

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Dec. 16, 2021



Monday night about 40 people turned out to listen to members of the Planning Board work through proposed changes to the Unified Development Code regarding short-term rentals which was presented at the Nov. 17 joint meeting between the Town Board and the Planning Board.

— Photo by Kim Lewicki

Planning Board says 'yes' to STRs in some form in all zones

If the Town Board accepts the Planning Board's recommendations regarding Short-Term Rental regulations in Highlands, every zone R1-B4 will be allowed

to have some version of STRs from now on.

During the 2 ½ hour meeting, the seven-member board painstakingly poured over the proposed

amended regulations for the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) that lawyers Craig Justice, Jay Coward and Commissioners

•See STRs page 16

MC is identified as Tier 2 County by Department of Commerce

By Brittney Lofthouse

North Carolina has utilized a three-level system for designating county development tiers since 2007. The designations, which are mandated by state law, determine a variety of state-funding

opportunities to assist in economic development. After a year of financial uncertainty surrounding the COVID19 pandemic, Macon County is now categorized as a Tier 2 — moving from a Tier 3 designation

“The state's calculation regarding every county's economic development ranking may seem like a small label placed on the county, but in reality, the annual ranking determines a significant

•See TIER page 8

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Covid vaccinations and testing to continue

By Tom Neal

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital

With the new Omicron strain and the anticipation of a post-holiday surge, we feel there will continue to be a need for Covid-19 testing and vaccination services into the new year. Therefore, Optum will continue to provide Covid-19 testing and vaccination services on the Plateau through the end of January.

Covid-19 testing and vaccination schedule:

- Covid-19 Testing at Village Green in Cashiers every Tuesday from 9a-5p.

- Covid-19 Testing at Highlands Community Building every Wednesday from 9a-5p.

- Covid-19 Vaccination at Highlands Rec Center every Thursday from 9a-5p. They will limit vaccines offered to adult and pediatric Pfizer.

Thanks to Optum, Cashiers Village Green, and the Town of Highlands for supporting these services.

We will reevaluate the need to continue the services next month.

Candidate is filing halted

Primary moved to May; new filing period not set

By Brittney Lofthouse

The saga surrounding North Carolina's 2022 election continued last week when the North Carolina Supreme Court issued an order suspending all candidate filings

in the state and pushing the 2022 March Primary election to Tuesday, May 17 — it had been March 8.

Just after 6 p.m. last Wednesday, The North Carolina Supreme

•See FILING page 8

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Swearing in ceremony is tonight

Tonight is the December meeting of the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners. The meeting is at the Highlands Community Center next to the ball field. It begins at 7 pm with public comment.

The meeting will have two parts. First, the current board will complete old business. There will be two public hearings, one for the annexation of the Ellis property that is adjacent to the Ravenel Subdivision. The second hearing will be for the zoning of that property to R1.

Also under old business will be an update from Kaye McHan, the director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce, concerning the impending snow festival in Founders Park. The festival will be held Saturday, January 29. Equipment will be brought in prior to Saturday to make snow. Kaye will present the schedule for the snow making process.

The first item under new business will be the swearing in of the mayor and two board members, Amy Patterson and Eric



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Pierson.

I will be starting my third term as mayor. I am honored to serve Highlands for another four years. The town is facing many challenges and opportunities. In coming weeks, I will review what I believe are future decisions for Highlands that will have to be addressed. Certainly, the town has several immediate issues for the board to review. The short-term rental issue is a current, major issue followed by

the adoption of the Highlands Comprehensive Community Plan. Both issues impact how Highlands will progress and develop as a community in the coming years.

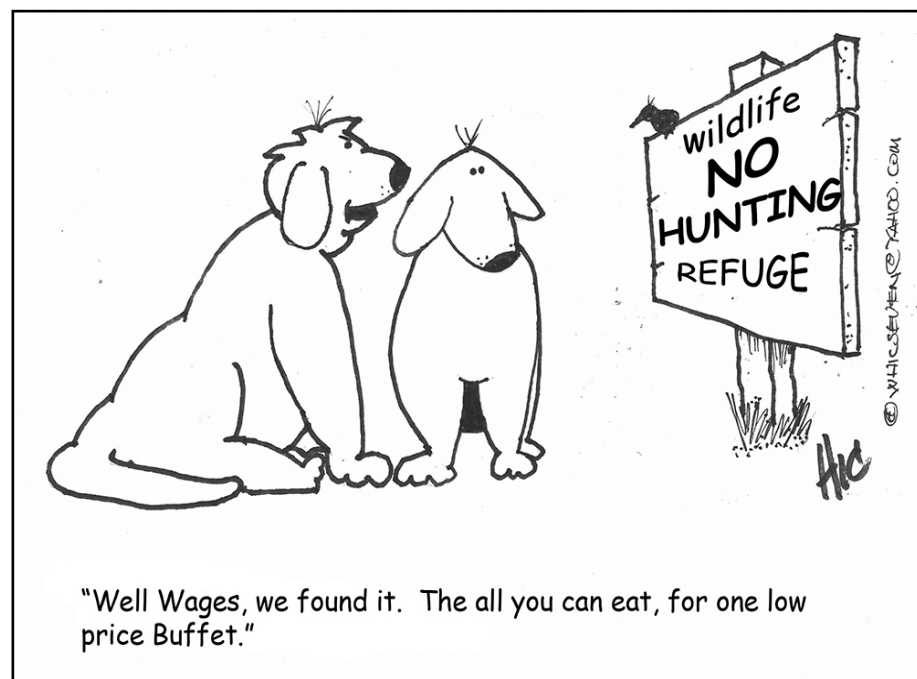
Another new item will be the presentation of the completed town audit by Martin and Starnes Associates. This current audit has also been sent to the North Carolina Local Government Commission where their accountants have reviewed the audit that the public accountants conducted.

