

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 19, Number 16

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: [HighlandsInfo.com](http://HighlandsInfo.com)

Thurs., April 21, 2022

## Highlands CC retains its Audubon sanctuary certification

These days country club sporting golf courses are often blamed for polluting ground water and area waterways. Not so for

Highlands Country Club.

HCC has retained its designation as a "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" through

the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, an Audubon International program.

• See HCC page 17

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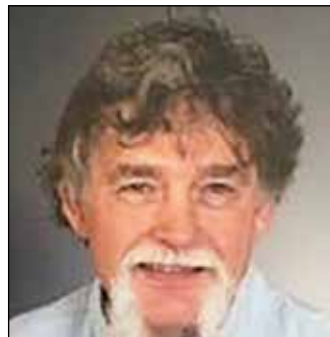
## Primary Candidate Forum – Part 2



Danny Antoine



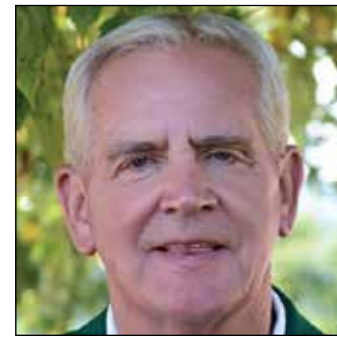
Gregg Jones



Richard Lightner



Dan Reitmeier



Gary Shields

## Meet the Republican primary candidates for District 2

By Brittney Lofthouse

The Macon County Board of Commissioners currently has three seats up for election.

Two seats in District II, which covers the Franklin Area, and one seat in District I which serves Ellijay, Flats, Highlands and Sugarfork.

To be on the ballot for the primary, candidates have to live in the district they want to represent, but the election both in May and in November is an at-large election which means voters can

live anywhere in Macon County to vote for both seats both in the primary and the general election.

The May 17 primary ballot will only feature Republican candidates for office because there are three seats open – one in District 1 (with two candidates vying for it) and two in District 2 (with five candidates vying for it.)

Since only two Democrats have filed to run for the District II – Ronnie Beale and Betty Cloer Wallace -- and there are two seats open – a primary is not needed for

the Democrats.

The top two Republican vote-getters will be placed on the November ballot to face the two Democrat challengers or an independent challenger who secures enough signatures to be placed on the ballot by the deadline.

Danny Antoine, Gregg Jones, Richard Lightner, Dan Reitmeier and incumbent Gary Shields are vying for the two District II seats. The candidates were asked to provide a short bio and were all asked the same questions.

**Danny Antoine**

Danny Antoine was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and was raised overseas in Port-aux-Prince, Haiti. He moved to Macon County in 1998 and has been married to his wife Mary for 13 years. Together, the couple have 15 children and 11 grandchildren. Antoine is an Ordained Minister as well as a family and marriage counselor and has also owned and operated a small business in Macon County for the last 22 years. He is a 6th Degree Black Belt, was the

2002 Karate World Champion and was the 2021 Legends of the Carolinas Martial Arts Hall of Fame Inductee. He serves as the volunteer Chaplain for the Franklin Police Department as well as the Franklin Fire Department.

Antoine serves as a board member for Macon County Care Network as well as for KAVOD Family Non-Profit Foundation.

"I am not a politician. I am simply a concerned citizen unwilling to sit on the sidelines," said

• See PRIMARY page 8

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Finding the right balance is challenging

Last week I attended the Newly Elected Officials Seminar in Asheville. The event was sponsored by the University of North Carolina School of Government and the North Carolina League of Municipalities.



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

While I was recently elected to a third term, I like to attend these events to learn about new issues and brush up on old ones.

The professors covered a number of important topics such as town government structures, North Carolina statutes regulating municipalities and budget planning. I learned a lot, such as reserve fund levels that other towns maintain. I was prepared in discussions to tout that Highlands maintains very high reserves. But, I discovered several other nearby towns maintain budget reserve percentages equal to or even higher than we do in Highlands. I kept silent.

