

Highlands Newspaper

Remember those who served

FREE Every Thursday

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Board of Ed outlines graduation plans

By Brittney Lofthouse

Graduating high school is an incredible milestone – an accomplishment that is forever remembered. Students in the graduating class of 2020 around the country

will have a graduation experience unlike any other class before them – many of which won't have a graduation ceremony at all.

Gathering restrictions and social distancing guidelines across

the state have resulted in graduation ceremonies being postponed, altered for a virtual experience, or canceled entirely. Macon County tackled the possibility for schools

• See GRADUATION page 17

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2020-'21 MC School calendar to include remote days

By Brittney Lofthouse

Covid-19 has changed just about every aspect of our day-to-day lives. Things like grocery shopping or visiting friends and family or even going to work have drastically changed since March.

While talks of returning to some sort of normalcy continue – the Macon County Board of Education approved a tentative calendar for the 2020-2021 school year Monday night, but kept in mind that any sort of surge or second outbreak could change everything once again.

The North Carolina legislator revised guidelines for school districts to follow when developing school calendars, mandating that the next school year will start

• See CALENDAR page 16



Photo by Ginger Moseley

Memorial Day: remember those who served

While it may look a bit different this year, we will still be celebrating Memorial Day.

This day of remembrance has been observed since May 30, 1868 when it was known as Decoration Day. General John A. Logan, commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, called for a day of

remembrance “for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land.” What

• See MEMORIAL DAY page 5

Fifth MC resident tests positive for COVID-19

By Emily Ritter
Public Information
MC Public Health

On May 15 and again on May 17, Macon County Public Health received positive test results for COVID-19 in two people. That makes five Macon County residents so far. The fourth Macon County resident who tested positive is between the ages of 25-49. The patient is symptomatic and is isolating at home for 14 days. No further information will be released about this individual.

Then on May 17, the fifth positive resident who had close contact with another person who previously tested positive for COVID-19 was announced. That person is also following isolation instructions and is under the guidance of MCPH. No further information will be released about this individual.

Macon County Public Health is working to identify close contacts of the individual. The CDC defines close contact as being

within approximately 6 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.

On Monday, MCPH tested 38 people who had been notified that they may have been infected. That's the most ever tested at one time.

The CDC defines close contact as being within approximately 6 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

• See COVID page 9

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Remembering Don Mullen

The May meeting of the Highlands Town Board will be held tonight at 7 p.m. by way of ZOOM.

The information for accessing the meeting is on the town website.

As always the meeting will begin with public comment. Also, we will hold a long delayed public hearing concerning three changes to the UDO. Anyone wishing to make comments concerning these items can raise their hand, and the session moderator will recognize that person and open their microphone. To make sure all comments are made, please feel free to email me and indicate you want to make a public comment. My email is: mayor@highlandsnc.org. Written comments can also be sent, and I will read them to the other commissioners. The only requirements for written comments is that the writer has to be identified. The ZOOM meeting will also have a chat option where an attendee can make comments that commissioners can see during the meeting.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

As I have stated several times now, the best way to get all the information about the meeting is to request to be placed on the town's Sunshine list. Simply call town hall at 526-2118 and ask to be added to the list. Only your name and email address are required.

Small businesses across the state are struggling during this state of emergency. The state legislature recently approved COVID 19 Rapid Recovery Loan

Program for small businesses and municipalities. The governor signed the bill, and now the distribution of these funds are underway. The funds will be prorated and sent to the counties. County boards have the task of distributing the money to businesses and municipalities.

Jackson and several surrounding counties have partnered with the regional non-profit, Mountain BizWorks, to administer and distribute the loans to qualified businesses. I hope Macon County will follow suit and establish a similar plan through the Macon County Economic Development Commission or Mountain BizWorks.

As for the Town of Highlands receiving support, I believe the funds should be directed to our business community. The town has the ability to adjust our budget to get through this difficult economic situation. Many small businesses need support immediately.

On a sad note, Dr. Don Mullen, a former Highlands mayor, passed away this week. On behalf of the Town of Highlands let me express our condolences to his wife Patsy and his family. On a personal note, Don was a great mentor to me. On numerous occasions, including last month, I would have discussions with Mayor Mullen about the issues and situation in Highlands. Under his leadership the process for reorganizing the structure of town government to the current town manager and board system was begun. Dr. Mullen loved and served this community as an elected official, physician and as a minister.

As a minister and physician Don helped many people throughout the world on his numerous mission trips. He embodied the great Christian ideal of love and service to his fellow human beings. He was a great Highlander.





• HIC'S VIEW •



Andersons soon regreted adopting the retired fire house dog.

whicseven@yahoo.com

• WEATHER •

| Thu, 21-May | Fri, 22-May | Sat, 23-May | Sun, 24-May |
|--|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| 65°F 50°F | 67°F 56°F | 77°F 57°F | 76°F 59°F |
| Cloudy with showers around | Mostly cloudy with a t-storm | A shower and t-storm around | Mostly cloudy |
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| High: 68° Low: 51° | High: 71° Low: 56° | High: 83° Low: 61° | High: 84° Low: 64° |

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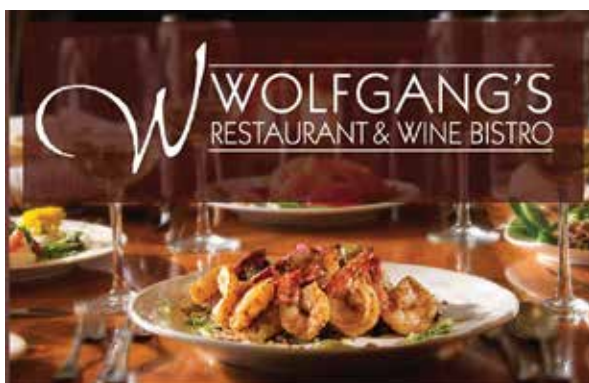
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...MEMORIAL DAY continued from page 1

Gen. Logan referred to as the "late rebellion" is what we know as the Civil War – in which nearly 620,000 soldiers lost their lives.