Another pressing item will be a budget amendment to replace a critical sewer pump station on Arnold Road. For several months our town crews have been managing this situation. The town has rented portable pumping station in order to bypass the failing station. Our workers have been trying for months to acquire parts to get the station back online. The supply chain backlog has impacted our ability to acquire critical parts.

In the meantime, our town engineer determined that the best long-term solution would be to replace the entire pump station which is about 22 years old. It is analogous to repairing an aging car, the pump station will fail again down the road if we simply replace some needed parts. Our public works director wants to appropriate the funds now, rather than wait until a new budget year in July. He indicates that even with ordering the new pump station immediately, it could take months for the order to be fulfilled. The town is currently dealing with supply chain issues in several major departments.





Another item under consideration is to purchase a portable pump station in case another fixed station fails. The town should always plan for worse case situations.

• HIC'S VIEW •



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• WEATHER •

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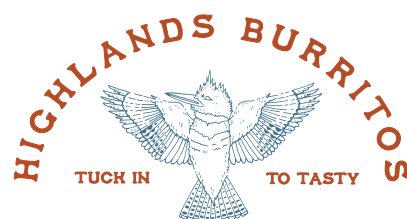
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• LETTER •

'On the Sunny Side' column warms the heart

Dear Editor,

I am so blessed by Kenny Youmans story of the Warner sisters in last week's "On the Sunny Side" column.

It was so touching. Isn't it a shame we don't hear more good news like that in his columns?

It was excellent and beautifully written.

**Glenda Bell
Highlands**

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Your Home's Christmas Wish List

Remember the big Sear's catalog Wish Book? I felt it was my duty, and using great restraint, marked one thing on each page to complete my wish list. The toys and gadgets were always shown first, then the next year's clothing trends, and lastly, the useful and necessary home items. I rarely made it past the toy and gadget sec-

tion. Have you ever considered your home may have a wish list, too? Well, maybe it's you who's wishing, but the home may benefit in the process.

According to the Realtor online magazine, there are thirteen home trends that homeowners (and potential home buyers) will have their eyes on in 2022. Check out

the list to see which one(s) you think would complete the wish list for your home.

1. Good, reliable internet service. More and more people are choosing to work from home at least part of the time, and to do so, they want to have the fastest internet. It is one of the things buyers look for when searching for a home, and if they're from a large city, what we think of as 'good internet' is a stretch for them. We have high hopes with the new Hotwire, but that service won't be available to everyone. The new kid on the block, Starlink may be another option, especially for areas that previously had not internet. You can go to Starlink.com to check it out, but be warned, according to the site, 28741 is at its capacity right now, and it may be 2023 before service is available. Starlink is an Elon Musk/SpaceX venture.

2. Quality fixtures and building materials. Homeowners have spent millions over the last fifty years to replace the 50s-60s look in their homes. Now, buyers are heading back to the mid-century look in a big way with one big caveat-they want quality. No cheap composite anything, they want the real deal. After a couple of years with supply chain disruptions, some are willing to wait on the right contractor who guarantees top quality.

3. Home theaters, yoga studios and up-scale bar/lounge areas are making a comeback. Again, remember the mid-century formal living rooms which no one used? Those were a carryover from the parlor rooms used for a century before. Well, now those spaces are being used for lounge areas with bars, but no TVs. (Who needs TV when everyone has one in their pocket?)

4. Purple is the new black. You don't know how happy this makes me. I love purple. The deep jewel tone will find its way into homes as well as deep earthy hues of browns, peach and khaki green.

5. Move to the great outdoors. Our area is a perfect match for this! Fire pits remain high on the list as are screened porches, outdoor kitchens, and decks-you-could-live-on. Nostalgia looms heavy when millennials look for things they remember from their grandparent's lifestyle, like porch swings. Another trend is more natural landscaping. Learn to live in your surroundings instead of changing it.



Jeannie Chambers
Chambers Realty &
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6. Mid-century modern marries contemporary chic. It's OK to have contemporary as long as it is warm and inviting.

7. A bedroom on the main floor is mostly for baby boomers. The new trend is to have all (or most) of the bedrooms on the same level, but not necessarily on the main level.

8. Open-plan living is still key, but not as open as it has been. While mid-century homes had everything separate, rooms will start to show some separation, even

if with half-walls, islands, pocket doors. Even though barn doors aren't listed in the new trend, they are a great way to partition off areas.

9. Maximalism vs. minimalism. While less-is-more is still the way to go as far as furnishings and excess "stuff," the maxi comes in with finish details. Arched doorways, mixed medium artwork, designs with curves, mixed mediums, like stone, fabric, wood and glass. We don't live a monochrome life.

10. The fifth wall – your ceiling. Smooth ceilings are the key. You can use light fixtures to accent the space, or paint, but no more popcorn ceilings. I think they're against the law now, anyway (not really, but...)

11. Smaller homes (but not tiny homes). More people are opting for 2,000 square feet or less. The article stated the reason may be people are waiting later to get married, and are having less children, and boomers are downsizing.

12. Electric homes are making a comeback, but with the latest resources to allow for a lower carbon footprint using the lowest amount of fossil fuels as possible.

13. Multifamily breakout rooms. You can probably thank the pandemic for this one. This doesn't have to be a large room, but enough space for work-from-homers to have a space within their space to gather with others.

If you're still reading, remember this: Your home is YOUR castle, and you don't have to follow trends of any kind. Looking at a wish book, at all the shiny new things, is enticing, but it's you and your family who make your home special. Happy holidays to each of you, and I hope all your wishes come true.



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ALL ABOUT BOOKS

• INK PENN •

Unpacking the Decorations: A scene from a Christmas Cozy

In “Whiskers, Wreaths & Murder,” Book III in my Dickens & Christie cozy mystery series, my main character is preparing for her second Christmas since her husband died tragically. Unpacking the decorations is bittersweet, but her four-legged companions help to lighten the mood. Enjoy!

• • •

I’d been hesitating to pull out my boxes and boxes

of Christmas decorations, worried I’d have a meltdown, but since I’d made it through tree shopping without tears, I decided to chance it. After all, I thought, even if I have a good cry, tonight’s party will cheer me up.

