

Highlands Newspaper

Remember to give thanks ...
Happy Thanksgiving!

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 18, Number 47 Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com Thurs., Nov. 24, 2021

Current STRs in R1 could be allowed

At Monday night's combination Town Board/Planning Board meeting, the draft ordinance regarding housing in Highlands was presented by Attorney Craig Justice of the Van Winkle law firm.

Justice presented several "surprise" findings. Justice's area of expertise is land use and zoning, and he was hired by the town to help clarify and possibly amend its Unified De-

velopment Ordinance as it applies to housing definitions and allowances in Highlands' various zoning districts. He has represented the town in zoning cases in the past

•See STRs page 17

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Select Bank is now First Bancorp

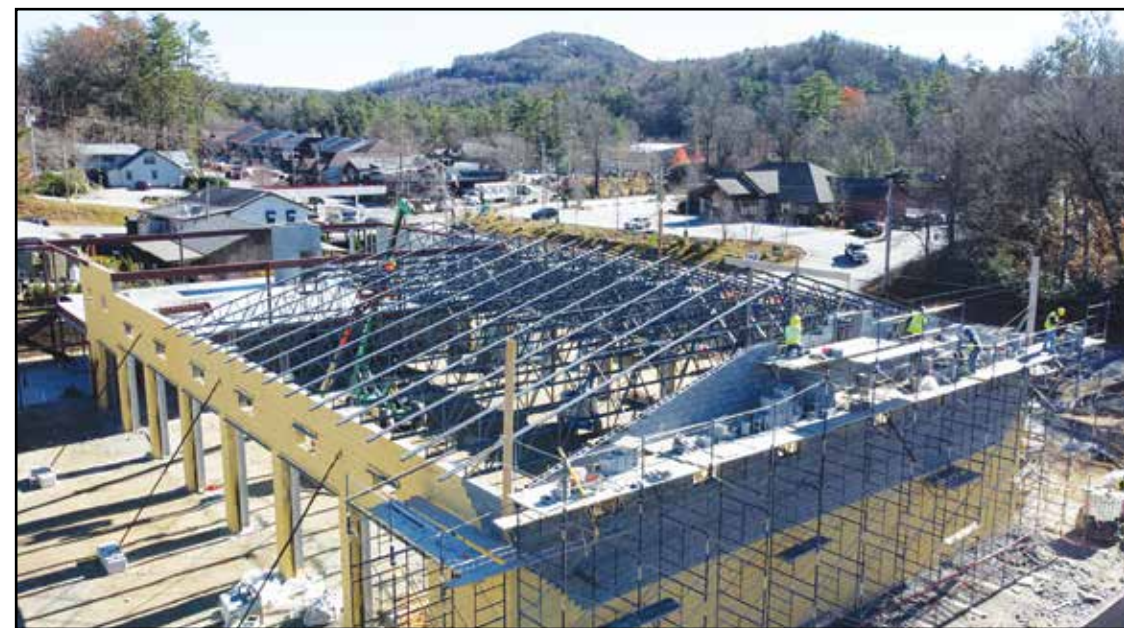
Submitted
What was once Macon County's largest hometown bank — and one of the first of its kind — has gone through yet another acquisition.

First Bancorp recently announced the completion of its acquisition of Select Bancorp, Inc. the parent company of Select Bank & Trust Company.

The merger solidifies First Bank's position as the leading community bank headquartered in North Carolina, with total assets of over \$10 billion and over 120 branches.

Select Bank & Trust purchased three branches of Entegra Bank in April 2020 — Entegra Bank, which was the original Macon Bank — sold to First Citizens Bank around the same time. Before First Citizens Bank could finalize the acquisition of Entegra

•See SELECT BANK page 8



After delays due to weather, the construction of the new fire department at Main and Oak streets is moving along at a fast clip. Last week the trusses went up. Town Manager Josh Ward said hopes are to get the structure dried in before inclement weather sets in.
— Photo by Brian O'Shea

Trusses raised into place at new HFR station

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Crews began installing trusses last week at the new Highlands Fire & Rescue Station located across the street from the post office.

Trusses are webbed structures used to support the weight of a building's roof. In the case of the new HFR station, 18 trusses are being lifted into place.

Each truss is approx. 80-feet long and 13-feet tall and is made up of three pieces. Each piece weighs approx. 500 pounds and are being raised into place by a lull

•See HFR STATION page 11

Hurricanes are on a winning streak

By Coach Steve Hott
On Saturday, Nov. 20, the Highlands Hurricanes Swim Team (HHST) defeated the Smoky Mountain Aquatics Club (SMAC) and the Jackson County Swim Team (JCST) at home.

The score was HHST 350; SMAC 257; JCST 53.

The Hurricanes were led by Junior Olympians Jasmine Abranyi and Aniah McKim who each scored 26 pts winning three events. Abranyi broke the team record in the 100-yard backstroke along the way.

Blake Kenter and Bella Batista scored 24 pts. They both won two events.

Elizabeth Burnette, and Jr. Olympians Corena Dearth and Chase Kenter also each won two events. Dearth scored 23 pts, Burnette 20.

•See HURRICANES page 8

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Happy Thanksgiving!

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Thankful for a bounty of blessings

I hope we will all step back from our busy schedules and commitments on Thanksgiving Day to reflect on all the blessings we have. I am thankful for so many things that have happened this year in Highlands.