Memorial Day was established as a federal holiday in 1968 when Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act. They chose the last Monday in May, rather than May 30, in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees. This change went into effect in 1971.

In December of 2000, the National Moment of Remembrance Act—which asks Americans to pause on Memorial Day at 3 p.m. local time for one minute to honor those who died protecting America's rights and freedoms—was signed into law.

Over the years, the emphasis on the remembrance of our fallen soldiers has given way to picnics, BBQs, and 50% off sales. Although this has become commonplace, we still need to take the time to observe and recognize the reason for the holiday.

More than 1 million men and women have lost their lives defending America in wars, from the Revolution to the current global war on terrorism.

Highlands American Legion Post 370 will be honoring those heroes on Monday. We will have representatives at the Highlands Veterans Plaza to raise the flag and to recognize the 18 veterans who are having bricks added to our local Walk of Honor.

In an effort to continue with public gathering and social distancing guidelines, we encourage everyone to join us Monday the 25th at 10am via a live feed of the ceremony on our Facebook page for the American Legion Post 370 Highlands NC at

<https://www.facebook.com/HighlandsNCAmericanLegionPost370/>.

On this Memorial Day be sure to take the time and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

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Tuesday night teachers said farewell and handed out awards to the senior class during a drive-thru parade at the school.

•WORD MATTER•

Imagining a Future in the Age of Uncertainty

Many of us are attempting to come to terms with the times in which we are living. There's so much happening, as well as so much not happening right now, no one seems comfortable with the idea that we might be living in uncertainty for quite some time.

During stressful times it can be difficult to peek out from our own circumstances and place ourselves into the shoes of someone else. We understand our own conditions; we're struggling with quarantining and distancing, we're wondering if our jobs will be there, we're in fear of our businesses and our investments vanishing, we're questioning plans we've been looking forward to; big plans as well as small, simple plans. This is what I mean by uncertainty.

All these things are the result of having too much time, too little space, and a loss of control over our freedom of movement. We're thinking about ourselves, our families, perhaps our friends and neighbors, but are we able to think about any or all of hundreds of millions of others who we don't know but who share our current reality?

Each and every one of us has a kind of "now story" that owns our thoughts, emotions and circumstances. But is my story a concern for you, or for anyone else? Are we able to look outward, to think about others in this time of isolation and internalization? It's hard.

While others question what they're facing right now – health, job, business, interacting with others – I'm thinking about some societal, even global matters impact-

ed by this life event we're all sharing. For example:

What changes will we see in our national healthcare system? Will the U.S. now produce essential medicines and protective equipment ONLY here at home? Will we finally ensure that EVERY American has at least basic healthcare? Will healthcare workers be properly equipped?

What will our workplaces look like once Americans have survived, been vaccinated, or, sadly, have passed, either as a direct result of Covid-19 or from some underlying condition exacerbated by the virus? How many jobs that required us to travel to a workplace have been or will be converted to work-from-home situations? In large or very large cities, will businesses that can operate in a decentralized environment choose to do so? What will happen in those places to commercial office space, and to all the service businesses – coffee shops, restaurants, florists, drycleaners, bars and clubs – if working from home becomes the rule rather than the exception?

Speaking of restaurants, how's that going to work? How long will social distancing requirements prevent operators from filling seats while maintaining hygiene standards consistent with regaining the confidence of diners? How will disruptions to our food supply chain impact how we eat?

How will our children and grandchildren obtain an education? Will there be a full-scale return to classrooms inside school



Bud Katz

buildings, K-12 and college level, or will there be an expansion of home-schooling, distance learning, and/or online classes? And how will parents of school-age children go to work if their children are schooling at or from home?

How will we view government in the future? Have they gained our confidence? Are we satisfied or angry at how they've reacted, or overreacted, to the pandemic?

What have we learned about our elected leaders?

How long might it be before we can consider visiting movie theaters, concerts, sporting events, worship services? Will we feel comfortable being in close proximity to strangers in public spaces anytime soon?

For how many months or years will people choose to wear gloves and masks in

supermarkets, malls and inside retail stores? Will this ever feel normal? What does normal even mean anymore?

There are so many factors imposing themselves onto any envisioning we might want to consider regarding our post-Covid-19 future. So many of us are talking about "going back" to the way things were. I'm sorry, but I don't think that's going to happen. While operating within the darkness of Covid-19 we are, at the very same time, illuminating so many different possible scenarios behind the curtains of our own imaginations.

Instead of wondering when things are going to return to how they were, each of us might do better considering how we want to design our future once this is behind us.

That said, any imagining regarding any future must at least acknowledge the probability of something in that future which might once again knock us off-center.

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• BUSINESS NEWS •

Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation funds delivery of 150 hand sanitizer stations to area restaurants in Jackson and Macon counties

The Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation has funded a grant for a collaborative Chamber of Commerce initiative to

purchase and deliver 150 hand sanitizing stations to area independent restaurants for use by their patrons. The following Cham-

bers of commerce are participating in this project:

- Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Franklin Chamber of Commerce
 - Highlands Chamber of Commerce
- Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation is committed to lifting the health and well-being of our mountain communities.

During this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation is providing financial support to solutions for the safe re-opening of our communities. We are pleased to fund this Chamber of Commerce initiative to support our area restaurants' commitment to safety and hygiene for their patrons as well as encourage economic recovery for the community at large.

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INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival's 2020 season cancelled

To all our Festival Friends, we waited as long as we possibly could, hoping for a miracle, but sadly the time has come to make the call that the 39th season of the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival has been cancelled.