By the time I carried all the boxes from the garage to the sitting room, I was thinking I should have asked Peter or Gavin for help. What on earth was I thinking when I shipped all this? At least the containers were clearly labeled. In the summer, when I’d moved into my fairytale cottage and begun sorting boxes, it was apparent I’d swung back and forth from haphazard to highly organized when I was packing in Atlanta. Thank goodness the Christmas decorations were in the organized category.

Dickens and Christie watched as I opened the box of teddy bears and other animals, many of which I’d acquired pre-Henry. There was my treasured Richie Bear from the now-defunct Rich’s department store in Atlanta. He was a white bear with a red sweater and red knit cap. Two brown Lord & Taylor bears from different years were wearing knit scarves and hats. The Lord & Taylor locations in Atlanta had long since closed, and I still couldn’t believe the flagship store on Fifth Avenue had closed after over one hundred years in business.

Christie wandered over to climb into the box. “What’s with all the bears? I thought we had cats too . . . Wait, here’s one.” She’d found a black and white cat with a Santa hat. She sniffed everything as I pulled out several more cats, a moose, and a mouse. Each one made me smile and Christie purr.



Kathy Manos Penn

Dickens was more interested in lounging in front of the fire and content to watch from afar. Next was the box holding the small red, white, and green quilted tree skirt my mother-in-law had handed down to Henry, perfect for the smaller tree. Tucked in with it were the larger green velvet tree skirt trimmed in rich burgundy and the delicate crocheted angel tree topper. I considered these items heir-

looms, as Henry’s mom had made them all.

“You know, Christie, I have a picture of you as a kitten, curled up with the packages beneath the tree—after you’d chewed ribbons and clawed wrapping paper. You played so hard, you conked out.”

“I’ve learned better now. I prefer to play with the paper after you’ve unwrapped the packages. I still think the ornaments are fair game, though.”

“Yes, dear. That’s why I never place fragile ornaments on the lower branches where you can reach them.” Thank goodness, she confined her antics to the bottom of the tree. I’d had a kitten named Moocher, another black cat, who’d climbed up the trunk of the Christmas tree one year. I was lucky I’d been there and been able to reach in and grab him without breaking a single ornament or worse, toppling the tree.

I was saving the several boxes of ornaments until last, so I turned to the box labeled China. I knew it wasn’t china, but I hadn’t known what else to call the plethora of candle holders, decorative plates, and Christmas knickknacks I’d collected. I had a handblown glass tree with tiny glass balls hanging on the branches, a wooden sleigh, and several snow globes.

Christie meowed, “I remember the big snow globe, the one on the gold base that played music. That thing scared me to death.”

That got Dickens’s attention. “It only scared you after you knocked it to the floor and it burst into pieces! We didn’t see you for hours after the crash.”

Christie turned her nose up before she replied, “Excuse me, I believe it jumped off

• See INK PENN page 19

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The Muff – Turkey, Sopressa salami, ham, cream cheese olive spread, smoked provolone cheese and shredded lettuce on sub roll. **\$13**

The Porker – Shaved ham, Jarlsberg cheese, DJs pickles with homemade honey mustard on ciabatta. **\$12**

The Hudson – Turkey, Provolone cheese (Have it your way--cucumber, lettuce, onion, banana peppers, black olives, DJs pickles). **\$13**

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...FILING continued from page 1

Court made the announcement suspending candidate filing for all offices for the 2022 primary election including filing for rescheduled municipal contests, and any separate filing period in January for those contests. As of Wednesday evening, more than 1,400 candidates had filed statewide.

Filing had been underway since noon on Monday and was scheduled to continue until Dec. 17, but many candidates for Congress and the General Assembly had delayed filing to see how the courts might rule on the recent redistricting due to gerrymandering.

"Today's order by the state Supreme Court restores faith in the rule of law and it is necessary for the Court to rule on the constitutionality of these unfair districts before the next election," NC Governor Cooper said last week.

For any candidate whose filing has been accepted by the State Board of Elections or any county board of elections, that candidate "will be deemed to have filed for the same office" in the May primary, subject to any court rulings that would impact that candidate's eligibility, accord-

ing to the Supreme Court order.

Those candidates would be able to withdraw their candidacy during the new filing period. Any individual who withdraws their candidacy is free to file for any other office for which they are eligible during the reopened filing period.

Dates for a new filing period have not been set.

The Supreme Court's ruling stems from three lawsuits that have been filed against the redistricting plan approved last month by the General Assembly that would be in place through the 2030 election cycle.

Democrats and critics say the Republican-drawn maps are illegally gerrymandered to maintain dominance by the GOP in Congress and the General Assembly for a state that historically has been split evenly between Republicans and Democrats.

The 2020 census provided a 14th congressional seat that had to be included, and the dominoes that knocked over among candidates were felt profoundly in Guilford and surrounding counties.

...TIER continued from page 1

amount of funding opportunities available for counties," said Macon County Manager Derek Roland. "While being classified as a Tier 2 county means we are more economically distressed than other counties, it also means that substantially more funding opportunities will be available to us moving forward."

The North Carolina Department of Commerce annually ranks the state's 100 counties based on

economic well-being and assigns each a Tier designation. The Tier system is incorporated into various state programs to encourage economic activity in the less prosperous areas.

Designations determine eligibility and guidelines for several different grant programs including the One North Carolina Fund, building reuse, water and sewer infrastructure, and the downtown revitalization program.

• See TIER page 9

...TIER continued from page 8

talization Main Street program. Tier designations also play a role in the state's performance-based Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) program, to channel funds for infrastructure improvements into more economically distressed areas.

The Development Tier Designation statute (§143B-437.08) provides specific guidelines for calculating annual tier rankings. This process assigns each county to a designation of Tier One (most distressed), Tier Two, or Tier Three (least distressed). Assuming no ties in rankings, the statute requires 40 Tier One, 40 Tier Two, and 20 Tier Three counties each year. If there is a tie for the final position as a Tier One or Tier Two county, both will be placed in the lower tier.

