

Highlands Newspaper

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Thursday, March 26, 2020

Town Board shuts all lodgings

At an emergency meeting of the Town Board Monday, commissioners passed a resolution effective immediately closing all hotels, motels and rentals to the public. However, existing, con-

tinuously occupied rentals are excluded.

The resolution will remain in effect until the proclamation is modified or rescinded.

Monday's move was prompt-

ed by advertisements that popped up on social media over the weekend encouraging people to come to Highlands to wait out the virus.

"People are coming to High-

• See **SHUTTERS** page 6

Second visitor tests positive for COVID-19 in Macon County

On Sunday, March 22, Macon County Public Health was notified that an individual who was admitted to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) tested positive for COVID - 19.

The patient has been transported to Mission's main campus in Asheville. The patient is a resident of Maryland and traveled to their secondary residence in Jackson County, where they became ill, and then went to HCH's emergency room for care. Jackson County Health Department was immediately notified of the positive results.

The Jackson County Health Department is working to identify

• See **SECOND** page 13



Nine-year-old Hudson Tilley messages his great-grandmother through her window at the Eckerd Living Center. Visitation at Mission facilities and such facilities state-wide is no longer allowed except for labor and delivery and pediatrics where only one adult is allowed at a time.

Country clubs, too, take steps against COVID-19

It's not the unseasonably warm weather that is prompting second-home owners to come back to Highlands earlier than usual - it's the COVID-19 situation back home.

General Managers at area country clubs are seeing families returning but what they are returning to isn't business as usual.

"This is technically our off-

• See **CLUBS** page 11

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LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORTS

Potts arrested for impersonating a law enforcement officer; brandishing a weapon

By Brittney Lofthouse

Over the weekend, local law enforcement responded to a Highlands residence after receiving reports of a man trespassing while brandishing a firearm.

The Macon County Sheriff's Office, along with Highlands Police Department responded to the call on Moonlight Lane in Highlands to find Arthur Potts, 30, who also reports a Moonlight Lane address, carrying a shotgun around the neighborhood.

Macon County Sheriff's Deputy Derrick Stamey responded to the call, which reported Potts was brandishing the firearm and demanding residents to remain in their homes. Highlands Police Department Master Officer K. Breedlove and Officer E. Sueyklang responded with Stamey to further investigate.

While patrolling the area on foot, law enforcement encountered Potts on the porch of his

residence, which he shares with his mother in Highlands. According to Deputy Stamey's incident report, he instantly recognized Potts, who has an extensive criminal record in Macon County.

After law enforcement identified themselves, Potts, raised the shotgun to his waist - prompting law enforcement to give additional commands to drop the weapon. Potts complied and placed the gun in the driveway and was then taken into custody without further incident.

While being detained, Potts claimed he was working as an informant for Homeland Security and was working with the State Bureau of Investigations. While interviewing neighbors, it was reported that Potts had gone around the neighborhood claiming to be with the SBI while brandishing the loaded shotgun.

• See **LAW** page 8

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

More 'state of emergency' protocols initiated

Like every community, Highlands is under great pressure and stress. We are facing uncertain weeks and months ahead. All of us need to stay calm as possible and support one another.

Toward the end of the week I too was being "calmness challenged." The incoming information, rumors, problems and uncertainty were very frustrating. I have always wanted to provide citizens with accurate and up to date information. But, in a state of emergency that goal is a challenge when information and requirements from federal, state and county officials are changing as the crisis evolves.

Let me cover some things that are in effect in Highlands in this state of emergency.

All restaurants and bars are closed to dining inside dining. Some restaurants are providing takeout service. The town has relaxed the temporary sign ordinance, so look for the large take out signs for restaurants providing this service. I want to encourage residents to use the takeout option and support local restaurants. Be sure to tip generously. Our service workers need our support in this critical time.

The governor's emergency proclama-



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

tion has also shutdown nonessential service businesses where there is direct contact with customers. These businesses include hair salons, massage parlors, tattoo shops and others.

On Tuesday afternoon I convened an emergency meeting of the Town Board. After an hour-long discussion the board voted to extend the existing emergency declaration to include the closing of all hotels and rental facilities until further notice. Included in this order are all upcoming rentals, including

VRBO and AirBnB venues.

Health officials have witnessed some short-term rental agents advertising to come quarantine in Highlands area during the pandemic. Those plans have to be stopped and not allowed. The Highlands Plateau is not free from the coronavirus, and we certainly do not want promotions for people to come quarantine here. If you observe anyone promoting this kind of plan, please call and report it to the Macon County Public Health hotline at (828) 349-2517 or call me at (828) 506-3138.

The board and I do not want to encourage people to come and stay in Highlands during the COVID 19 emergency. While it is not practical to close off the town, or the county for that matter, along with other municipalities and counties we are taking measures to deter visitors and tourists. The traveling and unnecessary movement of people is a primary way the coronavirus is spread and transmitted.