We had SUCH an incredible summer planned for you, with more new faces and creative programs than ever before, including violinists Cho-Liang Lin and Ray Chen; pianists Anastasia Huppmann and Inna Faliks; the Hermes Quartet from Paris; harpist Bridget Kibbey; tenor Timothy Miller; narrator Lois Reitzes; and Festival favorites David and Julie Coucheron; cellists Zuill Bailey and Charae Krueger; the Attacca Quartet; the Eroica Trio. So many other special concerts and events were all lined up and ready to go....

We are already planning for a truly blockbuster 40th anniversary season in

2021; it is going to be one nonstop party all summer long! The other good news is that, thanks to the incredible support from all of you over the years, and thanks to the hard work of our Board and the amazing leadership of recent past Presidents Jack Sapolsky, Kathy Whitehead and our current President Martha Pearson, we are in pretty good shape to weather this storm.

We will be posting performances by some of our Festival Musicians over the summer on our Facebook page – please check it out and “like” it if you use Facebook to stay in touch. And more information is always available on our Website at h-cmusicfestival.org.

Stay well; we cannot wait to bring you live music and much more in the near future.

William Ransom, Artistic Director
Nancy Gould-Aaron, Ex. Director
Martha Pearson, Board President

Emma Weller is Bel Canto Scholarship recipient

The Bel Canto Recital Committee is pleased to announce that Emma Weller is the 2020 Scholarship Award winner. Throughout school Emma pursued several art disciplines, including dance, voice and percussion in the school's band, and visual art. Weller demonstrated talent and leadership skills in the dance program. She also took art classes in school and at The Bascom Visual Arts Center.

Working at the Highlands Decorating



Emma Weller

Center after school and during the summer enabled Weller to explore a vocation that would further develop her interest in the arts. Emma plans to attend NC State next spring where she will major in fashion merchandising at the Wilson College of Design within NC State.

Stell Huie, Chairman of the Bel Canto Committee observed “we had six strong candidates for the award this year.

• See WELLER page 19

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I'm Ok...You're Ok

What different lives we are all now living due to Covid 19! The entire world has changed in so many ways.

Memorial Day is the time to recognize those who sacrificed their lives to protect our freedom. These brave men and women went to war, knowing they may never return to their families and loved ones. Now, our medical workers go to work every day, knowing they are risking their lives to protect ours.

Masks, gloves, and social distancing prevent hugs, handshaking, and gatherings of more than 10 people. If there is anything positive to come from this dreaded virus, it is that families are home together with the opportunity to share sit-down meals, talking and listening to each other, playing sports in the yard, putting puzzles together, cooking and gathering in the kitchen, and truly getting to bond again as a family.

I see a trend of families wanting to move to smaller towns, feeling safer in less dense areas, and still wanting to reconnect with their families and loved ones. What

better place to settle in than on our plateau! Come home to nature at its best with beautiful mountain scenery, great hiking, and grand waterfalls. Experience a quieter and gentler lifestyle. We offer fabulous restaurants, great shopping, wonderful entertainment, and a sophisticated "Mayberry" experience complete with a "dummy cop," who reminds us to slow down! The virus has certainly slowed down our way of living and I think we all are looking at life with new thoughts and aspirations.

Our real estate firm is here to help in every way possible, whether with reassurance, guidance in selecting a home, or simply discussing market conditions. We have seen an increase in buyer activity since this pandemic began-some wanting to be here full-time and work from home and others desiring second homes as a respite from the uncertainty and confusion we now face.



Pat Allen
Pat Allen Realty Group
Owner/BIC
Cell: 828-200-9179

So, we will all look at this Memorial Day in a new light, honoring those who sacrificed their lives for our freedom, as well as those who are sacrificing their lives everyday so others may live. We honor and appreciate you all. God bless our great country and its wonderful people.

• *Pat Allen is the owner of Pat Allen Realty Group. She is a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist and is certified as a specialist in Resort and Second Home Properties. She chooses to remain an independent firm and her firm was recently selected as a Leading Real Estate Company of the World®. She is consistently a top producer and award-winning broker on the plateau. Visit her on the web at Pat Allen Realty Group.com, call 828-526-8784, or 828-200-9179. The main office is conveniently located at 295 Dillard Road with a new second location at 5121 Cashiers Road at the entrance to Wildcat Cliffs Country Club.*

... COVID continued from page 1

measures are needed such as temperature and symptom checks, quarantine and/or testing.

The entire state of North Carolina is under a modified "Stay at Home" executive order, currently under phase one. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19; however, anyone of any age can become infected with this illness.

Therefore, we ask that community members strictly follow this order and continue to practice social distancing, as well as safe hygiene measures such as hand washing and frequently cleaning touched objects and surfaces.

Symptoms for COVID-19 are fever, cough, other lower respiratory illness (shortness of breath). If you believe that you may have COVID-19, please call the Health Department at 828-349-2517. The call center is open Monday through Friday from 8am – 5pm, until further notice.

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Mountain Women: Forgotten Sisters in NC History

In 2020 North Carolina will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, the one giving women a lifetime right to vote, all the while trying to figure out a once-in-a-lifetime event, the coronavirus. Therein lies the conundrum of women's rights movement in North Carolina and the nation. Whenever this country seems poised to recognize and celebrate women's rights, some dread epidemic or war occurs. You might think it a curse.

In 1919 it was the "Spanish" flu just after the bloodletting of World War I, the Vietnam War that overshadowed protests during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and, later, the HIV-AIDS epidemic of the 1980s that helped distract and finally

kill the ERA Amendment. Women's protests forever are drowned out by the drums of war and submerged in others by blacks, gays, and anti-war movements. Moreover, unlike other more monolithic protest groups, women face greater internal division in their struggles as well as daunting, incremental social pressure. For every Betty Friedan there was a Phyllis Schlafly. Politically there really isn't a solid "woman's vote."