Tier Rankings use 4 Factors

- Average unemployment rate for the most recent 12 months for which data are available (October 2020 – Sept.2021, NC Dept. of Commerce, LAUS)
- Median household income for the most recent 12 months for which data are available (2019, U.S. Census, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates)
- Percentage growth in population for the most recent 36 months for which data are available (July 2017 – July 2020, NC Office of State Budget & Mgt.)
- Adjusted property tax base per capita for the most recent taxable year (FY 2021-'22, NC Dept. of Public Instruction)

Each county is ranked from 1 to 100 on each variable, making the highest possible County Rank Sum 400, and the lowest 4. After calculating the County Rank Sum, counties are then ranked from most distressed (1) to least distressed (100) in order to determine their Economic Distress Rank. Note that the 2018 Appropriations Act (S.L. 2018-5, Section 15.2.(a)) eliminated several "adjustment factors" that will no longer be used to calculate the final tier ranks, adjustments that previously factored small population sizes and poverty rates into

the calculations.

In addition, §143B-437.07.(d) calls for the Dept. of Commerce to publish the state performance statistic for each of the four factors, alongside the county values. Any county underperforming the state average on any of the four factors may request assistance from the Department to improve its performance.

Macon County was among a handful of counties across the state to see a shift in economic development rankings. Eleven counties will change tiers in 2022. Counties moving to a less distressed tier include Alexander, Brunswick, Buncombe, New Hanover, Randolph, and Rowan. Those moving to a more distressed tier include Chowan, Jones, Macon, Polk, and Watauga.

For 2022, the county's economic distress rank is #80 (it was #84 in 2021). This shift was largely driven by a change in the county's median household income rank, which moved from #49 last year to #35 this year.









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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



Pictured above is the Pre-School Class of the GCC at HUMC

Merry Christmas from the Gordon Center for Children

The Gordon Center for Children, Inc. would like to thank its major benefactors for the 2020 and 2021 academic years: the A.L. Williams Family Foundation, Bel Canto Recital, the Bryson family, Cullasaja Women's Outreach, the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, HANDS, Highlands Community Fund, Highlands Motoring Festival, the John Mitchener and Heath Massey Fund, Ann White Morton, Mountain Findings and Region A Partnership.

The grants and donations provided through these benefactors enable the Gordon Center for Children to provide academic scholarships, support extension activities such as music, art and exercise classes, replace playground equipment and furniture, pur-

chase books and curriculum supplies, support a free after school program for elementary students, and provide additional support to ensure a healthy and safe environment.

The Gordon Center for Children, Inc. is a non-profit organization that is an outreach ministry of the Episcopal Church of the Incarnation and Highlands United Methodist Church and it oversees operation of a half-day preschool program, a full-day child care center, and a free after-school program through the hospitality of HUMC.

The GCC would also like to thank other organizations in the Highlands community who have provided support throughout the years: the staff at HUMC for Chapel and music classes, the Hud-

son Library for story time, the Highlands Biological Station for nature lessons, the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust for hiking and environmental activities, the Highlands Rec Park for recreational activities, and the Bascom Art Center for art classes.

Highlands is a special place that is filled with generous and gifted organizations that help the young children in our community to flourish.

Thank you for your support in the different ways that have been displayed. For more information about the Gordon Center for Children please contact Allison Tate or Christine Murphy at 828-526-5084.

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

Rotary gives annual checks to Highlands School staff



Pictured from left front row: Teacher Assistant, Francie Jetter; Rotarian, Ricky Siegel; Athletic Director/Coach-Brett Lamb; PTO President, Ester Gooch; Kindergarten Teacher Bonnylin Covey; Rotarian, Zach Claxton. Back row from left: Assistant Principal, Sarah Holbrooks; PTO Middle School Representative, Faye Wurm.

The Rotary Club of Highlands honored the teachers at the Highlands School recently with a check for \$100 to 47 teachers.

The presentation of the checks came during Teachers Appreciation Lunch hosted by the Representatives of the School

PTO.

Throughout the school year, teachers go into their own pockets for supplies for their classrooms and their students.

This is Rotary's way of saying thank you to them for all they do for the children of the school!

HHS's Oakley passes the torch



Pictured are Obie Oakley who is the outgoing president of Highlands Historic Society after serving six years, Harry McDonald, incoming president and Lance Hardin who became the archivist this year filling the shoes of Ran Shaffner. The exhibits in the museum were totally revamped this year and the Highlands Historical Society should be on your "must see" list next year.

- Photo by Tracy Foor

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Highlands School Winter Sports Teams



Varsity Boys Basketball

Back row:
Sam Stiwinter
Kasen Mitchell
James Earp
Harrison Gates
Lawson Shuler
Brandon Moss
Cooper Hall
JD Head

Front row:
Nathan Keener
Win Dyleski
Mason Taylor
Jeffery Olvera
Davis Ingate
Kaden Mitchell
Andrew Reyes Cuevas



MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL – Back row: Coach Lester Norris, Charlie Sherwood, Aniah Mckim, Walt Mckinnon, Carter Smathers, Timmy Mcdowell, Paolo Mcrae. Front row: Jesus Mendoza Tentle, Aiden Crook, Stephen Pierson, Tucker Wilson, Bryan Jarquin Colmenares, Isaiah Vilardo and Coach Todd Sherwood.

Highlands School Winter Sports Teams

Varsity Girls Basketball

Back row

Manager: Madison Webb

Abbie Doerter

Ezra Branham

Riley Conner

Lillykate Bryson

Ava Schmitt

Bella Wilson

Julia Schmitt

Front row

Beatrice Bryson

Mackenzie Woods

Hayley Borino

Reese Schmitt

Aislynn Wyatt Luck

Bella Branham

Hendy Rios Ruiz



MIDDLE SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS – Back row: Julieta Rios, Soraya Lopez, Marget Cole, Layla Baybac, Nicole Taylor. Front row: Lillian Rutter, Falon Brewer, Katie Fox, Arabel Auliso and Cassie McDowell

VARSITY CHEERLEADERS – Back row: Getsi Hernandez Rojas, Shirley Diaz Ovando, Katie Earp, Taylor Rickert, Brooke Fogarty, Savannah Bozeman, Annamaria Silverthorn, Anna Nichols. Front row: Madi Smith, Ashlynn Wilson, Karmen Jenkins, Brandy Zagal, Darby Templeton, Kaki Dyleski, Madalynne Coen, Rea Miller and Anna Fox.