I am thankful that we are making progress against COVID and hope the rates of infection will continue to decline. With my optimism I also have caution that our community, like so many others, could see an increase in COVID in the coming winter months. I know everyone will continue to practice caution, especially during this holiday season.

I am thankful that we had a tremendous community response in setting up and operating the vaccination clinics at the beginning of the year. Like so many folks, I was truly inspired by the many volunteers that worked countless hours to make sure our most vulnerable residents had access to the vaccines without delay. It was truly a community effort that confirms our faith in our



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

friends and fellow human beings.

I am also thankful that this small, village town has maintained and sense of community and public life. We have resumed many of our community celebrations like the 4th of July fireworks, the Main Street Halloween event, and now the forthcoming town lighting and the Christmas Parade. Our churches and nonprofit organizations are also returning to normal meetings and operations. All of these events

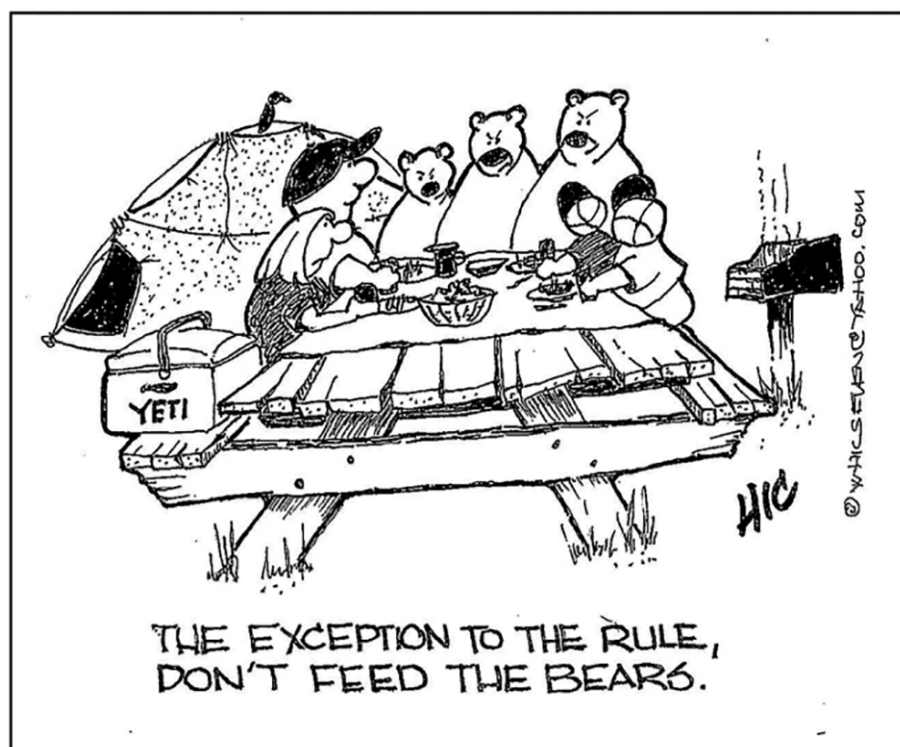
and organizations make this community a very attractive place to put down roots and to conduct business.

I am grateful we endured a major project of paving Main Street and our corridors with little disruption or delay. I am also grateful that Highlands has a strong economy and stable town budget. Town property taxes have not increased in eight years. I also see utility rates remaining stable in the coming year. I am thankful that the town completed the fiber project this year, and that Hotwire will begin their operations at the beginning of next year.

I am also thankful that we had a successful municipal election where vigorous discussion and debate was had about the state of the town and how to address future challenges. I am especially gratified that we had over a 50% voter turnout. The average turnout across the nation for municipal elections is 15%. Our voters did an outstanding job in either doing early voting or turning out on Election Day. I am honored and grateful that I was elected mayor for another four-year term to serve this community that Sallie and I love.

With so much to be thankful for, I am also optimistic about Highlands' future. We do face challenges, such as continuously maintaining and upgrading our utility system. The town will also need to adopt the Highlands Comprehensive Community Plan at the beginning of the year. The immediate challenge facing the town will be developing a comprehensive plan and policy addressing short-term rentals. While I anticipate some contentious moments, I am confident we can also work through this issue.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 25-Nov	Fri, 26-Nov	Sat, 27-Nov	Sun, 28-Nov
56°F 30°F	44°F 23°F	50°F 27°F	49°F 25°F
Sun and areas of high clouds	Mostly sunny and cooler	Milder with plenty of sun	Mostly sunny
RealFeel® High: 60° Low: 28°	RealFeel® High: 42° Low: 26°	RealFeel® High: 54° Low: 21°	RealFeel® High: 50° Low: 28°

For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Weather

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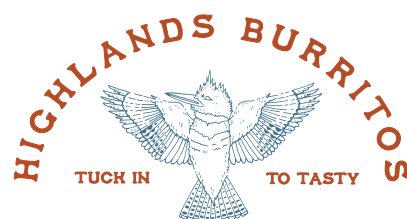
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Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving has to be one of everyone's favorites. No pressure to buy that special gift. Just get together with family and special friends and count our many, many blessings.

Thanksgiving was declared a national holiday by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 during the American Civil War. He proclaimed it to be a day of "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelled in the Heavens."