So who does the North Carolina Department of Cultural Affairs



Milton Ready

crafty but only with their hands, pious and think should be celebrated this plagued year? The program is titled, *She Changed the World: North Carolina Women Breaking Barriers*. Be assured few pushy, breaking-down barriers women will come from the western mountains. Instead, those mountain women selected if any will fit a predictable stereotype held by Raleigh, one that typecasts them as Grandma Browns and "tall women," strong and hard-working, loyal to a fault,

domestic, teachers of survival skills who become venerated elders, storytellers, and keepers of family lore. Mountain women did not so much "change the world" as they created and sustained one far different from that viewed from the perspective of tobacco road.

That generally means Raleigh will choose an Amanda Swimmer, perhaps the most well-known Cherokee potter justly lauded for being the keeper of their traditions, Macon County's own Lucy Morgan, founder of the renowned Penland School of crafts near Spruce Pine, and Jane Hicks Gentry, perhaps the finest ballad singer ever to come from the mountains. All these

• See **SISTERS** page 21

"Out of Dooms is Great! By all Means, Get Out!"

- Tom Friedan, Former CDC director on Sunday News Show

Highlands Aerial Park is reopening

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Phasing in during COVID-19 Modified, staying-at-home & social distancing

One Lap of the Mountains

"Let's go for a drive," is an invitation for adventure when the course originates in the Western North Carolina mountain town of Highlands. All seems right with the world while cruising along the local winding two-lane mountain back roads. Whether the automobile is a sports car or a higher clearance vehicle, there is a thrill just around that next curve. The Highlands Motoring Foundation publication, One Lap of the Mountains, Exciting Drives for Car Enthusiasts, is a perfect route guide for all interests to navigate scenic WNC roads and learn a few bits of roadside trivia.

The book includes: an explanation of the main roads leading off the Highlands Plateau, mileage and directions for six of the popular Highlands Motoring Festival One Lap of the Mountains routes, and a pair of rally routes, complete with questions and answers. Each One Lap of

the Mountains route covers between 160-180 miles with an approximate mid-way lunch stop before returning to Highlands. Along the ride there are multiple opportunities to explore, stop for a picnic or take a hike. The rally routes include a restaurant destination but the shorter round-trip mileage of 60-80 miles makes these drives perfect for a half day of fun.

As a bonus, the route book includes mileage and directions to four Auto Hikes, which are routes that incorporate an adventure on both paved and unimproved mountain roads not suitable for low clearance cars. Like the One Lap of the Mountains routes, instructions to the Auto Hikes point out waterfalls, hiking trails and sites of interest.

A collective effort by Highlands residents and mountain driving enthusiasts Jan and Gus Lard, Knight Martorell and Steve Ham, the book expands on the popular Highlands Motoring Festival

One Lap of the Mountains events. All routes begin and end at the Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park on Pine Street in Highlands, North Carolina.

One Lap of the Mountains, Exciting Drives for Car Enthusiasts is available for purchase on the Highlands Motoring Festival web page or in the Highlands Visitor Center located at 108 Main Street, Highlands, NC. Registration is now ongoing for two all new One Lap of the Mountains drives hosted by the Highlands Motoring Foundation during the Mountain Motoring event planned for September 11-13, 2020. Proceeds from all Highlands Motoring Festival events and the sale of the route guide benefit the charities of the Highlands Motoring Foundation. Visit highlandsmotoringfestival.com for book purchase and more information.

See you on the road!



Have you missed visiting the Highlands Nature Center? Our staff have missed you! In the spirit of staying connected while staying apart, we're starting a "Plateau Pen Pal" program! We invite anyone who is interested to write to the Highlands Nature Center, part of the Highlands Biological Station. If you have a favorite memory from visiting, a drawing or photo you'd like to share with us, or just want to exchange a friendly hello, we'd love to hear from you. Paige Engelbrektsson, our Nature Center Education Specialist, will answer each and every letter. There may even be responses from a few "guest experts" you may be familiar with from the Nature Center - experts of the scaly or salamander variety. She will also be mailing hard copies of our themed Nearby Nature activities, designed for kids and adults of all ages, to any interested pen pals. For more information, please call (828) 526-2623.

Send your letters to:
Highlands Nature Center
265 N. 6th Street
Highlands, NC 28741

We can't wait to hear from you!

Popcorn at The Playhouse

Starting this week, the Highlands Playhouse will be selling our famously fresh popcorn on our patio! Stop in for a small bag to-go between 1 - 4 pm this Thursday, and Friday. We'll also have cold Coke products and concession candy available, all right from the patio. Cash only, please and thank you. We look forward to seeing all our our friends again here at the Playhouse!



It's true. Sheltering at home and social distancing is making us all a little crazy!



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Phasing in during COVID-19

Modified, staying-at-home & social distancing

See if you can find Mouse Musings!

Mice that have been mysteriously appearing in Highlands are the brainchild of New Yorker Rae Stang.

Last week we featured several but there are more. See if you can find them!

“All my life I’ve liked making things. If a life is like a tapestry, then most lives have at least one strong central thread that creates the pattern. In my tapestry - it’s creativity. My brain gets an idea, and then it’s actually hard put to stop it from becoming reality... it’s a mixed blessing.”

Her sheltering in place musings scampered across the Facebook and In-

stagram landscape at a fast pace. When others posted gorgeous pictures of gourmet meals, Daily Mouse peered out of an apple. That day Stang observed “Staying home and cooking seems to be the general state of affairs right now. The Mouse enjoys eating his way through an apple and then taking a nap in his deliciously scented bed. Comfort food



indeed! Hope everyone is staying safe & feeling well!”