Highlands School beats Blue Ridge Early College at Blue Ridge

Highlands varsity boys basketball team travelled to Cashiers on Tuesday and defeated Blue Ridge Early College 63-35. The Highlanders established a substantial lead from the beginning and the Bobcats never caught up.

Highlands girls varsity basketball team hit the road and beat Blue Ridge Early College 64-25 on Tuesday.

Left: Highlands James Earp snags his own rebound and then puts up another shot for 2.

Below: Highlands Reese Schmitt drives along the baseline to put 2 points on the board.

– Photos by Brian O'Shea Plateau Daily News



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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

ICE RINK IS NOW OPEN

• Thursdays 1-8pm, Fridays and Saturdays 1-10pm and Sundays 1-5pm. Cost is \$5 per skater.

Rec Pool Schedule:

• Adult Swim: M-F 6:30a-1:30p AND Tues & Wed 3:30-7p. Call ahead for Public Swim Weekend schedule due to staff shortages. 828-526-1595.

American Legion

• No meeting in December. Next meeting Monday, January 3, 2022, 9 AM Highlands United Methodist Church. All veterans invited.

Mondays

• ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 5:30-6:30pm. No registration required – just show up and participate. Questions? Visit www.maconncliteracy.org, call 828-526 – 0863 or email info@maconncliteracy.org

Second Mondays

• The local chapter of PEO, an off-campus sorority founded in the 1800s that provides grants and loans to women who want to return to school or further their education and have a financial need, meets at 10 a.m. If interested, please call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004 for meeting places.

Mon.-Fri.

• Water Aerobics 18 years plus 10:15-11 a.m.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

• The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a to 6p.

Mon. & Wed.

• Cardio Kickboxing with Crystal Corbin 5:30-6:30 p.m. A full body workout that engages every muscle in the body.

Mon. & Thurs.

• Drive-thru flu clinics at the Public Health Center at 1830 Lakeside Dr. in Franklin from 1-4 p.m. \$36 for the regular dose and the \$73 for the high dose (recommended for those 65+). Insurance will be filed; please bring your insurance card with you. Questions? Call 828.349.2081.

Mon., Wed., Thurs.

• Indoor and outdoor Pickle Ball 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class 8:30am-9:30 a.m. \$25 a month. The class is led by Cathy Hodgson. Contact the

Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9 a.m.
• Highlands/Cashiers Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. Open meetings are held in Highlands at the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Mon. at 5:30 p.m. and on Wed. & Fri. at noon. And held six times a week in Cashiers at Church of the Good Shepherd, Rte 107. For exact meeting times visit our website www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of A.A. call (828) 349-4357.

Tues. & Thurs.

• New Zumba class from 4:30-5:15p.
• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30pm. A combination class with many different type of exercise.

Tuesdays

• Strength Training 8:15-9:15. Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone.

2nd Tues. thru December

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health, held the second Tuesday of each month through December. Reservations are required and masks will be required. Register online at vayahealth.com/calendar (click on the desired class to register) or call the library at 828-526-3031.

First Wednesdays

• Highlands-Cashiers Hospital is featuring Walk-in Wednesdays Hiring Event. Interviewing for RNs, CNAs, Allied Health Professionals and Support Services Professionals. 1-3:30 p.m. 190 Hospital Drive, front entrance. On the spot offers. Sign-on bonuses offered for select positions. Bring updated resume. Casual wear.

Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15 a.m. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout.

• Free Covid vaccination clinics – 9 a.m. to 5p.m. at the Rec Park. (Closed for a half-hour lunch break) Closed on Thanksgiving Day. Location subject to change, please check <https://myspot.nc.gov/> for the latest location information. Walk-ins are accepted, however we encourage residents to pre-register and schedule an appointment at <https://myoptumserve.com/covid19>, or by calling (877) 505-6723 if

you do not have internet.

• AL-ANON Meetings. The AL-ANON Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope to solve their common problems. An In-Person meeting is held each Thurs., noon at the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., Highlands. An AL-ANON Zoom Meeting is held each Saturday @ 10:15am ID:889-3772-7928 Password: EasyDoesit or to speak with a member call 828-342-6866.

Thru Dec. 24

• Santa in the Park

Thru Dec. 19

• Holiday Spectacular at the Highlands Playhouse. Ticket prices for adults are \$25 in advance or \$35 when purchased day of the performance, and \$10 for children (under 18 years of age). The Playhouse will be working with area schools and outreach programs to ensure any local student can come to this family friendly event.

Thru Dec. 17

• Donations for REACH of Macon County can be dropped off at the Highlands Police Station and the Highland Fire & Rescue Dept. Needed are: paper products, full-size toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, razors, etc.), laundry and dish washing pods, dryer sheets, Lysol wipes, feminine hygiene products, diapers and wipes, hairbrushes, toothbrushes, combs, sealed dry dog/cat food and sealed cat litter.

Thurs. Dec. 16

• At OEI's The Farm, Mike Kinnebrew. Fireside Holiday Evening. Get tickets online at OldEdwardsHospitality.com/Fireside.

Sat. Dec. 18

• Ceremony and Wreath Laying. Highlands Community Building at noon. Then shuttles will take volunteers to the cemetery to lay veteran wreaths. For more information, call Phil Potts at 828-200-9753.