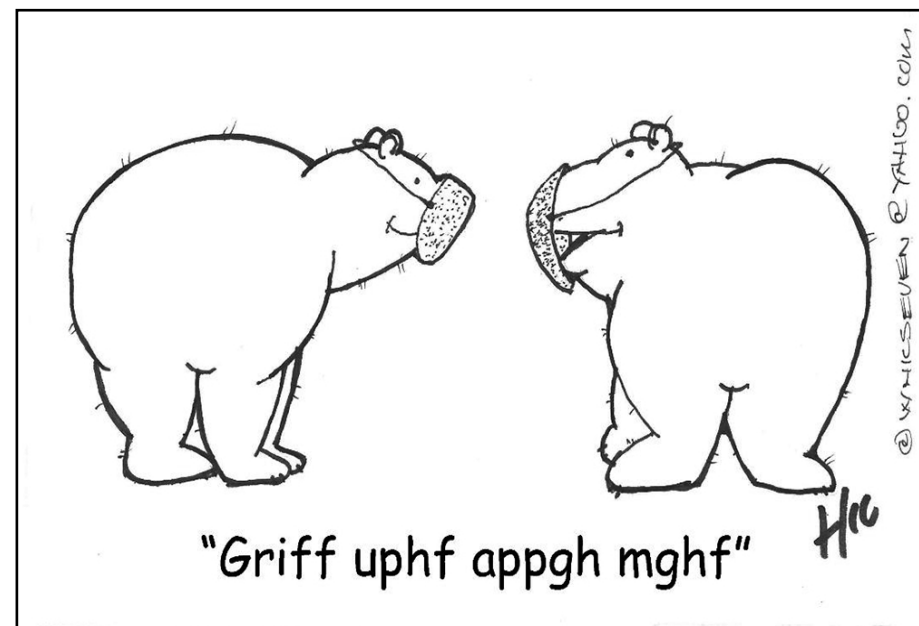
The town is committed to providing essential services throughout this pandemic. We are doing all we can to keep workers healthy and on the job. Residents can help in the critical area of garbage collection. Please, put all garbage, especially medical refuse such as tissues, in a secure trash bag and place all trash bags in a garbage container, preferably a bear-resistant toter. Minimizing direct contact with trash bags is a way of protecting sanitation workers. The practice of putting loose bags of trash in a front yard for pickup is a current ordinance violation. Under this emergency, the practice is strictly prohibited. The bear-resistant toter for residential pick-up goes into effect August 1.

Finally, I know many business and residents are under financial stress and worried about paying utility bills. We are following the governor and utility commission's guidelines in addressing billing in this state of emergency. Be assured, we will not cut anyone's power or water off during this emergency. Town staff and the board are working on a plan to help businesses manage their accounts during this crisis. Options being considered are delayed pay-

ments, rate adjustments, debt forgiveness and generous payback arrangements. The town is committed to helping businesses and residents recover from this disaster.

Highlands will recover, and your elected leaders are committed to supporting and building a community that is stronger than ever. May God help and protect us all.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 26-Mar	Fri, 27-Mar	Sat, 28-Mar	Sun, 29-Mar
61°F 48°F	76°F 54°F	74°F 57°F	66°F 42°F
Partly sunny	Warmer with periods of sun	Partly sunny and very warm	Partly sunny and not as warm
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High: 67° Low: 45°	High: 80° Low: 55°	High: 76° Low: 57°	High: 68° Low: 54°

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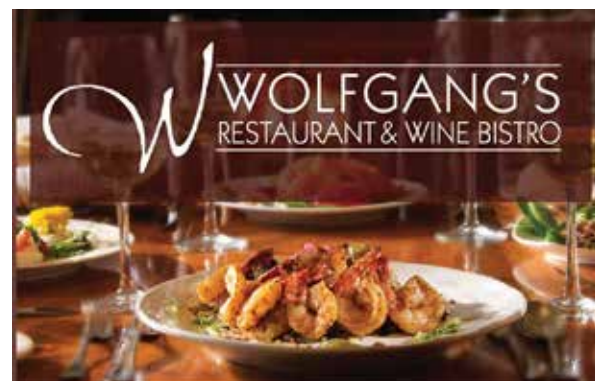
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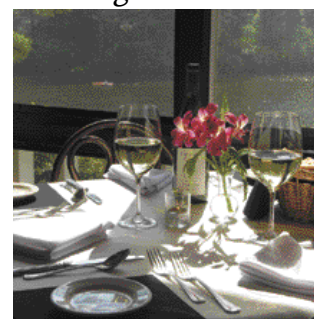
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• LETTER •

Something is very wrong with the HCA scenario

Dear Editor,

I have read all your articles concerning the terrible services provided by HCA. Their quest seems to be money and not the citizens of Western Carolina. But there is one important problem that is affecting those of us who live on social security. I will use my situation as an example.

I moved to Franklin, NC about six months ago from Cabo San Lucas and brought three months of blood pressure medicine with me. As I started to get low on medicine, I went to Mission Health Center to get a refill. I saw the doctor she checked my pulse and blood pressure and wrote me a prescription. She did change one to something she said was better and said she could only give me a single refill. She asked me to come back in a week to take my blood pressure, I paid my \$134 for the

5-minute visit and left.

During that week, I had a bad reaction to the new medicine. So, I quit taking it and went back. When I got to my appointment, they told me my doctor had quit. But gave me a prescription for my old medicine and told me to make another appointment with a new doctor to get back on track. Which I did.

The new doctor prescribed a new medicine and gave me a 30-day prescription and said to come back in a week to see how it worked. Another three minutes. I paid \$138 and left.