The instructor emphasized that the tendency in North Carolina is for small towns to maintain higher reserve fund percentages than do larger cities.

At the end of the workshop, Professor Carl Stenberg led a presentation called "Public Choices, Public Values." The pre-

sentation and group response focused on values that town councils have to address when making decisions about public policy.

Professor Stenberg shared the Public Values Compass Model that has been created by the NC School of Government. He pointed out that public issues reflect four major public values. These public values were illustrated as if they are opposite points on a compass needle, for example, north versus south, east versus west.

The values on the opposite compass points are: Liberty versus equality in one direction and prosperity versus community in the other direction. When elected officials make public policy decisions these polar values can cause tensions in the decision-making process.

For instance, liberty is an overall value encompassing associations of freedom, choice, opportunity autonomy, personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. Those treasured values can come into conflict with the values of equality and related associations such as fairness, justice, tolerance, equal rights, diversity, equity and a level playing field.

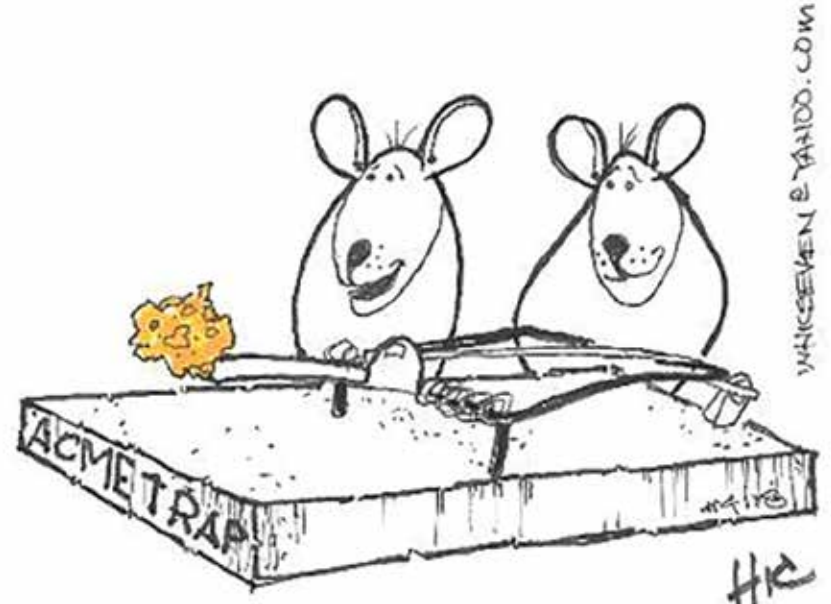
The challenge for elected officials, and for that matter a community, is to find the right balance in making policy between these two points on the public values compass.

Another set of values at opposite points on this compass model is prosperity versus community. Related values of community are safety, belonging, family, neighborhoods, tradition, security and quality of life. These community values are sometimes contrasted with prosperity which relates to growth, efficiency, productivity, profit, competition, privatization, return on investment, and also quality of life.

As Professor Stenberg emphasized, solving public problems requires solutions that consider these competing values. That point made me think about current issues in Highlands, especially short-term rentals.

I have listened to many residents with about STRs. So many of our friends and neighbors hold different values identified on the compass model that shape their position. Some think the prime issue is liberty and property rights. Others embrace the position of community, fairness. Others want

## • HIC'S VIEW •



"Please, I insist. You go first."

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 21-Apr	Fri, 22-Apr	Sat, 23-Apr	Sun, 24-Apr
63°F 45°F	69°F 48°F	68°F 48°F	69°F 48°F
Partly sunny	Partly sunny and pleasant	Mostly sunny	Plenty of sunshine
RealFeel® High: 70° Low: 47°	RealFeel® High: 77° Low: 51°	RealFeel® High: 76° Low: 56°	RealFeel® High: 76° Low: 55°

For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to [www.highlandsinfo.com](http://www.highlandsinfo.com) and click on Weather

### Highlands Newspaper

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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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# • OBITUARY •

## James Luther Owens



James Luther Owens, 64, of Highlands, NC passed away on April 15, 2022.