The first Thanksgiving was celebrated by the pilgrims after their first harvest in the New World in 1621. It was attended by 90 Native Americans and 53 Pilgrims. It was a day of prayer and thanking God.

"When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around." Willy Nelson

"Be thankful for what you have, you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never have enough."

"The greatest source of happiness is the ability to be grateful at all times." Zig Ziglar

First Thessalonians 5-18. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

"I like the taste of turkey

Anytime throughout the year

But it never seems to taste as good

As when Thanksgiving is here.

Could it be it's cooked with all the trimmings

That are cooked with it to eat-

But I think it's eating at Grandma's house

That makes it such a treat."

Wishing everyone a "Happy Thanksgiving." May all of you have many rich blessings, peace and prosperity throughout all the days of your lives.

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This Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is probably the biggest wrestling match of all the holidays.

It seems great on paper: eating comfort food, catching up with family, showing gratitude for the people in your life. But for many Americans, regardless of politics, race, gender or creed, the Thanksgiving table can

be an emotional minefield hiding underneath the linen tablecloth. In truth, the holidays are one of the few times when an assortment of people with different political, religious and personal beliefs gather in intimate settings. Leading up to our first Pandemic Thanksgiving in 2020, 40% of Americans on both

sides of the political aisle considered the other side “downright evil.” Alarming, 77% of Americans now believe that our country has become even more polarized since the pandemic! (Pew Research Center)

What scenarios cause the gloves to come off at Thanksgiving? Therapists who are busy after the holiday season cite the following reasons (including the simple issue of what time to eat dinner): divorce, new significant others, politics, past hurts, favoritisms, weight gain, money. Now add differences such as masking and vaccines. The good news is that the pandemic has also created a recognition of the importance of being together, and how precious and fleeting life can be. Hopefully, keeping these blessings in mind will inspire us to visit with love this holiday season.

Psychologists claim that we all yearn for love, connection and, above all, belonging. Social psychologists, Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary, argued in 1995 that above all, human beings have a powerful need to belong that largely stems from our evolutionary origins.

During the holidays, the yearning for belonging seems supercharged. A person once told me that we all compare the inside of our families to the outside of other families which appear loving and inclusive. Thus, everyone fantasizes for the family that is loving, happy, accepting and warm. You might hope that this year-after a year of separation-will bring resolutions of childhood wounds and unresolved issues. Be prepared that your hopes and expectations might be dashed. But don't let the pandemic tensions add to the normal family jabs and comments.

With so many families here on our precious Plateau celebrating Thanksgiving, here is some humble advice. Acknowledge that there are serious conflicts pulling on all Americans today, but vow to not let conten-



Jody Lovell
Highlands Sotheby's
International Realty

tious interactions with your loved ones ruin loving and enjoying each other after such a difficult period in everyone's lives. Both of my parents passed away two and one-half years ago. They died months before the pandemic and within six months of each other after a sixty-three year marriage. Despite our political differences and minor family disagreements, I wish that we could sit at the same table this year and emphasize our love for each other and blessings received instead of focusing on outside issues

over which we have little control.

Oh, is this a real estate investment article? Inventories remain historically low here on the Highlands/Cashiers Plateau and home prices continue to soar. The number of second homes purchased in the entire country in September was 53% higher than during the same time period in 2019 and 63% higher for investment properties, according to the American Enterprise Institute. Demand is still strong for this special spot on the planet.

Happy Thanksgiving from our entire team at Highlands Sotheby's International Realty. We appreciate each and every one of you!

• Jody and Wood Lovell own Highlands Sotheby's International Realty, the top-producing firm in Highlands for the last eight years and a top producing firm on the entire Highlands/Cashiers Multiple Listing Service for the last twenty-one years. Leaders in the sale of luxury real estate, Highlands Sotheby's sells more homes over one million dollars than any company on the Highland/Cashiers Multiple Listing Service. Jody is the Number One Broker in the entire State of North Carolina three out of the last five years. Let the Highlands Sotheby's team with twenty-eight brokers assist you with your real estate needs. Call them at 828.526.4104.



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Turn of the Century 480 Winfield Farm has 4.7 acres and borders USFS land. View, frog pond, perennials, fenced garden plot, fire-pit, porches. Main house has 3+BR/2.5BA with 1 car attached garage, Stone wood burning fireplace, wood floors and Large master suite on Main. Guest house has 1 BR/1BA with 2-car garage, a canning basement with keeping room. Renovated, updated, and neat as a pin. Offered at \$729,000. mls #97582



Great Family home has flat grassy spaces and lovely outdoor entertaining areas. View of Shortoff mountain from the historic outdoor fireplace. 3-4 Bedrooms, 3 baths, office, 2 car garage and a 2 car carport. A do not miss and in move in condition. Offered at \$1,174,000. mls #97458



This one has it all. A almost flat 3.55 acres with end of the road privacy. Enter the Home from a covered carport into a spacious den-living dining area, updated kitchen is located adjacent to the stone fireplace. Living and dining boast mountain views. Wing bedrooms floor plan with the master at the end of the hall and 2 guest bedrooms off the hall with baths. The cutest log guest-house that you have ever seen. Offered at \$1,995,000. mls #96998