I went back; everything was great. She said to call in for a refill when I ran out. The good thing is the medicine is only \$18 dollars for both.

When I started to get low on medicine, I called back. They said Doctor Crystal had quit, So I asked for the two

nurses who worked with me over the two months and I was told one had quit but the other one was with a patient and she would call me back.

A half-hour later the hospital called and said they forgot that Beverly my nurse had quit, too, 10 days ago. But if I paid \$180, Dr Hunley would call the pharmacy for my refill. I told them my Doctor Crystal told me she would call in my refill for free.

This time they said, "every time there is a new doctor you must pay \$180." I have had three doctors in three months and the cost for an \$18 prescription is costing me \$200 a month and I have a 6-year-old to care for and a wife who can't work and I only get \$825 per month social security.

I asked why the doctors quit after 2 or 3 weeks. Tracy from the hospital said they quit because they dislike Franklin so much, they just walk out. She also said they have the right to change my doctor every month and make me pay \$180 because they are a for-profit business and if I don't like it, don't come to Mission Health and that there is a lot of other people who are paying without complaining.

This is a scam by HCA and it should be illegal that I have to pay \$180 every month for them to call in a \$18 prescription. I told Tracy I need this medicine to stay alive she said "not her problem." This should be illegal.

James Kearns
Franklin


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CLOSED

...SHUTTERS continued from page 1

lands to get away from virus hot spots and we have to be careful about transmission and that's what the availability of rentals do," said Commissioner Amy Patterson.

Over the last few weeks, states of emergency have been enacted by the President of the United States, the Governor of North Carolina, the Macon County Board of Commissioners and the town to combat the effects of COVID-19 by implementing direct restrictions and prohibitions.

According to Town Attorney JK Coward, basically under emergency powers the town has totalitarian powers so if someone has contracted with a Realtor for a vacation rental or with VRBO

or AirBnB the town isn't liable.

"It's amazing how much power you are granted as a town under the emergency management act of NC, so whether you are breaking somebody's contract is totally irrelevant and there is a statute that says you aren't liable for what you are doing at all under the circumstances," he said.

Commissioner John Dotson discussed taking measures a step further to protect Highlands like in Graham and Dare counties where inroads have been closed to all but residents.

But Police Chief Bill Harrell said he didn't have the manpower for that.

Mayor Pat Taylor said the county had even considered that but decided against it due to logistics. Attorney Coward said the governor has been talking openly about closing borders, but that hasn't been mandated at this point.

MC Commission Chairman Jim Tate said the county had a meeting Monday to discuss potential additional restrictions like Gra-

ham, Dare, Jackson counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, beyond its original state of emergency declaration, but no action has been taken yet.

"I do not foresee Macon County closing its borders completely unless the state declares us to do so; however, I can say that I do expect Macon County to enact some additional restrictions regarding how we handle visitors and second-home owners in the very near future," he said.

Also on Monday, effective Wednesday, March 25, Governor Cooper amended his original state of emergency edict by closing public schools through May 15 rather than just March 30; limiting groups of people to 50 from the previous 100 to further promote social distancing, and closing specific businesses that require close social interaction.

Affected businesses are bingo parlors, including bingo sites operated by charitable organizations, bowling alleys, indoor exercise facilities (e.g. gyms, yoga studios, martial arts facilities, indoor trampoline and rock-climbing facilities), health clubs, indoor

pools, live performance venues, movie theaters, skating rinks, spas, sweepstakes lounges, video game arcades, barber shops, beauty salons (including waxing and hair removal centers), hair salons, nail salons/manicure/pedicure providers, massage parlors and tattoo parlors.

Restaurants were already closed to all but take-out and curbside pick-up.

Mayor Taylor said General Manager Terry Watson at Bryson's told him that even though the quantities of certain items like bread and eggs aren't as much as before, they are getting deliveries. He also said some producers have stopped making less of some items so they can produce more items in high demand.

The May 15 school closure date is based on current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Governor Cooper has asked the State Board to collaborate with the Department of Public Instruction and legislators to develop a plan to ensure access to a quality education for students through the remainder of the school year; and provide students with remote learning while school buildings are closed.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Patterson voiced concerns about the future of Highlands' businesses.

"We have to consider the economic impact on businesses and their ability to retain employees. If the Federal government gets its act together and extends unemployment and it's not 50%, that will be good, but when everything opens back up - whenever it is - we still need to have an economy here," she said. "We need to figure out what that's going to look like and how we can keep businesses going in the meantime."

She said she would like to encourage all businesses on Main Street not to be open.

"I think we should consider deferring all their utilities including sanitation and electric and water and everything else, so they don't have to be open because they 'have bills.' They won't have bills. We need to figure out how we can support the businesses so when we are through with this pandemic we actually have an economy and the situation hasn't bankrupted everybody."

She said it's not a "give them money to stimulate the economy" it's to make sure Highlands' economy is viable.

Director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce Kay MaHan said she is getting notifications daily that businesses are closing until further notice. She said some of the larger stores can afford to do this and they are doing it because they value human life more than they value the profit.

"But some employees are still going in at some stores and working with stock, and doing computer work, but some owners are suggesting they will end up closing their doors. So, anything that can be done to help them out would be great," she said.