James was born on September 16, 1957, to the late Jayco and Martha Munger Owens. He was known to his family as "Pappa James" and to everyone else "Captain Casual." James was a land surveyor and loved being out in nature working or hiking the many trails in the area. He loved playing music and hunting, usually with one of his nieces or nephews. He also loved spending time with his special friends, Chuck Baty, Harold Neely, Ralph Webb, and Susie Talley Owens. He loved his family more than life. He loved his community and the people in it. His heart was huge.

He is survived by his brothers, Chuck Baty of Highlands, NC, Gene Owens (Stacy) of Satolah, GA, Dennis Owens (Sandra) of Glenville, NC, Johnny Owens (Marcy) of Satolah, GA, and Frank Lowery (Sarah) of Habersham, GA; sisters, Mary Owens Ridgeway of Anderson, SC, Sherry Owens of Highlands, NC, and Missy Grace (Brian) of Satolah, GA; many special nieces and nephews and great nieces and great nephews also survive.

James is preceded in death by his parents Jayco and Martha Munger Owens and by one brother, Bennie Owens, and one nephew, Noah Owens.

Graveside services will be held on Thursday, April 21, 2022, at 4 pm at Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery with Rev. Oliver Rice officiating.

Hunter Funeral Home is assisting the Owens Family with arrangements.

## Volunteers are needed for the Plateau Pickup!

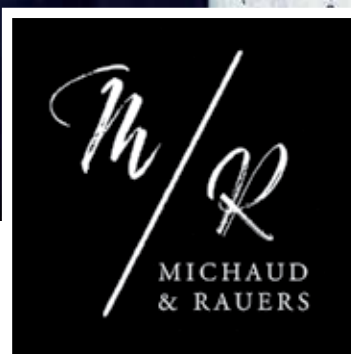
It's time to give Mother Nature a hand with her spectacular spring show by sprucing up Highlands and her highways.

Volunteers are needed to help with the annual Plateau Pickup on Saturday, April 23, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Volunteers will meet at K-H Founders Park on Pine Street, where they will receive their geographic assignment. Stretches of U.S. 64, N.C. 28, N.C. 106 parts of downtown Highlands will be covered. Groups, families and individuals are welcome!

Volunteers will receive a light breakfast, a safety vest, gloves, pick-up tools and garbage bags and a thank-you t-shirt. A boxed lunch will be served to volunteers after the event when they return to the park.

The event is organized and hosted by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC. To participate, send an email to [events@highlandschamber.org](mailto:events@highlandschamber.org) or call 828-526-5841.





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## ...MAYOR continued from page 2

equity and a level playing field, but how that translates into policy may vary among individuals and groups.

Switching to the other compass points, some residents embrace community, neighborhoods, quality of life while others support growth, productivity and return on

their investment.

The challenge for the board, our elected officials, will be to strike a balance that will insure the long-term viability for Highlands. Like so many other communities, the town will have to set a direction very soon. Making no decision is not an option.

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## ...PRIMARY continued from page 1

Antoine. "My desire is to serve my community to the fullest extent of my abilities and will consider it an honor to do so. I love our County and I want to be able to add to our beautiful culture, not merely receive from it. I truly believe in the title of "Public Servant," and serving this County has been my lifestyle for over 20 years. Many issues revolving around helping our youth and families in general can be solved by county officials who work well together for the greater good of the citizens. I would like the opportunity to be an elected county official who will serve the people of Macon County with integrity, striving to give my very best at all times."

*What do you see as being the biggest issue facing Macon County?*

Antoine: "There are many issues confronting our county; the levels of importance can be fairly relative," said Antoine. "Drugs are a major issue here plaguing all age groups. The assets that are available to our children and teens are lacking. Young people are our greatest asset and the leaders for our county's future. I firmly believe we can help alter this drug epidemic by raising a strong generation of young men and women with their identities intact. I believe in teaching the youth how to contribute to our society rather than just take from it."