Compassionate and empathetic, Daily Mouse has identified with the lonely, the volunteers-at-home, children and even parents.

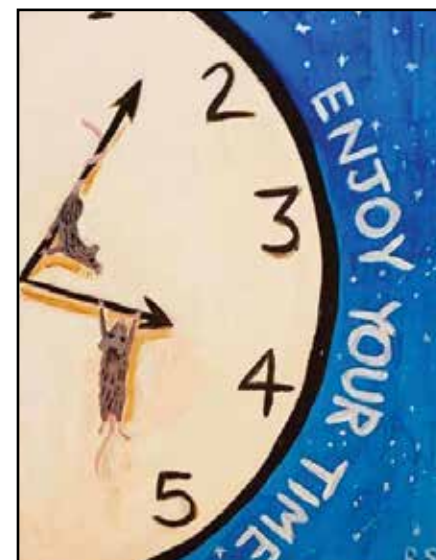
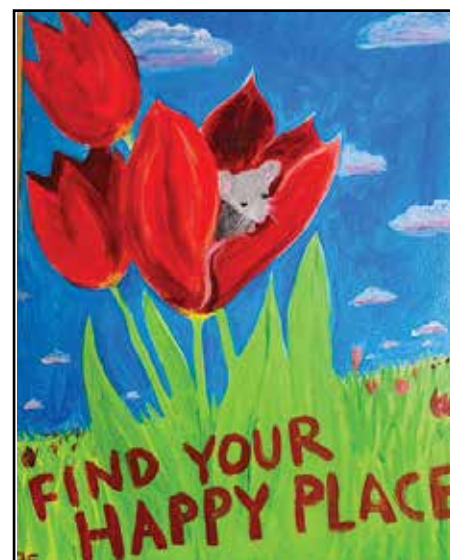
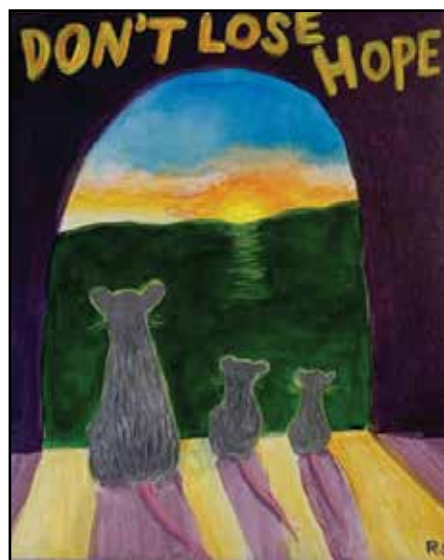
This week 30 different Daily

Mouse messages appeared in Highlands and here’s why!

“I was touched by Leela Chrestman’s April 30 Letter to the Editor,” Stang’s friend said. “Leela took the time to identify with the stress everyone is feeling and expressed her desire to spread joy and make our community stronger. Bringing Daily Mouse to Highlands seemed like a joyful way to help spread Leela’s message.”

While you cautiously move about town, see if you can find some of Stang’s Daily Mouse musings.

Take a selfie and text or email it to Highlands Newspaper: 828-200-1371 or highlandseditor@aol.com



The Hart family enjoys the big outdoors!



DOGSPEAK

• REFLECTIONS FROM LORD BANJO •

The Zen of Ponds

It's been a while since I've been to Miss Beverly's house, and I've been daydreaming about seeing her again. When I last visited, she and Nurse SarahAnne had just returned from a summer wedding in Mexico, and they were both suffering from Montezuma's Revenge.

Day one, we got in a short walk — short because Miss Beverly was still under the weather and because our Atlanta temps were in the 90s. It was so hot that Miss Beverly wiped me down with a wet towel before turning the floor fan directly on me on the cool tile in the kitchen. The Royal Critter Sitter knows all the tricks for taking care of the Royal Pooch.

All was well until SarahAnne came by to drop off her new dog, Lily Belle. Lily is a beauty, but she is ridiculously rambunctious. She's a rescue, and they think she's less than two years old. Judging by her energy level, I'd say she's younger than that.

No matter how quietly I reclined on the floor, that girl got right in my face. She jumped she leaped, she darted, and most irritating, she kept licking me in the face. It's possible she was trying to kiss me — I mean I am a handsome gent — but she got on my nerves no end.

The last straw was her invading my water bowl. I growled at her, and she backed off but came right back. Maybe because I never lifted my head from the floor when I growled, she thought I was teasing. Miss Beverly knew I wouldn't hurt Lily, but she also knew I was mightily displeased with the girl's behavior. A second water bowl appeared, and all was well, at least in that department. The kissing and the darting never did stop.

By day two, I needed to escape from Lily Belle, so I went in search of cool, quiet spots in the backyard. Miss Beverly and her husband Mister John have a fenced yard filled with trees and bushes where a boy can get lost, given a chance. There's also a huge pond, complete with a bridge, a waterfall, lily pads, and fish.

Miss Beverly nicknamed me the



Lord Banjo

phantom because of my tendency to disappear into the shady spots in the yard. She'd weed and putter in the yard, realize she hadn't seen me for a while, and come in search of me. It was our little game. There was no way Lily could play because she couldn't stay quiet long enough to hide. Me? Like most Pyrs, I can lie still for hours.

The best part? I completely bamboozled Miss Beverly. She looked up, didn't see me, and started the usual search. Only this time, she didn't find me. She knew I had to be in the fenced yard, but she began to panic when I was nowhere to be found.

As she later told Mum, "The game was afoot. Out of the corner of my eye, I spied a large black lily pad in the pond. It blinked at me. Huh? Lord Banjo had stealthily slid down the waterfall into the pond, but I, 'Sherlock Beverly Holmes,' found him."