MaHan said the chamber is working on a grant program to help the ones that reopen with marketing to get people back to Highlands and keep everyone out of the hole.

"They know it's important to close now, so they can reopen as fast as possible," she said. "But anything the town can do would be great."



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•WORD MATTER•

Keep Calm and Practice Kindness

One of the most difficult exercises we face during the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and its broad effects on American life is managing to keep focus.

We, as has been said by much greater minds than mine, are in rough, uncharted waters. There's a lot happening, all at once, everywhere.

I'm going to trust that we all understand the broad strokes involving the nature and scope of this catastrophic event. This missive is presented to hopefully explain, to those who need or want it, why keeping calm and being kind are incredibly important, both right now and until we can all resume whatever passes for normal life in the future.

There's an old bromide about walking and chewing gum at the same time. In the digital age, that became multi-tasking. In WWII, it involved fighting a war on two fronts.

President Trump declared himself a wartime president last week. He's absolutely right.

What's happening right now is a war being fought on the public health front and on our nation's economic front. One, the public's health, appears to be a higher priority, but I believe attention to both is absolutely imperative, and those who choose to make the current national conversation political in nature are wrong and are not contributing to identifying and implementing real, workable solutions.

Look, I'm not naïve; this is a national, state, and local election year and whatever outcomes flow from actions taken on the part of all levels of government will play into the campaign activities of both parties and all candidates.

Let's throw those stones at a later date.

Right now, countless millions of Americans are out of work due to the rapid spread of the virus. Many, perhaps a majority of these folks are already straddling the economic survival line. Additionally, an entire segment of the population, our nation's elderly, meaning those over sixty years of age, are in a singular category of vulnerability, which expands exponentially when underlying health concerns, such as lung and heart diseases, diabetes, and generally weakened immune



Bud Katz

systems as the result of unrelated medical issues are factored in.

Our nation's healthcare system is being tested as never before. Both human and equipment resources are under levels of stress unimaginable to the rest of us.

A word about the rest of us.

Here's the bottom line: a large number of Americans are going to contract Covid-19, the disease brought on by exposure to Coronavirus. A significant number of those who contract the disease will experience little to nothing in the way of symptoms or lasting effects. A relatively small number of those exposed will require hospitalization.

This is where things get difficult. Some will achieve symptomatic relief relatively quickly, and will be sent home, to hydrate, to rest, and to get through the disease. Others will require use of a ventilator. With those placed on ventilators, the risk of death is approximately 50%.

In short, before all is said and done a lot of people will get the disease, while a relative few will die as a result.

As we've been told over and over again, not getting the disease in the first place is the best possible outcome. Wash your hands. Don't touch your face, especially, your eyes, nose and mouth. And, here's where the rubber meets the road, to the extent possible, avoid close contact with others.

We've already seen the stock market plunge by over 30%. Smaller and mid-sized retail businesses are closing down and many are going out of business. Tens of millions are unemployed. All of the gains our nation experienced since the beginning

of the 2008 economic slowdown are gone. All of them. Gone. That's the bad news.

We all, repeat, all should be encouraged by knowledge borne of experience that our nation can and will survive the long-range economic impact associated with the steps being taken in the short-term to limit exposure to the virus.

The calculus is simple. The economy WILL rebound when we've overcome the spread of the virus.

Congress and the Trump administration are, I believe with all my heart, doing their best to do the right things in the right order to get our nation firmly on the road to recovery. If they, and we, can keep political divisiveness OUT of the equation for now; if the, and we can remain calm and practice kindness, in general and to each other, our nation's health will improve and our economy will come roaring back.

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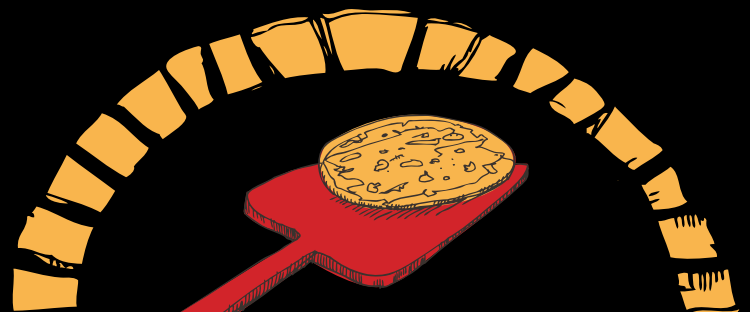
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... LAW continued from page 1

At one point, Potts was seen racking the shotgun while stepping onto the porch of one of the neighbors.

Potts was arrested and charged with impersonating a law enforcement officer, assault with a deadly weapon, and going armed to the terror of the people. He was booked into the Macon County Detention Center on a \$5,000 bond.

Potts currently has 13 cases pending in Macon County criminal court, with the oldest case dating back to 2016 when he was arrested for Felony Larceny from a construction site and other charges. Potts also has pending charges from arrests made in 2017, 2018, and 2019. Charges range from misdemeanor drug paraphernalia to Felony drug trafficking. Potts was named as one of three leaders in the 2018 "Operation JAWbreaker" arrests that led to more than 20 people being arrested for a large scale criminal enterprise.