Mirror Lake front cabin. Old house charm with new house living. Main house has 2 bedrooms 1 bath, a real stone fireplace, wood floors and usable kitchen. Guest house has 2 bedrooms 1 1/2 baths with an enclosed outside shower. Offered at \$1,600,000. mls #97457



Great house at Highlands Falls Country Club. Recently renovated and in move in condition, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 car garage, great decks that take advantage of the ridgeline views. Inside features an open plan with vaulted ceilings and a custom kitchen. Offered at \$649,000. mls #97104



In HFCC, this Craftsman style home has loads of stone and glass and a great screened porch with fireplace and open deck. Great room with 2 stone fireplaces. Custom kitchen, bar, powder room, and master suite with gas fireplace. Upper has 2BD/1BA. Lower level has laundry, huge storage room, family room, sitting room with fireplace. 2BE/2BA. A two car garage and a view of Whiteside Mountain. Offered at \$1,895,000. mls #95669



+/- 5.3 beautiful acres on Foreman Road with a subdivision plan for four lots, four 5-bedroom septic permits, and a completely remodeled cabin. The property is walkable to town with access from Foreman Road or Cullasaja Drive and features a creek with two waterfalls. The original, completely remodeled cabin has two large bedrooms, a bathroom with laundry, a full-length deck with ridgeline views overlooking the creek, a stone fireplace, 2-car garage, and storage shed. Offered at \$2,700,000. mls #97837



Apple Mountain Shoppes is investment property that doesn't fade away in these volatile times. Great high traffic location on Highway 64 near all of the Country Clubs and the Briar Patch Shop. Own and operate or just rent out for a steady income. Offered at \$1,199,000. mls #97428



A blank canvas, ready to make your own. Gutted and ready for renovation. Was a 2 bedroom 2 bath. Fantastic flat lot, great location. Walk to Mirror Lake. Offered at \$679,000 mls #97333



What a great opportunity to own a subdivision 1.5 miles from downtown highlands called RIDGEWOOD ACRES. This 33-acre tract already has several nice homes in it and the roads are paved. This listing includes 2 beautiful homes; one with a view to the west. This large tract could be a private mountain getaway or ability to develop. Don't miss this one. Offered at \$2,750,000. mls #96975



This charming, spacious family home has easy access to the golf course and has grounds with a small branch and pond. 5-6 Bedrooms, 6.5 baths, great covered porch with fireplace and space for great entertaining. Custom features throughout and a cooks kitchen. Full detached guest suite. All of this at a great value price at Highlands Country Club. Offered at \$1,650,000. mls #97428



Lovely Old Orchard estate Over 9 acres with spectacular mountain views, this house is in move in condition, with 5 bedrooms, 4 1/2 baths. Fully renovated kitchen with dining area and cathedral living room with fireplace. Immaculate grounds. Do not miss this one if you want privacy and usable yard. Offered at \$1,950,000. mls #97404



This beautiful 3 bedroom 2 bath log cabin on the Atlanta side of Highlands on buck knob road in scaly mountain is the perfect hideaway with almost 10 acres of land and a great view to the west. The covered porch across the entire back of the log cabin is a great place to enjoy the long range mountain views. The log cabin is furnished with a few exceptions. Offered at \$530,000. mls #95272



Horse Cove. First time on the market. Long time family vacation home. Open deck and screened porch to enjoy the stream below and view of the neighboring pond. 4 bedrooms, 2 full baths and 2 half baths. Basement with laundry room and 1/2 bath. Lots of storage. Offered at \$799,000. mls #95668

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The Godfather – Sopressa salami, shaved ham, pepperoni, red onion, smoked provolone, tomato, shredded lettuce, banana peppers, onions with Italian dressing on baguette. \$13

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

Salads

The Garden of Eatin' – Spring mix, tomato, cucumber, pepperoncini, onion, red pepper, fresh garden herbs, DJs basil balsamic beets, Fermenti pickled carrots, DJs pickles, House Ranch or Italian. \$14 (Add meat additional \$3)

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...HURRICANES continued from page 1

nette 22, and Kenter 18.

Jr. Olympian Conner Hughes also scored 18 pts and won a race. Tate Wilson and Emilina Hernandez both scored 17 pts, Wilson winning an event.

Jr. Olympians Finneaus Garner and Justin Powell scored 16 pts, Powell qualifying for his 3rd event at the 2022 Jr. Olympics, the most on the team so far.

Alyse Remery and Jr. Olympian Paolo McRae scored 15 pts. Remery won and broke the team record in the 100-yard breaststroke.

Penelope McRae scored 13 pts. Ian Batista, Annie Wilkes and Eli Highsmith scored 12 pts, Highsmith winning the 25-yard freestyle.

Max Jestin scored 10 pts, and Jr. Olympian Jack Sumner 9 pts. Mason Johnston 7 pts., Charlie Wilkes 3 pts, and Luke Highsmith 2 pts. William Burnette finished 7th in the 50-yard backstroke with a best time.

The Highlands Hurricanes are a Highlands Recreation Park Team that practices at the Highlands Recreation Park Pool in the evenings. The only requirement to join is that a swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards (one length of the pool) unassisted. For more information, please call Head Coach Steve Hott at 828.421.4121.

...SELECT BANK from page 1

Bank, they were required to offload three branches located in Macon and Jackson counties located at 30 Hyatt Road, Franklin; 498 East Main Street, Sylva; and 473 Carolina Way, Highlands.