Sat. Jan. 1

• Met at the PAC Laurent Pelly's storybook staging of Massenet's Cendrillon is presented with an all-new English translation in an abridged 90-minute adaptation, with mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard as its rags-to-riches princess. Maestro Emmanuel Villaume leads a delightful cast, which includes mezzo-soprano Emily D'Angelo as Cinderella's

Prince Charming, soprano Jessica Pratt as her Fairy Godmother, and mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe and bass-baritone Laurent Naouri as her feuding guardians. Emmanuel Villaume (Conductor); Jessica Pratt (Fairy Godmother), Isabel Leonard (Cinderella), Emily D'Angelo (Prince Charming), Stephanie Blythe (Madame de la Haltière), Laurent Naouri (Pandolfe)



The Ho-Ho History of the Christmas

(StatePoint) While you may love your holiday traditions, you may not have given much thought to the origins of these customs. When it comes to sending Christmas cards, this long-standing tradition has a fascinating history.

Did you know that these seasonal greetings date back to the 1840s? The annual custom was started by trendsetter Queen Victoria herself, whose published engraving featuring the winter wonderland at Windsor inspired her subjects to follow suit. Stateside, Annie Oakley was another Christmas card pioneer, sending the first known personalized Christmas card in 1891.

While the 20th century saw the rise of the folded card sent by mail, today, digital greetings are yet another way to show friends and family you care, thanks to a wide variety of options available. For example, SmashUps personalized video greetings allow users to send customized holiday wishes featuring favorite celebrities, including Santa himself. To learn more, visit smashups.com or download the SmashUps app, available for iPhone and Android.

As you send and receive seasons' greetings this year, take time to appreciate the long and storied history of this fun and festive tradition.

Christmas Activities AT INCARNATION

Christmas Services

Friday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve

4 pm Holy Eucharist

6 pm Holy Eucharist

8 pm Holy Eucharist

Saturday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day

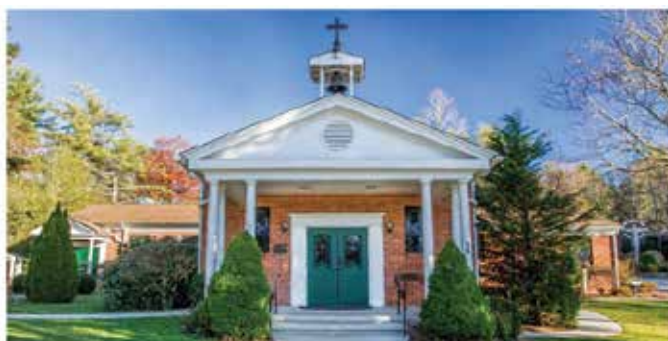
10:30 am Holy Eucharist

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...STRs continued from page 1

Amy Patterson and Brian Stiehler presented at the joint Town Board/Planning Board meeting on Nov. 17. In the end, the board suggested quite a few changes.

At the onset, Chairman Brad Armstrong said he didn't feel the Planning Board had the expertise necessary to discuss established land use laws about vested rights regarding STRs and so steered the board to the future instead.

"Let's talk about what we want to see happening going forward and see what we can and want to do," he said. "I am inadequate to navigate state statutes and case law. Let's talk about what is healthy for Highlands 5, 10, 20 years from now."

Nevertheless, members had thoughts about property owners' vested rights regarding STRs because that was the parting word of Attorney Justice at the Nov. 17 meeting.

That night, to the surprise of many, Justice said property owners in the R1 district who currently have STRs can continue as they have been regardless of amendments to the UDO and if they sell their property, that STR use follows the land not the owner.

Monday night Wendell Willard, who recently replaced Dennis DeWolf on the Planning Board, asked "What do we want to do as a community? Vesting or termination of vesting? If STRs are a continuing use in town, we need to set up boundaries where they are acceptable. We don't have boundaries now. People might buy a home and not know the zone they are in allows STRs and end up next to renters," he said.

Helene Siegel questioned many aspects of that notion, too.

"Do we want a town that is transient? Does vesting apply to all zones? What equals a vested right – one year of renting, two, five? Who determines who is vested?" she asked.

• See STRs page 17

Join us in celebrating the birth of our Savior at the Highlands United Methodist Church

Family-friendly Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

in the Sanctuary

5pm

*Includes a 45-minute pageant
recorded by our after-school children*
Cokesbury Christmas Carols

7pm

30-40 minutes in Faith & Fellowship Center

Christmas Eve Prayers

in the Sanctuary

9-10pm

Midnight Eucharist

in the Sanctuary

11:45pm

Approximately 15 minutes

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...STRs continued from page 16

Chris Wilkes said he believed everything should be left as it is – meaning amendments to the UDO regarding STRs aren't necessary.

“This ‘vested box’ is a nightmare. As it is now issues are complaint-driven regarding noise, parking, trash, septic. There are already laws in place. There have been rentals in Highlands forever. We should be talking about the responsibility of the owners. Rental contracts are clear as to allowances and so are our ordinances. It comes down to enforcement,” he said. “Owners, too, not just renters, need to be responsible. There needs to be someone responsible for the property 24/7. People who outwardly abuse the ordinances have to be accountable.”

Rick Trevathan agreed. “Enforcement is the issue,” he said.

Nick McCall said vested rights are the equivalent to a “golden goose” for property owners whose STR status is allowed to continue because their property value would be higher than that of their neighbors who chose not to rent their homes over the years.

Armstrong said the board's charge is to deal with land use issues, nothing more.

“The question of vesting and enforcement isn't the purview of the Planning Board. Those issues go to the Town Board and its legal representation. So, let's think long-term,” he said. If not currently a STR, what should be allowed in the future.”

Darren Whatley agreed saying the board needed to consider how STRs will impact the long-range plan for Highlands.

When asked what they were dealing with, Thomas Craig, who was in the audience, told the board there are about 450 STRs in the Highlands Township with about 200 estimated to be within the town limits across various zoning designations.

The first issue the board put to bed was the proposed amendment to “family” housing. The November document suggested changing the number of five unrelated people allowed in a home to three.