During the gathering of intelligence for Operation JAWbreaker, investigators discovered that drug purchases and transactions were arranged by James Steele, Arthur Potts, or Wade Ennis and that the three men made additional arrangements for those drugs to be transported back to this area for distribution. During the operation, investigators were able to identify the three suppliers of heroin and meth in the Atlanta area. In collaboration with local, state and federal partners, investigators and law enforcement were able to intercept various shipments of heroin and meth during traffic stops as they were headed back to Macon County.

At the time of Potts' arrest over the weekend, he was out on bail not only for the 2018 JAWbreaker arrest, but for a host of other charges he continues to rack up while awaiting trial in Macon County.

• See LAW page 11

... SHUTTERS continued from page 6

Mayor Taylor said there are two stages to dealing with COVID-19.

"Right now, we are in the protection and prevention mode, but we will need to move forward for recovery at some point," he said.

Though the board didn't move on the economic package discussed, Town Manager Josh Ward did suggest the town mimic the NC Utilities Commission and suspend electric disconnections for non-payment.

"I've already gotten a call from a person who was laid off and won't be able to pay so since it's a mandate, I think we should do what the NC Utilities Commission is doing," he said.

The board agreed to follow the NC Utilities executive order.

"This is along the lines of what I was

talking about," said Patterson. "We need to start thinking about not just containing the virus but make sure we have an economy at the end of this, so our businesses don't go bankrupt or leave town. They have to pay commercial rates for electricity, sanitation, water ... those are all much higher than residential prices. I don't want to waive everybody, but at least talk about what we can do if we mandate all the businesses shut down, then maybe we waive their utilities."

Commissioners agreed this was on their radar and they would work on it.

She said this may be a long haul and she doesn't want Highlands to wake up with COVID-19 and Highlands businesses both gone.

— Kim Lewicki

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COVID19 and Real Estate

Well, what else is there to talk about? Plenty, but more on that later.

First of all, a retraction of sorts. I was quoted in last week's issue of this fine paper as saying "We welcome all renters," and while that statement is correct, and remains true, the current conditions of the Coronavirus have changed the meaning somewhat of the statement I made on March 14th.

Traditionally, our 'season' starts in June and goes through October, and then there's a little lull, and ramps up again like July-the-fourth for Thanksgiving and Christmas/ New Years. That being said, we have weekend rentals all year long, and sometimes weekly and monthly rentals through the winter, but especially in April and May. Some of those renters are escaping city life, (a term with a different meaning this year) for a mountain retreat. Some of them are renting two weeks up to two months to wet their feet in the

Highlands Community. They know what it's like in the summer, but they want to get a true feeling of what a second home would be like for them.

In my experience, there are very few impulse buyers. You know, the ones that discover Highlands for the first time, start to look for property that day, or even make an offer the very first day they visit! It's as if they've been bitten by the Highlands love bug, now that's a good bug to have. It doesn't happen very much, but it does happen. I doubt if it happens this April or May, but who knows? Could fear cause people to buy, sight unseen? Yes, that could happen. People have bought sight unseen before, and I can see that as a big possibility this year.

At Chambers Realty & Vacation Rentals, we took a preemptive strike and prohibited all short-term rentals through the end of April. Yes, we have renters that aren't



very happy, but they understand. All of the rental owners we've talked with have been very supportive and back our decision. Will the self-ban be extended? We hope not, but if it's needed, we will extend the prohibition of rentals. It is our commitment, and very important to us that our community stay strong and healthy. A quote from our

website blog, "We simply cannot ask our community to bear unnecessary problems by being inundated with guests, now just isn't the time." Any reservation having to cancel because of the COVID19 will get a full refund.

Things like the Food & Wine Festival, the June and August Arts & Craft shows, Highlands Playhouse, PAC, and The Bascom events, all those kinds of things help move the weekend traffic to our town, and of course, once they're here, they get to enjoy all the wonderful restaurants and shops,

and the original reason people flocked to the area-nature.

Friends of Highlands, and property owners, this too shall pass. We are not alone in this, and we'll be talking about it for years to come. You know, when you're driving down the road and you hit an unexpected bump, a big one? The kind of bump that makes your jaws rattle a little, and you may even raise up out of your seat? It's a very jarring experience isn't it? Most of the time, about a mile down the road, you've gotten over the sting of the bump and you keep going. Sometimes, those bumps cause reactions like accidents, or a flat tire, and those can prove costly. This time in our lives is a BIG bump. It's time to just keep on keeping on- but this time, we're keeping on from the safety of our own homes, our asylum.

Want something to do? If you don't have a home in Highlands, but love to visit, get out your calendars and plan a trip

• See INVESTING page 13



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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Jesus Hated His Quarantine!



During prayer this past week, early in the midst of our collective Corona-virus lockdown, I was brought to tears as God took me in the Spirit through the whole of Lent and right to the cross—with Jesus hanging upon it. In a sense, it was as if the Lord had said, “Do not pass go, do not collect \$200., go straight to the cross, spend time there.”

So to Calvary I went. It was to the very moment on the first Good Friday when Jesus uttered the phrase, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?”; which itself is a quote from Psalm 22 meaning, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34) Why would God lead me to the cross? Why to that very moment in time? Why did the tears flow? First, you must know that one of my oft repeated prayers is “show me your heart in this matter, O God,” whatever “this matter” may happen to be at the time. Understanding that, perhaps you can discern that in my prayer Jesus was revealing his heart in connection to all of the fallout surrounding this Covid-19 mess.