The three branches have operated as Select Bank & Trust for the past year but will now soon transition once again.

"We are very pleased with this merger with First Bank," said William Hedgepeth, President and CEO of Select Bancorp. "Both institutions share the same community banking philosophy that our customers value so much. Although we are closing one chapter in our company's history, we believe we are starting another one that will be even brighter. We have been warmly welcomed by the First Bank folks, and we expect a smooth integration for employees and customers alike. I would like also to thank Select Bancorp shareholders and customers for the loyal support they have shown over the years and for what I expect will be many more years to come."

Although you won't see the branches and signs change just yet, First Bank is working on integrating the two banks' systems. This is expected to be completed in mid-March 2022. Until this integration is completed, bank customers will continue to access, manage, and update any Select Bank & Trust accounts through the Select Bank & Trust website, mobile app, and at Select Bank & Trust branches only.

After the system's conversion in mid-March 2022, Select Bank & Trust branches will become First Bank locations. Customers will continue to see friendly and familiar faces, and will have access to new digital banking offerings like a free budget management tool and person-to-person payment options, as well as robust financial education resources.

Have a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!



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REALTY GROUP

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• OBITUARY •

James Stewart



James Stewart, died peacefully on November 18, 2021, surrounded by his family in Highlands, North Carolina. Born in 1944 in Brooklyn, New York, Jim spent most of his childhood in Coral Gables, Florida and graduated from Coral Gables High School. He had many fond memories of sailboat racing and biking while growing up, and he remained a lover of nature, hiking, and national parks and forests his entire life.

He met Lynne Underwood, his wife of 55 years, at Lake George in the Adirondacks in 1964. They married in June 1966, shortly after he graduated from the Ohio State University, where he was a business major and a member of Sigma Chi fraternity. He served in the U.S. Army in Benjamin Franklin Village, Mannheim, Germany, from 1966 to 1968, specializing as a Chaplain's Assistant. Upon his return to the U.S., he began working at Stewart R. Browne Manufacturing, a safety equipment

manufacturing company founded by his grandfather. He remained at the family company from 1968 until his retirement in 2013, serving as President for fifteen years.

Those who knew Jim described him as kind, gentle, generous, funny and humble. He was a devoted husband to Lynne and a doting father to his children, Margaret, of Brooklyn, NY, and Ross, of Atlanta, GA. He instilled in his family his love of travel, nature and

the Ohio State Buckeyes. He was a loving brother and health care guardian to his late sister Carolyn Mason Browne.

After 30 years of living in the Atlanta area, Jim and Lynne decided to settle in Highlands, NC, their favorite spot in the mountains. Jim took countless hikes in Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests and in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. He could be found on trails around Highlands almost daily with his beloved mini schnauzers, Sophie and Woody. He was a generous supporter of conservation and environmental causes and an enthusiastic collector of folk art and crafts.

In addition to his wife and children, Jim is survived by two brothers, Alan and Christopher Browne, both of greater Atlanta. Memorial contributions may be made to First Presbyterian Church of Highlands-Missions (www.fpchighlands.org). A memorial service will be held at First Presbyterian Church of Highlands on Friday, December 3 at 2 pm.

Online condolences can be made at www.maconfuneralhome.com. Macon Funeral Home will be handling the arrangements.

Please Support Highlands' businesses on 'Black Friday,' Nov. 26 and on Nov. 27, 'Small Business Saturday!'



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'Blue Highway' at PAC Friday, Nov. 26



The Highlands Performing Arts Center will present in concert Friday, Nov. 26 at 7:30pm the bluegrass award winning band, Blue Highway. Blue Highway is filling in for the originally scheduled band, Sideline. Sideline's bass player passed away unexpectedly. Tickets are available online: www.HighlandsPerformingArts.com 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands NC

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...HFR STATION continued from page 1

forklift, a forklift with a mechanical arm.

Construction is being handled by DR Reynolds and project Superintendent Todd Smith said he hopes to have all the trusses in place by Thanksgiving, but added that moving large metal structures isn't something that should be rushed.

"My main concern is safety," said Smith. "Making sure one of these doesn't fall over in a strong gust of wind or some-

thing."

Smith said the goal is to have the new building closed up by winter so work on things such as electrical and plumbing can be done indoors. He said roofers are scheduled to begin work in early December.

Smith said over the next couple of weeks after the trusses are installed, crews will focus on the exterior walls and metal studs.

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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

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• Thursdays 1-8pm, Fridays and Saturdays 1-10pm and Sundays 1-5pm. For Thanksgiving week the ice rink will be open Wed, Nov. 24 from 1-8pm but closed Thurs., Nov. 25 in observance of Thanksgiving Day.

Rec Pool Schedule:

• Call ahead to make sure the pool is open for Public Swim due to staff shortages. 828-526-1595.

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+). Insurances 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

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7:30pm

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• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

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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 en-

courage 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.

Fri.-Sat. Nov. 27-28

• At the Highlands Playhouse, Foodie Film Series with Rob Brydon and Steve Coogan eating their way across the globe at 3 and 6 p.m. Visit www.highlandspayhouse.org for ticket information.

Nov. 27-Dec. 24

• Santa in the Park

Sat. Nov. 27

• It's Small Business Saturday, at the Highlands Nature Center's Pop-Up Gift Shop 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 930 Horse Cove Road.