I was hoping I'd get more time in my new found oasis, but she and Mister John wanted me out. Mister John is quite particular about the looks of his pond, and I didn't fit with the other lily pads.

The problem arose when Lily decided if I could go in the pond, so could she. She'd never before ventured in because she got the "No" signal whenever she approached the edge. It took both Miss Beverly and Mister John to get Lily out of there. And, of course, she didn't stand quietly in the pond; she bounced and bobbed. We were both dripping lily pads by the time we emerged, and Mister John was none too pleased.

I was tickled I'd taught Lily a new game. With my coaching, she may come to understand the Zen of ponds. Youngsters like Lily believe water is for splashing, but we more mature dogs relish water's calming effect. Ohm.

• Lord Banjo lives in Georgia with his Mum, Kathy Manos Penn. Find more stories in his book, "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch," available on Amazon and locally at Highland Mountain Paws. To contact him, please email inkpenn119@gmail.com.



Our Community Needs Us!

We all **love** this area, but with the Covid crisis, our *community* needs us to step up. So how can we **help**? Whether full timers, seasonal residents, or regular visitors, helping may be *simpler* than we think.

- Be *generous* beyond the norm.
- Make *donations* to local non-profits that you'd not normally make. Or *increase* the amount that you'd normally offer.
- And instead of waiting until the end of the year, make your donations *now*.
- Go to stores and **buy two** of something – or splurge on items that you'd normally wistfully walk by. Start buying **Christmas** presents or **gift certificates** now: stash up.
- Pay **extra for haircuts** and other services, making up for those that never happened.
- Eat out – or **take out** – **more often** than usual. To help the restaurant owners, order the expensive dishes – and maybe offer to buy a \$50 dessert, just for the heck of it.
- And for waitstaffs and other service workers, make your **tips impressive**.

• If you would like to **volunteer** your time and services, sign up with the Highlands Chamber of Commerce initiative **Neighbors Helping Neighbors** at highlandschamber.org/neighbors-helping-neighbors/

It is, indeed, better to give than receive. Given the craziness of these times, our neighbors need our help; hopefully, all of us **who are able** will **show our appreciation** to those who work so hard to make Highlands-Cashiers the unique area it is.

Be creative. Be generous. Be grateful.

Paid for by a hopeful neighbor

... CALENDAR continued from page 1

Aug. 17, a week earlier than normal, and end no later than June 11, 2021.

The Macon County Board of Education approved school calendars for the district Monday night, which included the new mandate regarding remote instruction plans.

State legislation also requires all schools to submit remote instruction plans to the state Board of Education by July 20 – Macon County worked in five remote instruction days as required by law by taking existing teacher workdays and making them remote instruction days.

However, board members expressed their frustration with the mandate.

“That is just the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard,” Board Member Fred Goldsmith said of the requirement. “That is taking kids out of the classroom and we just don’t be doing that.”

Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin said that while the five remote instruction days have to be part of the calendar, the district does have flexibility to change the

days if needed.

“If we have a remote instruction day scheduled for February 12 and we miss school on February 9 because of snow – then we can make that snow day the remote learning day and have in-person instruction on the 12th,” Baldwin explained.

Goldsmith also noted that remote instruction is difficult for parents in Macon County because so many households lack access to internet – Dr. Baldwin noted that CARES Act funding will hopefully alleviate some of that concern moving forward.

Meanwhile, Baldwin said it will be up to each school and teacher whether remote learning is done online or with work packets.

Dr. Baldwin cautioned that in the event of a resurgence of COVID19 this fall, which health experts are predicting, the school system could be closed again. “If we have an outbreak at one school, then we have to be prepared for rolling closures for at least 14 days,” Baldwin said. “Having remote learning days built in, and planning for

the capability to do them will be helpful in the event that does happen.”

Members of the Board of Education took into account that the calendar and impending school year is tentative – and based on COVID-19 and further direction by state leaders, could all change.

In fact, North Carolina School Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson has been adamant that remote learning, like what has been done across the state, will likely continue in the fall.

“I will be blunt. Since the start of our switch to remote learning in March, I have held the belief that we are going to need to utilize remote learning next school year as well in some form or fashion,” wrote Johnson in an email to members and advisors of a task force looking at how to safely reopen schools amid COVID-19.

“We have to move forward with a plan at this point, but we also need to be prepared for all that to change,” said Dr. Baldwin.

• LETTERS •

COVID health protocols should be followed

Dear Editor,

I read Mr. Larry Brannan’s letter with great interest and as an older lady myself, I definitely agree with him.

What exactly are the rules for store and restaurant employees pertaining to masks and gloves?

When picking up my take-out meal this week, I noticed that not one employee wore a mask or gloves, including the kitchen staff. When asked, I was told that they had masks but had chosen to not wear them at this time. Their customers were also bare faced while waiting inside for orders.

Though this is a favorite restaurant of mine, I shall not return there until guidelines are followed. I applaud our Mayor for keeping our town safe and encourage our citizens to continue to follow his suggestions.

Puddin Bornheim, Highlands

• See LETTERS page 22



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... GRADUATION continued from page 1

to hold graduation ceremonies during Monday night's Board of Education meeting.

According to Dr. Baldwin – Nantahala High School will likely host a “near normal” traditional ceremony in June due to the small size of graduating seniors. Highlands High School is also likely to hold a traditional commencement ceremony – assuming North Carolina orders Phase 3 of reopening by August 1, the tentative date of graduation.

“We anticipate the gathering restriction will be loosened from no more than 10 to either 50 or 100 people, which would allow the Highlands Senior class to hold a pretty close to normal graduation ceremony,” Dr. Baldwin said.

Dr. Baldwin noted that a tentative date of August 1 was set by the school – which will all depend on regulations in place at that time.