From the cross, at that moment in history Jesus was experiencing the excruciating pain, the sheer horror of being separated, of being quarantined from his Father, from the pure holiness that he once enjoyed. It tore him apart—literally, spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally—He hated it. Jesus hated his quarantine! Our Savior was undergoing a gut-wrenching pain like no other at being unable to be with his Daddy, his Abba. Why was he in agony and unable to be with the Father? Because he had all of our disgusting, viral-sin on his shoulders. He was infected unto death. A disease as such was not (will never be) allowed into heaven. It would spoil the holiness, the health, the perfection. The Son of God underwent the most painful period of sequester or quarantine that he or any of us ever could experience here on earth so that that detestable virus wouldn't make it past the angel guards into heaven.

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

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Proverbs 3:5

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Eucharist Rite II. Childcare available at 10:30

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Wed: Choir:6p

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John 3:16

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...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 10

Our human familiarity with the current type of virus and quarantine program began back in the beginning of time. In Genesis, soon after Creation in the Garden of Eden we sinned, ala Adam and Eve. Sin became and remains the quintessential virus of mankind. Among other things, one of the repercussions of the sin-virus that would come to infect everyone, included our separation from God's nearer, constant presence. In short, we were kicked out of the Garden, we were quarantined from the heavenly Father and guards were placed at the entrance to keep us (sinful virus carriers that we are) away.

Alas, that set-up rubbed God the wrong way when he took the time to consider it. After all, he had created humanity because he wanted to have fellowship with us. He wanted to share his glorious creation with you and me and, hold on to your hats, He actually loved us, go figure! El Shaddai (God Almighty) did not like that separation one bit so He put into action his virus preparedness plan – Jesus Christ. His Son would be the One, the only One who could and would break down the dividing wall of separation (Ephesians 2:14) which was represented by the angelic be-

ings guarding the east end of Eden.

As God's Son, Jesus would naturally be averse to being quarantined. It's in his blood, so to speak. That is why God would lead any of us to the cross to remind us of the Lord's agony and to the pain of separation from the Father. But then so are we naturally averse to isolation. We are, after all, created in God's image (see Genesis chapter 1). It is therefore "in our blood" for us to enjoy fellowship with God, family, and others because we're made for it, we're made for relationships. This quarantine business is unnatural, it feels neither good nor right to be separated one from another. Why else would we use "solitary confinement" or "time-out" as a form of punishment to be avoided?

If you find this quarantine business to be uncomfortable, if separation or isolation brings pain or depression, then you are following in the hallowed footsteps of Jesus Christ. He has been there. And, he has provided the cure for the sin-virus in his blood. The divine-human quarantine is ended with the redemption of Messiah Jesus. Then too, as God, He alone can end the Covid-19 quarantine mess. Let's pray.

...CLUBS continued from page 1

season, but we are still following all the protocols outlined by the mayor, the county and the state," said Highlands Falls Country Club General Manager Jason Macaulay. "Our fitness club is closed as are our food service options."

Macaulay said staff have been allowed to work from home if they are more comfortable and the club is working with a skeleton crew.

The clubhouse is currently under construction with work on target and it's expected to be ready late in May which is when the club technically opens anyway. But he asked that members who return early not to expect business as usual or to ask for a tour of the clubhouse.

He said the country clubs in the area are mirroring each other and they have sent letters to their members advising them of the situation here in Highlands.

"We are a small town with a small grocery store and a small hospital. We haven't encouraged homeowners to come back early," said Macaulay. "We've made it clear that club services are not available."

Highlands Country Club General Manager Greg Crawford said the weather is almost too nice which doesn't motivate some people to follow safe practices.

Though over the last couple of weeks a home at Highlands Country Club provided safe harbor for a woman who was quarantined before and after testing positive for COVID-19, Crawford said the decision regarding opening club facilities was independent of the person's quarantine being lifted.

"The focus is having safe facilities and a safe community for members and staff," he said. "Health authorities, along with state and local government leaders, will be the club's informed sources and all that information will guide the operational activities. Any decision will defer to being cautionary but not paranoid," he said.

Crawford said the community association staff is working with limited hours and on-duty staff are not able to assist with the variety of requests members are accustomed should they return earlier than normal.

Richard Delany, president and managing director of Old Edwards Hospitality Group said most everything associated with Old Edwards will remain closed through March 31 "with all expectations that the closing will be extended even further," he said.

– Kim Lewicki

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from March 5. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

March 5

• At 8:54 a.m., officers took a report about a stolen vehicle from a residence on Sherwood Forest Road.

March 12

• At 8:56 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on NC 106 when a piece of wood fell out of a truck and hit the vehicle.

• At 10:44 a.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Bowery Road.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from March 6

March 18

• At 11:17 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident Road.

March 19

• At 3:08 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on the Cashiers Road.

March 20

• At 3:12 a.m., the dept. responded to a potential structure fire on Flat Mountain Estates.

March 21

• At 6:32 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible gas leak at a residence on Gibson Street.