*Commissioners are faced with more and more request for public education funding. What is your stance on county's role in funding public education? Do you think the current levels are adequate or do you think they should be increased/decreased? Do you support the sales tax referendum that will be placed on the ballot in November?*

Antoine: "I believe the county's investment in public education is crucial to our county's future. Without sufficient information, I cannot say in all certainty whether or not our current spending levels on public education here are adequate. However, that doesn't seem to be complicated to answer once I understand the accurate numbers on our spending. I am not for raising taxes when, at our current tax rate, we are not properly allocating the taxes currently collected. If the choice were between a sales tax vs an ad valorem tax, I would choose sales tax because at least the pass-through traffic can help cushion this tax. Ad valorem property tax would only hit our citizens. I will also say, being that we are maintaining approximately \$32 million in savings, I think we should consider the potential use of those funds rather than placing the burden of heavier taxes on the citizens."

*Macon County has completed a large space needs analysis project to address infrastructure needs.*

*What are your thoughts on the current direction the county is taking to address these issues?*

Antoine: "It seems like the analysis was done, but there hasn't been much forward motion on it. Getting refocused on the results acquired from the analysis can get us moving in the right direction for the county."

*Any other issues or information you would like to include for your voters?*

Antoine: "I want to encourage all of our citizens that although the many grievances you have shared with me are very critical and valid concerns, you have the opportunity to elect officials that will respond to your voices. There needs to be better maintenance on existing projects and infrastructure where we have put substantial investments. I believe we can do a better job with activities for the elderly of Macon County. I would like to see our active voter numbers hit an all-time high in this election, which is why I'm calling out to the younger generation, the age group of 18-55 to be more exact. I am calling on you for your participation in helping to bring about the right changes for our County."

**Gregg Jones**

Gregg Jones is a native of Macon County. Growing up his family owned and operated Jones Ruby Mine for which he contributed 20 years of his life helping his family succeed with the business. Today, Jones owns and operates is a small grading business. He is active in the community, serving on volunteer boards and coaching community basketball.

"I want to give the citizens of Macon County their voice back to help make decisions where their tax money is spent," said Jones. "I want to be the county commissioner that is transparent, available, and willing to work for the citizens of Macon County. I would like to see more citizen participation in their community."

*What do you see as being the biggest issue facing Macon County?*

"Building schools: I would address this by getting grant writers to bring in rural area grants to cover our needs and help distribute different funds for the needs of Macon County," said Jones.

*Commissioners are faced with more and more request for public education funding. What is your stance on county's role in funding public education? Do you think the current levels are adequate or do you think they should be increased/decreased? Do you support the sales tax referendum that will be placed on the ballot in November?*

"How I stand on public education

• See PRIMARY page 10





*Pat Allen*  
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## ...PRIMARY continued from page 8

in Macon County, we need to expand the schools to downsized classrooms to make learning more attainable," said Jones. "Our school buildings need to be updated for better operation and maintenance for the safety of our children and faculty. I do not support the sales tax referendum."

*Macon County has completed a large space needs analysis project to address infrastructure needs. What are your thoughts on the current direction the county is taking to address these issues?*

"The direction the county is taking to address the large space needs analysis needs to have additional planning in our fast pace growing county," said Jones. "The county currently has unfinished projects that need to be completed. Otherwise, they need to be done away with so held up funding could be used for other projects."

### Richard Lightner

Richard Lightner's father was a career Marine, so he was raised attending schools in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina. He graduated from WCU with a BSBA in Finance and Economics in 1980. While attending WCU, Lightner was elected President of a national fraternity and met his wife Judy Dillard Lightner. The two were married

in 1980 and started life in Franklin, Judy's hometown. Lightner has been a member of Cowee Baptist since 1978 and where he has served as deacon for 35 years.

After WCU, Lightner was finance manager with Carolina Tire, Student Services Director at Macon Program for Progress, Professional Sales and Management at Lowe's where he was recognized as the top ten salesman with Lowe's Company. From 1985-2019 Lightner worked as Macon County's Tax Administrator. He was elected the WNC Tax Association President two times, North Carolina Association of Assessing Officers President, Outstanding Tax Assessor for North Carolina, best tax office in North Carolina twice, and recipient of the Order of The Long Leaf Pine by the Governor of North Carolina for dedicated service to the state and its citizens.

