Angel Medical Center or Highlands-Cashiers Hospital or any other hospital under their umbrella upon request, meaning if an agency such as REACH is in need of a forensic evaluation from a SANE nurse, a request can be made and the nurse can travel from the Mission campus to a closer hospital if the victim does not want to travel to Asheville. REACH officials stated that is not acceptable and places an undeserved hardship on the victims.

"We are hopeful that HCA and, locally, Angel Medical Center will have a willingness to work cooperatively on exploring solutions and ensuring a partnership that will be provide the highest level of response for survivors from Macon County," said Anderson. "Historically, prior to acquisition by Mission, our local community had SANEs available at Angel Medical Center and these nurses were amazing professionals that made a difference in the lives of many survivors of sexual assault. The availability of forensic exams at Angel Medical Center also aided survivors in having a coordinated response by law enforcement, advocacy, support, and other essential local resources."

According to Anderson, REACH has received grant funding from NC Governor's Crime Commission to research innovative solutions to forensic exam availability in rural communities. "This project will look at both partnerships with hospital systems, as well as approaches outside of hospital systems in providing forensic exam services," said Anderson. "We have extended an invitation to HCA to be a part of this project in hopes we can work toward ensuring consistent and accessible services in our local community."

I knew they did it from the start, but no one listens to the cat!

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-Christie

• TAXING MATTERS •

Staying off the IRS Radar Screen

Nothing strikes terror in the heart of the American taxpayer quite like finding a letter in the mailbox from the IRS! In an effort to help you avoid that unpleasant scenario, provided below are examples of some common pitfalls to avoid if you don't want the IRS lining up to be your new pal.

It's surprising how many people mail their returns to the IRS without a signature. Before mailing, be sure to recheck everything and don't forget to sign your return. An even better solution is to file electronically. Returns filed electronically have safeguards and controls to eliminate common errors. Additionally, the return goes directly to the processing center and the information does not have to be keyed into a computer by an IRS employee, which could result in additional errors.

Did you remember to include all income on the return? If you received a Form 1099 from anyone, be sure this income is on the return in the right place or you will receive a notice. Even if you did not receive a 1099 for work done independently, you are required to report the income. IRS receives copies of 1099s from banks, stock brokerage firms, rental agencies, and subcontractors and these are checked against income reported.

If you made estimated payments or paid your taxes quarterly, check the amounts and the dates the taxes were paid. Forgetting to include a payment is a frequent error



Robbin Brophy, EA

that makes your tax burden look heavier. Many people forget to include the January payment, so keep in mind that the first payment of the year is sent in April, followed by June and September payments and concluding with the January payment in the following year.

If you file or pay late, you will receive a notice of delinquency and be charged interest and penalties, so try hard to avoid that. If you can't pay taxes that are due by April 15, be sure to file the return on

time with a Form 9465, Installment Agreement Request, either electronically or paper filed.

Incorrect social security numbers will generate a notice or a disallowance of your dependents. Don't mail the return without verifying that all social security numbers have been entered correctly. Transposing those numbers is more common than you'd think.

A few minutes of extra time reviewing your return will pay off in peace of mind and help you stay off the IRS radar screen.

- Robbin Brophy, EA is an enrolled agent, licensed by the US Department of the Treasury to represent taxpayers before the IRS for audits, collections and appeals. To attain the enrolled agent designation, candidates must demonstrate expertise in taxation, fulfill continuing education credits and adhere to a stringent code of ethics. She is currently accepting new clients at 828-558-4300.

Got Spring Fever? Alleviate it at the Nature Center!

On Tuesday, March 17, catch up on all the spring buzz! Join the Highlands Nature Center as we get to know our native bees a little better. Through a short introduction and a walk around campus, we'll find out what "weeds" are actually perfect for pollinators and discover some tricks for being bee-friendly. To participate in this free event. from 1-2 p.m., meet at the Highlands Nature Center, 930 Horse Cove Rd. The event is weather dependent. The Highlands Biological Station is a multi-campus center of Western Carolina University. For more information, please call (828) 526-2623.