March 22

• At 8:17 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Shortoff Road.

...LAW continued from page 8

Highlands PD investigates several B&Es and more

The Highlands Police Department is investigating two separate calls regarding the breaking/entering of three motor vehicles. The vehicles were parked between the hours of 2 and 3 a.m. at residences located on Cullasaja Drive.

The department has conducted a neighborhood canvas of the area. "We are reaching out to other residents requesting they check and secure their cars, and we are diligently following leads as they are reported to the department," said Detective Andrea Holland.

Two separate events occurred three

weeks prior.

A Dodge pick-up was stolen from a residence off 64 east and a car was broken into in the Shelby Place subdivision.

"We urge you to lock your cars and don't leave valuables in plain sight. If possible, utilize outdoor lighting with motion sensor activation," said Holland. "We are asking the public to contact the police department at 526-9431 if you have any information concerning these reports."


Mashburn, Burns sentenced for drug trafficking

Highlands PD assist in Mashburn and Burns investigation

Last week, U.S. District Judge Mar-

• See LAW page 14


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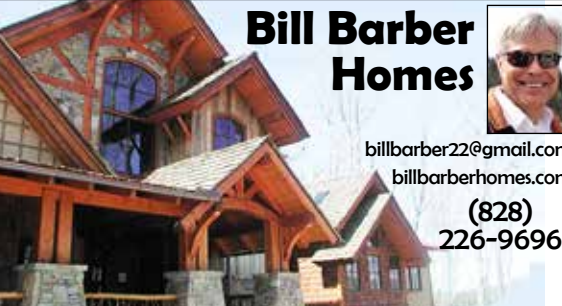
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Broker

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Pat Allen, Broker in Charge



...INVESTING continued from page 9

today. The hotels and vacation rental companies will be happy to talk with you about travel plans for later on this year. Look up the restaurants in Highlands, they're 'Mom & Pop' types, not chain restaurants, but all restaurants have staff that are affected by COVID19. Why not buy online gift cards to use later? Volunteer at a food bank in your area. Take a walk. Foster an animal. Have you seen all of the free concerts, educational sites and tours being offered? Again, this too shall pass.

Oh, and one last thing. If you have a hankering, and

the means and would like to buy property in Highlands, sight-unseen...have we (speaking for all brokers) got a deal for you. I would say, "come on down, the price is right," but for now, let's forget the coming on down part.

• Jeannie and Tucker Chambers are owners/brokers of Chambers Realty & Vacation Rentals at 401 N. Fifth Street, Highlands, although these days are probably working from home. Highlandsiscalling.com or jeannie@highlandsiscalling.com and tucker@highlandsiscalling.com

...SECOND from page 1

close contacts.

The CDC defines close contact as being within approximately six feet of a person with an infection with COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time of 10 minutes or longer. Based on information provided by the individual, county health officials will assess risks of exposure, determine which if any additional measures are needed such as temperature and symptom checks, quarantine and/or testing. Since cases are reported under the state of residency, this case will be identified as a Maryland case, not a North Carolina case. Therefore, this case will not show up on the North Carolina maps as a Macon County case.

As of March 23 at 5 p.m. regarding testing at MC Public Health only, 52 tests were collected (22 negative, 0 positive, 30 pending) This does not include tests by local providers and hospitals.

Note: As of March 25, there has been one confirmed COVID-19 death in NC; 504 cases; and 10,489 tests.

COVID-19 Testing Protocol Questions and Answers from the Macon County Heath Department

If someone goes to their doctor or the ER presenting symptoms what initiates a Covid-19 test?

Though the guidance and response to COVID-19 evolves on a daily basis as of March 23, testing guidelines are as follows:

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you should call to discuss this with your health care provider and your local health department. Testing for COVID-19 can only be done in consultation with your health care provider or local health department.

Only those who meet the following criteria should ask their doctor or local health department about being testing for COVID-19 through the NCSLPH:

- Have fever or lower respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) and close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case within the past 14 days; OR
- Have fever and lower respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) and a negative flu test

If a person is tested, who does it; where is it done?

Emergency Rooms, the health department, and some primary care offices are able to test patients who meet the testing guidelines for COVID-19 in Macon County.

Where is the sample sent for verification?

Either the NC State Laboratory, or a private laboratory such as LabCorp.

How long does it take to get the results?

In general, the test results are expected within 48 to 72 hours. However, with LabCorp experiencing a backlog due to the amount of tests submitted, it could be longer before results are available.

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LERY in Highlands Plaza is now open and accepting CONSIGNMENT FURNITURE. Please call or text Susan at 828-526-6004. (st. 3/19)

COMIC BOOKS - Buy /

Sell. Call Bob @ 302-530-1109 (6/4)

TO RENT: MATURE PROFESSIONAL WITH INDOOR CAT SEEKS REASONABLE 2BR HOME TO RENT. Solid references. Call or text 828-200-1611 (st. 1/30)

WANTED TO BUY: US

& Foreign COINS, free appraisals, call Dan at 828-421-1616. (3/26)

HARLEY DAVIDSON

MOTORCYCLE MEMORABILIA. Call Sandra La Jeunesse at 828-371-2214.