But Whatley said those scenarios are referring to employee housing, “That's a big problem here, so we have to be cognizant of that issue,” he said.

Siegel pointed out that the people in those houses aren't coming and going like one- or two-night wedding guests which is

what has instigated the outcry over STRs.

By consensus, the board agreed to leave that part of the UDO as is and to continue to allow five unrelated people to live in a house.

From the start, Willard wanted to do away with STRs in R1 and R2 and was the opposing vote throughout the night regarding most allowances but in the end the majority agreed to various stipulations in the zones – thereby leveling the “vested” playing field.

The state defines STRs as lodging less than 30 days. So, the Planning Board discussed Transient Lodging, Tourist Homes and Whole House Rentals as categories within each zone – R1, R2, R3, B1, B2, B3, and B4.

The length of days discussed were also categorized – less than seven days; more than seven days but less than 30; and stays over 30 days which are considered long-term. According to the board, renters over 30 days in whatever category are less of a problem or a nuisance because those renters stay put and tend to become part of the neighborhood.

In the R1 zone, they recommended no Transient renters (those less than seven days) but want to allow Tourist Homes for up to six months of the year. For Tourist Homes, the owner must be on the property and only up to two rooms can be rented either in the home or in a garage apartment which Town Manager Josh Ward said is considered part of the overall dwelling. Whole House rentals would also be allowed but for a minimum of two weeks at a time.

In the R2 zone, Transient renters would be allowed for less than seven days at time; Tourist Homes would be allowed with up to four rooms rented for up to six months of the year and Whole House STRs would only be allowed for a minimum of two weeks at a time.

Renting STRs in whatever form would be allowed in all the other zones – R3, B1, B2, B3, and B4 – Transient less than seven days, Tourist Homes up to four bedrooms and six months of the year and Whole House Rentals would be allowed for 7-29 days at a time.

In all cases in all zones, a zoning certificate would be required for STRs; two people per bedroom plus two would be allowed per house up to 12 people -- for instance, a six-bedroom house would only be allowed 12

people not 14; one on-site parking space per two people; a signed rental agreement, a sign displaying contact information for the 24/7 responsible person and there must be a fire safety inspection signoff.

Chairman Armstrong said the thorny issue of vested rights and all its implications into the future will have to be hammered out by the Town Board and its legal counsel.

At the next Planning Board meeting Jan. 10, 2022, the board will go over the verbiage crafted Monday night and once amended will send it to the Town Board for consideration.

– Kim Lewicki

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5pm Advent Vespers - Close to Home

A casual service in the Sanctuary

Ecumenical Longest Night Service:

Tuesday, December 21 at 5:30pm

For all those experiencing the acute pain of loss and grief in an otherwise joyful season of celebration. We will honor and name our grief, and we will be reminded that we worship the God of love, who comes to live among us even in our worst of times. All are welcome.

Christmas Eve:

4:30pm - Harp Prelude - John Wickey, Harpist

5pm - Family-Friendly Service with Candlelight

First Presbyterian Church of Highlands

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



**Be swift to love,
make haste to be kind!**

Rev. Dr. Curtis Fussell
Co-Pastor at
First Presbyterian
Church, Highlands

The Winter solstice will occur this coming Tuesday, December 21. That day has the shortest daylight hours in the year and the longest hours of darkness. The sun will rise late, move low in the sky, and set very early. The shadows will be long, and it will look and feel gloomy because of the lesser sunlight.

Just as nature has its shadow side, so too into everyone's life shadows and darkness will come. It's a part of living. We know all too well.

We know that our lives have limits. We grow old. Tears have filled our eyes. Heartache too has struck our spirits.

Yet, in spite of that reality, we can live with hope for better days, for a brighter future. We can be realistic people, but we can also be hopeful people.

Yes, life has its limits, but limitations can permit us to grow in wisdom and gratitude. Someone has noted, that after age 30, our bodies begin to age.

Okay! Still, a lot of things in life are better with age. Aged wood is better than green wood. The best cheeses are aged cheeses – more flavor!

Perhaps this saying is true: "You don't stop living because you stop growing, you stop growing because you stop living." Growing means gaining deeper wisdom and gratitude in living, even from all the ups and downs and griefs of life.

A study out of Duke University says that, contrary to the myth that older people are stuck in their ways, as people grow older, they gain the wisdom to see different perspectives and become far more capable of suggesting compromises in conflicts or difficult issues.

The study also says that because older people know their time is limited, they focus more on what brings emotional well-being and less on fomenting drama in life.

The Christian philosopher Henri-Frederic Amiel said, shortly before he died, "At this moment I feel well, so it seems strange to me that my death should be so near. Life has no sense of kinship with death. Yet, knowing that life has a kinship with death, we are compelled to open our lives to God and to others. Life is short and we don't have much time for gladdening the hearts of those who journey with us. So, be swift to love, make haste to be kind!"

Yes, it's true, life is short and has limitations. So, grow and learn from the shadows of life's limitation into a wiser and more grateful person, a kinder and more generous person.

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.
Wednesdays – Supper at 6 p.m.

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www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins
Sun.: 9:30am - Adult Sunday School; Worship Service 10:45am;
10:45am Children's Program, Youth-12:15 – 2:30pm Tues:
Women's Bible Study 10am-noon
Thurs: Men's Bible Study 7:30-8:30 a.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447
Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

Worship: Sun. 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion 2nd. Sunday EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-8152
5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org
Sunday Services in the Chapel:

Rite I, 8a; with choir, 9:30a; with choir, 11a.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org
Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands
Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am
Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Choir 5p; Prayer Mtg 6:15p

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors
828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org
Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.
Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m., Choir: 6p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)
Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am
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www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter 743-9814
Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville, NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson
Sunday: School 9:45a, Worship 11a & 7p, Bible Study 6p
Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed, Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road
The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily
sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

Sunday Evening Worship 5PM 1st and 2nd Sundays HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas, Pastor 526-3376
In-Person and live-streamed Worship Services
909 Bluegrass and 10:50 Traditional
www.highlandsmethodist.org

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

Rev. Angie Ballard • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741
Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.
We wear masks and social distance.