• Chamber event: Lighting of the Park 6-8 p.m. at Pine Street Park.

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• HOSPITAL NEWS •

My gratitude runs deep for everyone who makes Highlands-Cashiers Hospital and Eckerd Living Center excellent, and our caring community

Gratitude is something we traditionally focus on each November as we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving, but this year — like last year — things are different. Many of us limited celebrating last Thanksgiving by sharing dinner only with members of our own households, re-

fraining from travel, and taking other steps to decrease our likelihood of catching or spreading COVID-19. This year, things look brighter, as we have the vaccine to protect us.

However, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is still advising that we get vac-

inated, use masks, and observe best practices when we're flying or using any other public transportation method, as well as protect those we dine with who might be immunocompromised or ineligible for the vaccine.

As I look back on this challenging, tumultuous year, I find myself not only grateful, but inspired by the extraordinary care provided by the great people Highlands-Cashiers Community Hospital (HCH) and Eckerd Living Center (ELC), and the amazing people of our caring community on the Plateau.

I deeply appreciate that during this pandemic, an incredible time of need on the Plateau, we have been able to increase our services to our patients and expand staffing. Examples, respectively, include this past October's first surgery since September of 2014 and the addition of talented new physicians. Our most recent arrivals include the new Blue Ridge doctors, Dr. Kate Shattenkirk and PA Allison Litchfield at Mission Primary Care in Cashiers, orthopedic surgeon Dr. Greg Crawley, and general surgeon Dr. John Bishop. I'm especially thankful too, to the staff members who put in the extra hours needed to make our enhanced services happen.

This brings me to the entire HCH and



**Tom Neal, CEO/CNO
Highlands Cashiers
Hospital**

ELC teams. The most appropriate descriptors for our employees that I can muster — after seeing them perform so admirably and pivot often this year — are “skilled,” “dedicated,” and “compassionate.” It's this rare and special combination of talent, loyalty, and heart that touches our patients' lives deeply and makes HCH and the ELC so special.

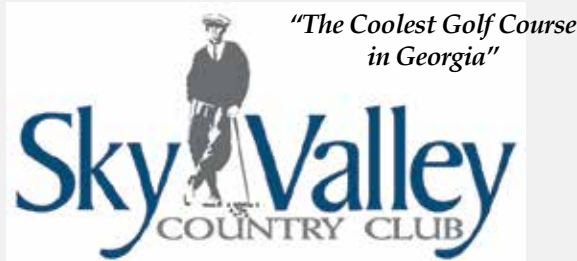
Our employees are unwavering in their commitment to our community, and

routinely go “above and beyond” to ensure that our patients receive both the very best care and an outstanding patient experience. I know this is true because I witness it daily. The great people of HCH and ELC — from doctors, nurses, and clinical professionals to the support personnel who assure that our patients are fed, the hospital is clean and well-maintained, and we have the supplies necessary to care well for our patients — are truly the lifeblood of our organization, and make me extremely proud and grateful to be part of the team.

Another team I could never forget to place on my gratitude list for 2021 is the committed volunteers of the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau Vaccine Initiative. While I wouldn't ever dream of saying that I am thankful for COVID-19, I do appreciate some of the good things that happened in our community as a result of it. My experience with the Vaccine Initiative will go down as one of the best I've had. Through it, we watched our community come together to fight to make us safe, and the spirit was amazing. It was a gift to be part of it.

Finally, I am thankful for my family and their well-being, especially after this harrowing pandemic experience. When I reflect on the fact that we have lost more than 700,000 people from COVID-19 — not to mention the many who have survived but suffer long-term, debilitating effects from the disease — I am truly grateful that my family is healthy.

As we all count our blessings over the Thanksgiving holiday, let's hope for more advances in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19, and relish our time with family and friends now more than ever.



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...STRs continued from page 1

and wrote part of the legislation regarding zoning allowances in the state of North Carolina.

Now under a Stay of Proceedings regarding the lawsuit with Save Highlands, the town hopes to avoid going to court over its Short-term Rental (STRs) debacle which began in August when Highlands' attorney Jay Coward declared STRs illegal in the R1 zone. As Coward said Monday night, "Contrary to popular belief, lawyers would prefer not to have to go to court."

The draft ordinance was put together under Justice's guidance with a workgroup made up of Commissioners Amy Patterson and Brian Stiehler, Town Manager Josh Ward and Attorneys Justice and Coward.

As required by North Carolina law, the Planning Board must also go over the ordinance and can make recommendations before it is adopted by the Town Board. Monday's meeting was the first workshop on the matter.

The Planning Board will discuss it fur-

ther at the Dec. 27 meeting and likely again in January. As usual, those are public meetings and public comment may be elicited. The Town Board won't be involved until the ordinance is presented for adoption prior to Feb. 1 which is when the "stay" ends. It can accept the Planning Board's recommendations or reject them.

Justice's surprises included North Carolina's long-standing vested interest law, whereby a land use may continue (be grandfathered) after new ordinances regulating the use are adopted.

Therefore, according to Justice, even if the draft ordinance is accepted, anyone who has used their home as an STR in the R1 district or anywhere else in town, may continue to do so exactly as they have been doing. He said the purpose of the amended ordinance will be to look to the future, not the past.