HELP WANTED

ALLISON DIANE

CLOTHING at the corner of Fourth and Main is looking for part time help..Please stop by or call at (828)526-5404 (st. 3/19)

JOIN OUR TEAM!!

Nectar Juice Bar (located inside Whole Life Market) is now hiring! Are you looking for a fun, healthy-minded individual looking for full-time, year-round work? Experience is not necessary, but kitchen or barista skills a plus. Competitive pay! Apply at Whole Life Market, 680 N. 4th St., Highlands.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE AT CHESTNUT HILL ASSISTED LIVING - COURTESY OFFICER 6 pm to Midnight, 5 nights a week; Part-Time Housekeeper; Chef/Cook. Call 828-526-8400. (st. 2/13)

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS needs nursery help on Wednesday nights; 1-2 hours; \$15 per hour; background check and interview required; must be at least 16 years old. (st. 2/13)

RANDEVU now hiring full- & part-time waitstaff. Call 828-743-0190. (st. 2/27)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT HIGHLANDS SMOKEHOUSE. Hiring all positions. Commitment to excellence in food quality and guest service. We are proud of the products and service we provide, we create experiences not just sell food. Offering defined, sane schedules and healthy work environment allowing for a balanced life. Very cooperative pay. Food service

experience preferred. Tobacco free workplace. Contact us at Smokehouzerecruiting@gmail.com (st. 5/2)

SALES ASSOCIATE HIGH END RETAIL CLOTHING STORE IN HIGHLANDS AND CASHIERS, NC. Full time, part time and seasonal. Inquire to 828-200-0928. (st. 3/38)

SERVICES HIGHLANDS HANDYMAN - 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 & FABRICATON roof repairs, chimney flashing, debris removal, pressure washing. Call 371-1103. (st. 6/27)

HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HANDYMAN: Repairs, remodeling, painting, pressure washing, minor plumbing and electric, decks and additions. Free Estimates. Insured. Call 828-200-4071. (12/31)

HIGH COUNTRY PHOTO/KEVIN VINSON: 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. 4/25)

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

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

ATTENTION BUSINESS OWNERS: Looking for employee housing? We've got several options! Close to town and affordable! Call Christal at White Oak Realty Group. 828-200-9699. (st. 9/19)

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

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

1.21 ACRES FOR SALE BY OWNER - OTTO, NC - \$28,000. Lot 12 Quail Haven Road. Otto, NC. Price not firm ... open for negotiation. Please email if interested to ddmarsh15@aol.com or call/text to 239-980-0531.

COMMERCIAL SPACE RENTALS

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

RESIDENTIAL RENTALS

ROOMMATE TO SHARE HIGHLANDS HOME AND EXPENSES. Call Sonja. 828-487-0363. (st. 3/19)

HOME FOR RENT IN MIRROR LAKE AREA. 2 BR/2 BA furnished. Screened porch & open deck. Small pets okay. No smoking. Long-term preferred. \$1,700 per month. 404-630-8398. (3/19)

SPACIOUS POST AND BEAM HOME WITH 4-bedroom, 3-1/2 bath home. Soaring 30' ceiling in open floor-plan of the kitchen/living/dining room. All other rooms offer 10' ceilings. Spacious master suite. Mountain views with creeks and large deck. Less than 15-minutes from Main Street. This is a non-smoking property. Call 828.421.1823 to view the property. Yearly lease @ \$3200 per month. (st. 1/30)

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

...LAW continued from page 11

tin Reidinger sentenced Eugene "Bo" Mashburn, 58, of Hayesville, N.C. to 135 months in prison and to serve five years under court supervision upon completion of his prison sentence.

Days later he sentenced Bobby Roger Burch, 48, of Hayesville, N.C. to 262 months in prison, announced Andrew Murray, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. Judge Reidinger also ordered Burch to serve five years under

court supervision upon completion of his prison sentence.

According to filed court documents and the sentencing hearing, Mashburn conspired with other drug traffickers in North Carolina and Georgia to distribute significant quantities of methamphetamine. According to court records, over the course of the investigation, law enforcement conducted two controlled buys of methamphetamine from Mashburn and seized methamphet-

amine, 24 firearms and two silencers from Mashburn's residence.

Burch was part of a drug conspiracy operating in North Carolina and Georgia, that distributed significant quantities of methamphetamine in and around Clay County and elsewhere. Court records show that Burch was the North Carolina-based source of supply for the drug ring. Court records also show that, over the course of the investigation, In making the announcement, U.S. Attorney Murray thanked the DEA's Asheville Post of Duty; the

Clay County Sheriff's Office; the Georgia Bureau of Investigation; the Swain County Sheriff's Office; the Macon County Sheriff's Office; the Highlands Police Department; and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation for handling the investigation.

Mashburn and Burns were arrested in 2018 as part of the Appalachian Drug Task Forces' "Operation Unicoi Pipeline."

Working across different states and jurisdiction, the Appalachian Drug Task Force conducted an in depth investi-

gation into Mashburn, Burns and others trafficking methamphetamine from Georgia to Clay County, North Carolina.

During the investigation, resources from the Macon County Sheriff's Department and the Highlands Police Department, such as SRT (Special Response Team) and K-9 officers, were utilized to build a case against the men.

The joint agency work contributed to the mountain of evidence that put Mashburn and Burns away in federal prison.

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