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

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

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11, Choir: 6 p.m.
Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

Franklin • 828-634-1312
Services 2x/month May-Sept.; 1x/month Oct. -April
mountainsynagoguewnc.com.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church
Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church,
4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)
Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

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Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone – 526-2418
Mass: Wed. noon (Latin), Thurs. noon, Fri. 9a; Sun., 11a
SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.
SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD
290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212
Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.
ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
Mass: Tues. noon (Latin), Thurs. 9a.; Fri., noon; Sat. 5:30p; Sun.
9a

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 S., Office: • 743-2359 • Rev. Rob Wood
June-Sept: Sunday Services: Rite I, 8a, Rite II, 9:15 & 11a
Nursery available for Rite II services

Sept 6-Oct 25- Informal Evening Eucharist-5:30 p.m.
Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

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85 Sierra Drive, Franklin • uufranklin.org
Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers
Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Nov. 8. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Dec. 2

• At 7:05 a.m., Officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on US 64 east at Pinecrest Road.

Dec. 7

• At 9:20 p.m., officers responded to a call of an assault on a female where she was hit, thrown to the floor and then hitting a man on the head at a residence on Sagee Woods Drive.

Dec. 8

• A little past midnight Jody Richard Stacy, 49, of Del Ray Beach, FL, was arrested for assault on a female and

simple assault at a residence on Sagee Woods Drive. He was issued a \$1,500 secured bond. His trial date is Dec. 21.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Dec. 7.

Dec. 7

• The dept. responded to a call of smoke at a location on Cherrywood Drive.

Dec. 8

• At 5:03 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Satulah Road.

Dec. 9

• At 7:04 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Horsecove Road.

• At 9:36 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to residence on Big View

Drive.

Dec. 10

• At 4:08 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cherokee Drive.

• At 8:53 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hide Away Trail.

Dec. 11

• A little past midnight, the dept. was first-responders to a residence on W. Church Street.

• At 5:45 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main

Street.

• At 12:12 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Chestnut Lane.

• At 6:55 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Helen's Barn Lane.

• At 9:55 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.

Dec. 13

• At 9:48 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Queen Mountain Road.

...INK PENN continued from page 7



the shelf. I had nothing to do with it.”

Jumped off the shelf? That’s a creative explanation. I looked around the sitting room and considered my collection. Garland, I need garland. I’d go out Sunday afternoon to get some, and then I could arrange candles and snowglobes in the greenery and hang the three Christmas stockings with the names Christie, Dickens, and Leta.

There, I thought. I’ve made it through without tears. I’ll tackle the orna-

ments another day. Maybe I’ll just open the boxes and set them by the tree and leave it to my friends to pull them out one by one . . .

May your holiday be filled with joyful memories and may you make new ones too!

• Award-winning author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her cozy mysteries in Franklin at Franklin Office Supply & Gifts and Books Unlimited, and on Amazon. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com, and follow her on Facebook, www.facebook.com/KathyManosPennAuthor/.

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FULL TIME LIFE GUARD - The Town of Highlands has a full time life guard position open. This position will work directly with the Pool Director making sure that the pool is running smoothly. They will also be responsible for supervising the part time life guards. They will need to be able to show leadership and ensure the safety of the patrons at the Highlands Recreation Pool by preventing and responding to emergencies. This job will start at \$15/hr. with full benefits, including health and dental insurance, along with retirement. Qualifications required are current certification in Life Guard Training, CPR and First Aid. They must also be able to demonstrate knowledge of rescue techniques, procedures, and equipment. Apply at www.highlandshsnc.org or stop by Town Hall to get an applications. Any questions please call Emilie Nickerson at 828-526-2118 or email at emilie.nickerson@highlandshsnc.org. Town of Highlands is an equal opportunity employer.

HIGHLANDER MOUNTAIN HOUSE DINING ROOM SUPERVISOR

- HMH is seeking a full time shift supervisor to coordinate reservations and oversee all aspects of service in the front of the house at TRG. This role will act as Maitre' D to the dining room, work service for lunch, dinner and brunch and be responsible for the proper ex-

ecution of each service period. This position will begin as an hourly position and has the potential to grow into a salaried position based upon performance. This candidate should be positive, reliable, hard working, have a love of people, service and have aspirations to lead and grow with the company. (st. 12/16)

THE HIGHLANDS RECREATION DEPARTMENT is looking for an Ice Skating Rink Attendant and life guards. The Ice Skating Rink Attendant is responsible for opening and closing the ice rink and providing good customer service. Life Guard training will be provided for anyone 15 or older. Flexible hours available, may include after school and weekends. Application packets will be available at the Highlands Rec Center, the Highlands Pool or online at <http://highlandshsnc.org>. The Town of Highlands is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Retirees welcomed! (9/16-10/7)

THE ROOSEVELT TAVERN - A new upscale casual establishment in Cashiers, NC. NOW HIRING ALL RESTAURANT POSITIONS. Including Chef, General Manager, Servers, Server Assistants & Line Cooks. Great pay, flexible hours, relaxed work environment for people who can work independently. Established company with great history and following in the area. 18 Chestnut Square, Cashiers. 828 482-8743. Route64restaurants@gmail.com. (st. 9/2)

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 22

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• CLASSIFIEDS •

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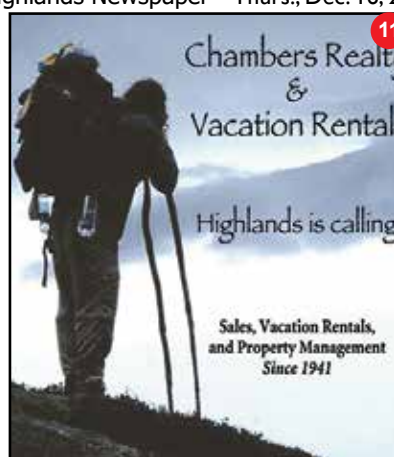
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