But if adopted, potential homes in R1 developments or homes under construction in the R1 zone will not be allowed to be rented as STRs in the future.

However, if a home in the R1 zone

changes ownership and has been rented as an STR in the past, the use may continue as long as the owners continue to rent it.

Justice said the "use" follows the land, not the owner.

However, if new owners voluntarily lapse renting for 24 months, the use ceases.

Likewise, if current owners of STR homes in the R1 district cease to rent for 24 months, the use is no longer grandfathered.

Short-term rentals will be allowed in some form in the R2, R3 and all the Business districts – but stipulations would apply regarding the length of stay.

Only Tourist Homes, which are allowed in all zones except R1, can rent rooms less than seven days and up to 175 days a year, but only if the owner of the home is residing on the property.

Whole House STRs in any district other than R1, can only be rented for 7 to 29 days for 25 weeks per year as an accessory use. Only two people per bedroom plus two more will be allowed per home. This doesn't apply to the grandfathered homes in the R1 district.

Another change regards long-term rent-

als – over 30 days. Three unrelated people would be allowed rather than the current five unrelated people. Justice said allowing three is standard; allowing five is not.

Finally, in the grandfathered R1 areas as well as everywhere else, owners must apply for a certificate to use their homes as STRs which would require, name, address, name and contact information of the operator or property manager, a site plan showing parking with no more than four vehicles allowed, the number of bedrooms, copy of the MC Revenue Dept. "property information card," proof that the septic system is safe and adequate, a copy of the rental agreement presented to renters and a statement under oath from the owner or operator that provisions are understood and information in the application is correct.

Current ordinances on the books regarding, parking, garbage and noise must be adhered to regarding STRs (as well as every other home in Highlands) and will be policed by the town's code enforcement officer(s). Town Manager Ward said it's likely that division will have to be expanded.

– Kim Lewicki

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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



Thanksgiving on Eggsells?

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Dr. Gary Hewins**
Community Bible Church

A movie entitled "Avalon," directed by Barry Levinson, came out in theaters in 1990. Avalon was a story of a Polish-Jewish family that comes to the U.S. at the beginning of the twentieth century. There, the family, and their children try to make themselves a better future in the so-called promised land. The progression or perhaps digression of this immigrant family is subtly chronicled by their annual interactions around the Thanksgiving table.

Upon their arrival to America, they have the greatest Thanksgiving dinners, seasoned with fun conversations, tons of laughter and family banter. After a while, the television becomes a household appliance, and the family seems enamored with its sounds and imagery as they eat. Eventually, Thanksgiving seems to be more about football and turkey than each other.

As I look back at the message of this movie, I am certainly aware of today's controversial distractions that vye for our attention, glaze over our minds, with the hopes of actually seizing our hearts. It is not fun to think about and it is not fun to actually say it, but there are many families that will not eat together this Thanksgiving Day for all the wrong reasons.

There too, are families that will have to avoid conversational topics if they have any hopes of thoroughly enjoying the holiday. If we are not careful, the beautiful institution of Thanksgiving can and will be hijacked, not by the advent of a simple television, but by the broad spectrum of strong opinions on political issues, vaccines, climate change and whatever else lies in wait to divide our families, marriages and churches. Stop.

Perhaps, we as a nation need to call a timeout, a cease fire, a mutually agreed upon truce to head off inevitable generational, conversational conflicts that can sour even the best of gravies.

It's Thanksgiving.

If your guest list is a close-knit homogenous group of same-thinking pilgrims, then enjoy your time together. Celebrate, laugh and giggle all the way through the leftovers. But if your table is set for a group of already, never-to-be-convinced otherwise, mixed bag of cause-oriented liberals and conservatives, God bless you. You need a plan with some boundaries.

It's Thanksgiving, love one another, hug, show mutual respect and keep the following Bible verses in mind and pray, even if you don't normally pray, before you sit down, let alone eat anything. Ok, here you go... You can thank me later.

"Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones." Proverbs 16:24

"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 22

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

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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.

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

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828-526-31 • 75 • fpcchighlands.org

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Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m., Choir: 6p

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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

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Rev. Angie Ballard • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741

Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.

We wear masks and social distance.

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Pastor Zane Talley

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

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

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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; Sat. 4p; 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

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Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

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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. 10. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Nov. 10

• At 11:30 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on US 64 east near Trillium Circle.

Nov. 15

• At 11 a.m., officers were called to Highlands School about guns, marijuana and drug paraphernalia on school property.

Nov. 16

• At 12:50 p.m., officers responded to a report of a person carrying and displaying a knife on the Highlands School campus.

Nov. 17

• At 5:44 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on US 64 west at Chowan Road.

Nov. 18

• At 1:03 a.m., Oscar Antonio De Loucio, 22, of Highlands was arrested for DUI when he was posted exceeding the speed limit on N. 4th Street. He was issued an unsecured \$1,500 bond. His trial date is Jan. 12.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Nov. 16.

Nov. 16

• At 5:39 p.m. the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Spring Street.
• At 9:54 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location in Highlands Plaza.

Nov. 17

• At 11:40 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Church Street.
• At 1:07 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of an illegal burn at a residence on Upper Lake Road.

• At 8:59 p.m., the dept. responded to a Co2 alarm at a residence on Holt Knob.