“My parents voted to delay graduation until Saturday, August 1,” said Highlands School principal Brian Jetter. “The gradu-

ation will be held within the state/local restrictions that are in place on August 1, whether that is a traditional ceremony or a ‘drive-through’ to get diplomas.”

Jetter said hopefully, as Aug 1 approaches, there will be more information and schools will be able to structure graduation to meet whatever pandemic rules are in place at that time.

“Until about the last week in July we won’t know what those rules will be or what graduation will look like,” said Jetter. “Stay tuned!”

Franklin High School – which has the largest graduating class in the county – is a little more tricky in terms of holding a ceremony. With 196 seniors expected to graduate, it is unlikely that even with loosened gathering restrictions, a ceremony would not only violate state orders, but also be potentially dangerous from a health standpoint.

The school board debated the legality, along with the health concerns of hosting a graduation for Franklin High students

Monday night – and were split on the decision.

FHS is currently debating three options, and letting students weigh in—the results are expected Friday, at which point board members will discuss possibilities further. The three options are:

Option 1 - June 13th

Each senior would have a mask, which are being donated by community members. Each senior would be dropped off at a designated spot on campus. Social distancing would be required throughout the event.

Each senior would be allowed one car for their parents to ride in. These cars would be assigned a parking spot alphabetically. The cars would file in by the Senior’s last name on a route through campus and entering the track.

As each Senior’s name is called, the family, in the car the entire time, would then pull onto the track and have a “front row” view of the Senior receiving the diploma. Then the family would return to their parking spot and listen to the remaining commencement on the radio.

Seniors would be seated 8-10 feet apart on the football field. This social distancing would be maintained the entire commencement. Seniors would be seated so that no more than 10 are on each side of the field within each 10-yard line.

Once the commencement ceremony is complete, seniors would return to their families’ respective cars, maintaining proper social distance. The cars would then have a drive-in event to showcase the seniors.

The ceremony would be recorded by BackLot Cinemas and aired at a later date for the community to view.

Option 2 – June 6th or June 13th

Seniors would drive on to campus, with family in one car. The student would exit the car at a designated location and pick up their diploma. Photographs with school administrators would be allowed.

Students would reenter their car and leave campus

Option 3 – August 1st

An event on this date may be similar

• See GRADUATION page 22



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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

The Hero's Journey

David Sterns
Wayfarers Unity Chapel

I'm a member of the heart of Wayfarers Unity Chapel. My talk today is inspired by Joseph Campbell's book "Hero With a Thousand Faces." His theme is commonly called The Hero's Journey. He talks about the epic heroes, like Ulysses and Hercules, and what they had in common. He also says that each of us can be a hero in our own lives, in our own way.

You don't have to wear a cape or leap tall buildings in a single bound to be a hero. Each of us can be a hero, by having high ideals and helping others. The bottom line to being a hero is to follow the Golden Rule. Love for your fellow human beings and life itself is pretty much a prerequisite for being a hero. When Jesus was asked, "What is the law?" He replied "Love God and love your neighbor as yourself." I would say Jesus was the greatest hero of all time. He also said to his disciples, "What I have done, and even greater things, you can do."

Dominic Torretto, in the "Fast and Furious" movies, once remarked, "Life without a code is meaningless." My personal code is to respect Life, respect others, and to respect myself. I don't always succeed, but I keep trying. Your code may be different, but following the Golden Rule has to be a part of it, if you want to be a hero. Heroes are not perfect, and you may make missteps. According to legendary coach Vince Lombardi, getting up after you have been knocked down is the spirit of a true champion.

Ask yourself, "What talents do I have? What am I interested in? What resources do I have?" Don Juan, in the Carlos Castaneda books, said, "Pick a path with heart." An example of present-day heroes are all those who are sewing masks at home, including my wife, Karen. Every time you do something selflessly for someone else, you are a hero.

Every time you support Nature or animals or plants, you are a hero.

Every time you do something hard, because it's the right thing to do, you are a hero.

Active self-improvement also qualifies you to be a hero. Everyone knows where their work lies, although author Tom Robbins once wrote that "Most people can't even act in their own movie, much less direct it."

Every time you refuse to respond to an unkind remark, you are a hero.

In television and the movies, the heroes defeat the bad guys. In real life, building up good is more effective in the long run, than defeating evil. Bruce Lee and his brother used to take to the streets in Hong Kong, to seek out and fight with hoodlums. After his brother was seriously injured, he realized that helping others was a more fruitful path than fighting bad guys. This also brings to mind the New Age proverb that what you are for, strengthens you, what you are against, weakens you.

While it is necessary to combat evil sometimes, the slower, more laborious process of building good

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

Proverbs 3:5

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Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

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Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

... WELLER continued from page 8

The decision was especially difficult given the need during this very difficult time for High School Seniors. Emma's application stood out because of the consistency and variety of her arts interests throughout High School and because she accumulated real life work experience related to the arts.

"We are especially gratified that every applicant recognized that the arts can provide solace, escape and comfort during times of stress and uncertainty."

For 28 years the Bel Canto Recital – Italian for beautiful singing – has introduced Highlanders to extraordinary emerging musical artists, many of whom have established international reputations for opera.

Planning for the 2020 concert is well underway by Artistic Director Stella Zambalis (an accomplished Soprano with a wide repertoire herself), and Musical Director Dr. Stephen Dubberly (Associate Professor of Opera, University of North Texas and Associate Conductor and Chorus Master, Fort Worth Opera).

Please save the date for this year's concert and dinner on September 13, 2020. Due to the complexities of the Covid 19 pandemic, plans are still fluid. . Call 828/787-2867 for most up-to-date information and to be added to the Bel Canto mailing list or please send your contact information to PO Box 2392, Highlands, NC 28741

... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 18

brings more lasting results. My martial arts teacher, master Ngo, said, "It takes 100 years to change the people." Think how long it has taken since the end of the American Civil War, to change white people's attitudes towards black people.