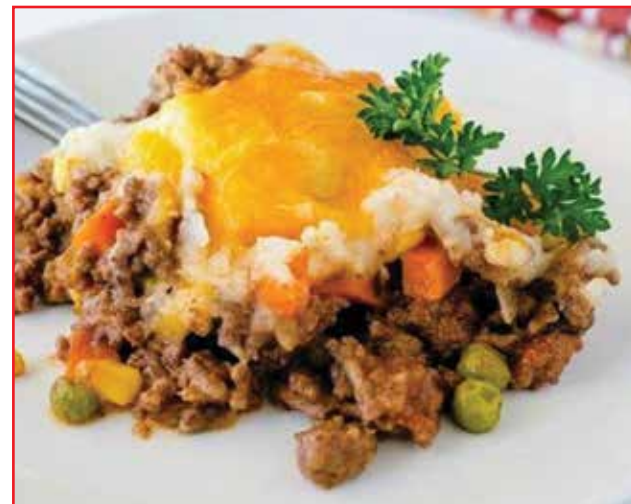
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Shepherd's Pie

Keeping in the spirit of Saint Patrick's Day, I decided to go with a Shepherd's Pie, one of Ireland's most beloved dishes. This is an easy home style dish, that feeds many and is packed with flavor. It is also a perfect weeknight dish! Enjoy!



**Ingredients from
The Spice & Tea Exchange:**
Onion Obsession Spice Blend
Lamb & Pork Seasoning

Ingredients from grocer:
Potato Layer Ingredients:
3 large russet potatoes
2 TBS butter
1/2 cup milk

Meat Layer Ingredients:

2 lbs of ground beef
1 small onion
2 TBS flour
2 TBS tomato paste
1 cup beef broth
1/2 TBS Worcestershire
1 1/2 peas and carrots, frozen or
canned
1/2 cup corn
1 cup of shredded

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350.

1. Add potatoes to a pot of cold water, bring to boil and cook until tender. Drain and mash with butter, milk, and 2 TBS of Onion Obsession Spice Blend.
2. In a heated sauce pan, cook down ground beef and add chopped onions, and season with 1 TBS of Lamb & Pork Seasoning.
3. Pour out excess fat and add flour. Cook for a minute or two and add tomato paste, Worcestershire, and beef stock.
4. In a sauce pan with melted butter, saute peas, carrots, and corn and season with salt and pepper.
5. In a casserole dish, spread the ground beef in an even layer on the bottom. Next, layer the vegetables, finishing with the mashed potato layer on top. Garnish with cheese and bake in a preheated oven for 20 minutes.

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

In His Good Time

Pastor Dan Robinson
Highlands Central Baptist Church

In her book "Though The Mountains Shake," Amy Carmichael tells of the time in 1895 when she met Andrew Murray of South Africa when he was in England taking part in various conventions.

She writes: "A breakdown in Japan had ended in my return home about that time and we were both guests in the same house. I knew that his books were very good. Not that I had read one of them, but a neat row of them, dressed in sober grey, lived in my Mother's room, and she and everybody said how good they were.

Was he as good as his books?

"He was better, for there was not only goodness, there was a delicious dry humor, dauntless courage, and the gentleness and simplicity of a dear child. And he was very loving. He never seemed to be tired of loving.

"Then something painful happened. This is how he met it: he was quiet for a while with his Lord, then he wrote these words for himself:

"First, He brought me here, it is by His will I am in this strait place: in that fact I will rest.

Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me Grace to behave as His child.

Then, He will make the trial a blessing, teaching me lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the Grace He means to bestow.

Last, In His good time He can bring me out again – how and when He knows.

Let me say I am here,

(1) By God's appointment,

(2) In His keeping,

(3) Under His training,

(4) For His time

'Such a story is timeless. May it help someone else as it has helped some of us, not only once, but often.' (Adapted).

Looking for a church home?

Wayfarers 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 for more information, or call 706-746-3303

Proverbs 3:5

BLUEVALLEY 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

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Sundays: 10 a.m.; Worship

Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

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464 US Hwy 64 east, Cashiers

9:30a Sunday School; 10:30a Worship Service; Mon. 6p Bible

Study & Supper in homes

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 • 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 SKYVALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447,

Pastor Gary Hewins

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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

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

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

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors

526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

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

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

Wed: Choir: 6p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

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• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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

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

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

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

Intercessory Prayer Ministry

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

Chaplain Margaret Howell • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Sun: School and Adult discussion group 9:30 a.m.;

Worship/Communion: 10:30; Early-Bird Christmas Eve service of

Lessons and Carols, Sunday, Dec. 22, 10:30 am.

All are welcome.

HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

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4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)

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

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

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Rev. Marty Kilby

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

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

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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

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

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

• BUSINESS/ORG NEWS •

Jackson County now has Community Paramedic Program

Harris Regional Hospital EMS offers community health fair; introduces new Community Paramedic Program.

Harris Regional Hospital EMS is sponsored a free health fair at the Savannah Volunteer Fire Department on Wednesday, March 11 to provide information and medical screenings to the members of Jackson County.

Presented by Harris Regional Hospital EMS and the Community Paramedic Program, the event included blood pressure checks, glucose checks, vendor booths and other health care information and activities.

In addition to general healthcare education, participants will also get the chance to learn more about Harris Regional Hospital's Community Paramedic Program that is provided by Harris Regional Hospital EMS.

The Community Paramedic Program is dedicated to members of Jackson County and expanded access to the vital health care they need. The program allows licensed paramedics to assist in the provision of health care alongside a participant's primary care provider.

Once enrolled in the Community Paramedic Program, patients have improved access to care by way of home evaluations and social needs assessments that have not been available previously. Paramedics that administer care through this program work closely with a patient's primary care provider to ensure they are receiving the exclusive, quality care they require and deserve within the comfort of their own home.

The Community Paramedic Program is available to those that have been diagnosed with COPD, Congestive Heart Failure, Pneumonia, Diabetes or at a high risk for falls. For more information about the Community Paramedic Program, ask your primary care provider for a referral.

About Harris Regional Hospital

Harris Regional Hospital, established in 1925, is an 86-bed acute and specialty care facility serving Western North Carolina with more than 100 physicians practicing in locations throughout a multi-county region, including Harris Regional Hospital Medical Park of Franklin, an outpatient facility in Macon County.

HCHF helps fund Pisgah Legal Services

One may not immediately conclude that free legal aid would fit into that paradigm. However, Jim Barrett, Executive Director of Pisgah Legal Services would disagree, "Folks who live in low-income households regularly experience problems that can be addressed with a civil legal aid attorney by their side: stopping domestic violence, accessing benefits, escaping poor housing conditions, and securing health care for example. Lawyers are powerful allies who can tackle the issues that keep people locked into poverty, trapped in abusive situations and living in substandard conditions. Social determinants of health are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. The work of Pisgah Legal addresses socio-economic problems – such as substandard housing and domestic violence – that exacerbate illness and injury."

In 2019, the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation dispersed \$2.5 million dollars to 53 organizations. Through the journey of conducting Listening Sessions, Community Outreach Meetings, and committing over



2,000 hours toward grant review, the Programs and Grants Committee and the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation Board of Directors has learned so much about our community and the incredible strengths it possesses through existing nonprofits as well as the road blocks to health that are prevalent in our community.

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Feb. 23. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Feb. 23

• A little past midnight, officers were called about someone driving under the influence at the site of an accident on US 64 east and Cullasaja Drive.

• At 1:33 a.m., Adam Russell Luck, 32, of Cashiers was arrested for DUI at a traffic stop at US 64 east and Cullasaja Drive. He was issued a \$500 unsecured bond. His trial date was March 10.

Feb. 27

• At 1:54 p.m., officers responded to

a 2-vehicle accident on NC 28 at Spring Street.

March 3

• At 5:57 p.m., officers were called about a simple assault on a 62-year-old man at a residence on Upper Lake Road.

March 4

• At 7:10 a.m., officers were called to 1331 Leonard Road due to the suicide of a 52-year-old man.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from March 4

• At 7:16 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Leonard Road.

• At 10:24 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Foreman Road.


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brophytax.com
robbin@brophytax.com



We've Moved!
The Highlands Barbershop is now located in a new, expanded space on Oak Street across from the K-H Park Plaza.
Open Mon.-Sat.
10a to 5p
Cirino J. Bosco, owner

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(772) 532-0706

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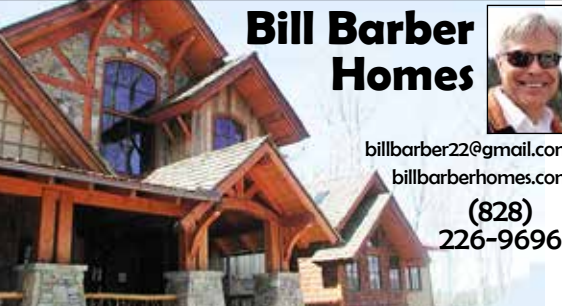
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