Nov. 20

• At 11:10 a.m., the dept. responded to a

fire alarm at a residence on Arnold road.

• At 1:04 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a NC 106.

• At 6:09 p.m., the dept. responded to a call about a possible gas leak at a residence on Cottage Row.

Nov. 21

• At 10:33 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Buck Creek road.

• At 2:03 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Trillium Circle.

Nov. 22

• At 12:31 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on NC 106.

• At 3:59 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible brush fire on Periquin Road.

Nov. 23

• At 7:14 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cullasaja Drive.



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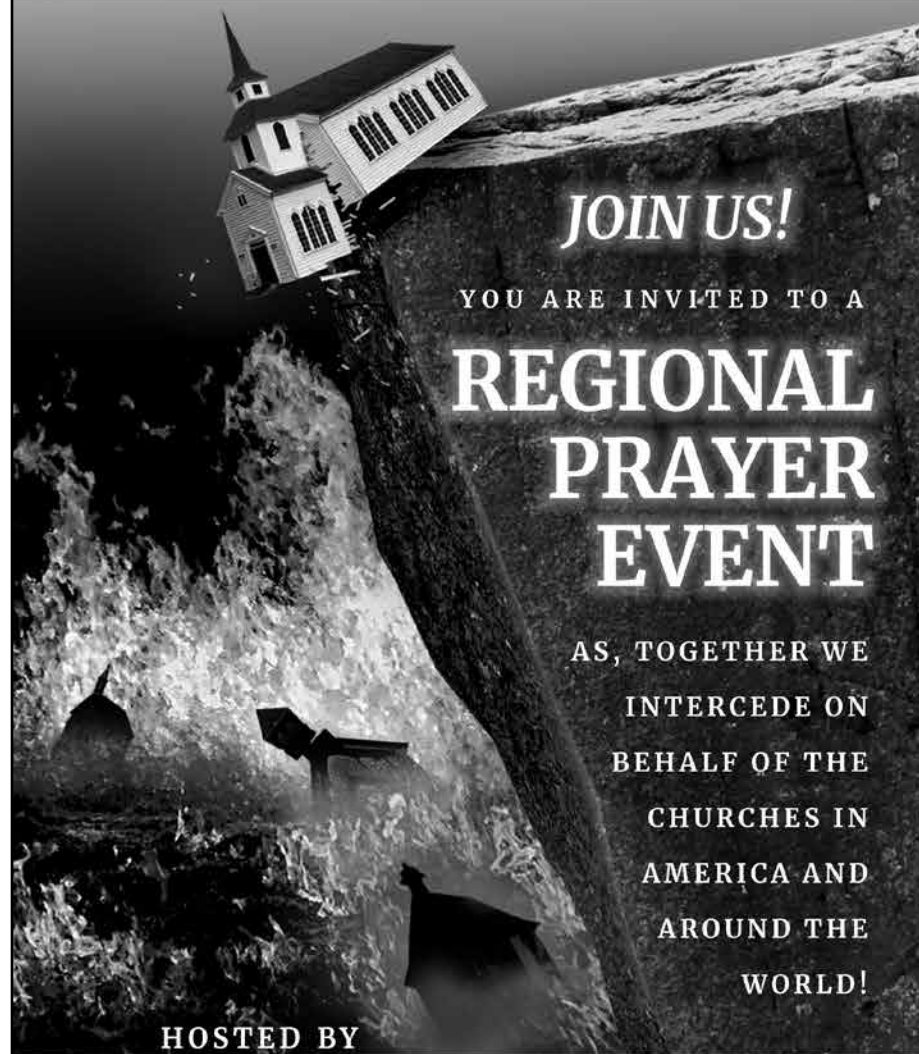
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HIGHLANDER MOUNTAIN HOUSE hiring a LEAD BARTENDER. Looking for a bartender who is passionate about hospitality and all things beverage. Someone who loves to take ownership of their role, has a strong work ethic and wants to grow with a company that is doing great things in Highlands. Competitive pay, flexible schedule and great environment. Applicants please email trg@highlandermountainhouse.com (st. 10/14)

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://highlandsnsc.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

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 22

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...SPIRITUALLY continued page 18

holds his tongue is wise." Proverbs 10:19

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15

My prayer for you this Thanksgiving is that you truly grasp the riches of gratitude in a deeper and more meaningful manner than any previous Thanksgiving Day! Feed your belly but also feed your soul and someone else's. We are all on the same team. Let us count our many blessings if we even can. Let us be "us" and not, "us and them" or "you and me."

One last thought, being grateful is a very noble thing. Even more noble is heart-felt gratitude laid at the feet of the only One who could ever bless you in the manner He has. To Him be the glory! Love Him and love one another. So simple.

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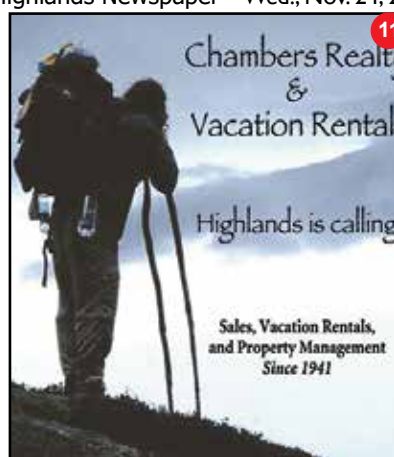
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