Be a hero in your own way, in your own life. Do what you can to make the world a better place.

A cautionary note is that we may be spiritual beings, but we live in a physical world, where the strong make the rules. Our ability to do good is within the framework of the societies we live in. Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's."

A few personal notes, and I will wrap this up:

A turning point in my life came when I realized that I could choose my own path, that I could be a hero if I wanted to be, and that I didn't have to believe everything that I was told. We need the guidance of parents, teachers, and ministers when we are growing up. However, this tends to program us to think and believe what we have been taught and not to think for ourselves. Many people who consider themselves to be open minded, are only open minded within their belief system. If you remember that everyone filters information through their belief system, you can comprehend how some people can maintain seemingly improbable ideas. An example would be that 40% of the American people believe the earth is 10,000 years old or less. If you don't believe me, look it up.

If we choose, as we mature, we begin to think for ourselves. We can all be heroes, every day, if we choose to. Thank you for allowing me to share my truth with you.

Peace, Light, Love.

Church in the Wildwood not opening Memorial Day weekend

Church in the Wildwood, Horsecove Road, will not open on Memorial Weekend due to Covid-19 guidelines. Check local papers and WHLC for further updates. Call 828-506-0125 and leave message if questions."

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• FIRE REPORTS •

The Highlands Fire & Rescue west. log from May 7.

May 14

• At 9:43 p.m., the dept. was first responders to a residence on Cullasaja Drive.

May 15

• At 1:47 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64

May 18

• At 3:07 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Forest Trail

• At 4:04 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on US 64 east.

• At 9:38 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Rolling Acres Drive.



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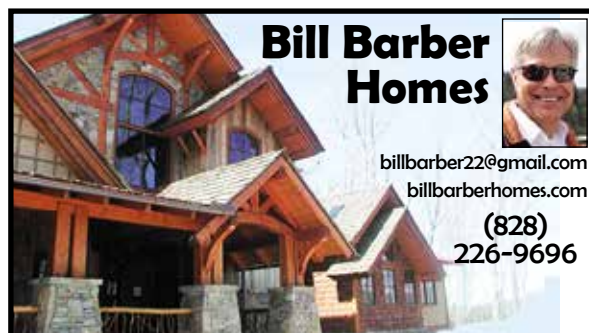
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... SISTERS continued from page 10

and more mountain women deserve to be celebrated but in their own right.

Devoid of mountaineers, Raleigh's initial list included Charlotte Hawkins Brown, an African-American who left the state to be educated in Boston and, upon her return, founded the Palmer Memorial Institute in 1902, perhaps North Carolina's premier black preparatory school for decades; Susie Sharp, the first woman appointed to the state supreme court in 1962; Eva Clayton from Charlotte who became the first African-American woman elected to Congress in 1992; Susan Dimock from Beaufort, the state's first female physician in 1871, educated in Zurich and who never returned to North Carolina; and Gertrude Weil, the mother of the suffrage movement in North Carolina. None came from the western mountains.

Contrast Raleigh's list of celebrated women who Changed the World with the lives of Swimmer, Morgan, and Gentry and you instantly see why mountain women are "forgotten" sisters in North Carolina history. Unlike their downstate sisters, Raleigh seems to believe mountain women had little desire to be political, serve on courts and in power positions, run for state and national office, get any except a "normal" education, and, yes, leave the state to better themselves. Really? When mountain women gathered in groups to inquire about quilting, cooking, families, and the Bible, be assured they also talked about suffrage, politics, education, economics, and, as one 92-year-old remarked, "trash." Sassy Scarlett O'Hara could have come from Highlands as easily as Atlanta.

As you read this, can you think of any mountain women who "broke barriers" and "changed the world" like those from the piedmont and coast? Those who didn't work in typically feminine and perennially underrated occupations like education and health care? Frankly, I'm convinced many of you can.

As a start, let me offer women such as Faye Ramsey from Marshall, the first female police officer in North Carolina, Viola Barrett who did as much for black education in the mountains as Charlotte Hawkins-Brown near Greensboro, Lillian "Brother Exum" Clement, in 1920 the first woman elected to the General Assembly in North Carolina and to any legislature in the South when only men could vote, and, of course, there's always that granola ghetto of pushy women in Asheville. Guess how many MEN have been elected mayor in Asheville in the last 20 years?

Mountain women formed their own unique concept of sisterhood hidden from all but themselves, one that allowed them to break barriers but differently and change the world for the better as they did. They should be celebrated in 2020 and always.

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

• CLASSIFIEDS •

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... LETTERS from 16

Brannan should be a columnist

Dear Editor,

You might consider asking Mr. Brannan if he could be persuaded to contribute a weekly column to the Highlander. His letter, aside from being articulate, was subtly humorous while still getting his point across. I thought it was the best written article in the entire paper.

Joanna Dickson

Franklin, NC

... GRADUATION continued from 17

to Option 1 or 2 above. An event on this date might also allow for parents to be seated in the stands depending upon Executive Orders and state and local health requirements regarding social distancing and mass gathering limitations in place in August.

Board member Stephaine McCall was adamant against the idea of a drive-thru ceremony. "It is my job to speak for the students and from what I am hearing, they don't want a drive-thru ceremony," he said.

McCall, who told the board that de-

spite social distancing orders from the Governor, she has allowed her daughter to visit with friends, "I had six over for dinner," she said. "Her mental health was more important."

McCall said that students should be allowed to have a traditional graduation ceremony – with precautions in place.

Board attorney John Henning cautioned against the legalities of hosting a ceremony that didn't abide by the Governor's orders and said that while it is ul-

timately up to the board, consideration needed to be made from both the legal side as well as a health safety.

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