While Lightner was not elected by the citizens for an office, he was an appointed County official, (Tax Administrator) with a legal appointment every four years by the Macon County Commissioners. The County Manager and Lightner's position

• See PRIMARY page 16



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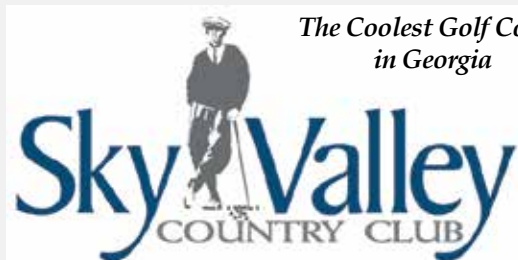
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— Richard Lightner

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# • INVESTING AT 4,118 FT. •

## Connect The Dots

Remember the childhood game where you connected the numbered dots, and in the end, if you connected them correctly, you have a picture. It was intended as a math learning game, but as we grow up, we tend to forget how many things are connected.

In the real estate world, it's like a big revolving circle, sometimes it revolves slowly and other times, it goes so fast, it's almost a blur.

Here are five quotes. Three are from knowledgeable experts from the online Realtor magazine, the last two are from me.

#1 – “The pandemic has shifted renter migration trends from gateway cities to feeder cities,” says Sean Wilkoff, assistant Professor of Finance at the University of Nevada, Reno, College of Business. “Now that renters can work remotely, they are interested in a different set of amenities that feeder cities can better offer.”

#2 – “The 30-year fixed-rate mortgage jumped to a 5% average this week, the first time it's been that high since 2011.”

– Nadia Evangelou, senior economist and director of forecasting at the National Association of Realtors

#3 – “As Americans contend with historically high inflation, the combination of rising mortgage rates, elevated home prices, and tight inventory are making the pursuit of homeownership the most expensive in a generation.”

– Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's Chief Economist

#4 – “Our mountain community usually trails the national trend, so we may not see a correction this year, BUT I remember saying the same thing in 2007. I was very wrong.”

– Jeannie Chambers, Realtor

#5 – “Highlands, NC is trying to come up with an equitable solution regarding short-term rentals. I just hope they don't kill the goose.”

– Jeannie Chambers, Realtor

Now, let's connect the dots.

Quote #1 -- is referring to long-term rentals (not vacation rentals aka STRs) and a feeder city is a new term for what we used to call bedroom communities. But, for many years, people have likened Highlands to a bedroom community in the aspect of living in Atlanta (for example) and owning



**Jeannie Chambers**  
Chambers Realty  
& Vacation Rentals

a home in Highlands in which to enjoy a get-away within a short drive.

Depending on how often those owners used their second home, some chose to allow their home to be rented as a short-term rental when they couldn't be away from their primary residence, or traveling, etc.

The quote is referring to people working in larger cities, but renting a home within a commutable distance, and probably working from their rental as well. These are not second homeowners; these

are year-round renters, but these cannot be mixed in with the year-round renters who are the work force in our area. Typically, feeder-city-renters can afford a much higher rent than a local work-force-renter.

Quote #2 – We've been saying the interest rates will go up, and now it has come to pass. Some people think that second homeowners don't mortgage, and all is on a cash basis. Those people would be wrong. True, people tend to put down larger down payments, but many choose to take a 10-15 or even a 30-year loan to take advantage of tax laws, some of which may include the income and expenses of short-term rentals.

Quote #3 -- Now this is a big deal! A generation consists of about 25 years. This Freddie Mac expert is painting a doomsday picture for first-time home buyers, and that's a sad thing. I can tell you one of the most satisfying feelings a Realtor can have is when helping someone buy their first home. Over the years, I've seen 'self-help' homes and homes built with the aid of Habitat for Humanity. We need more of those kinds of places.

Quote #4 -- The Great Recession began in 2007 and ended in June of 2009. Our area didn't start seeing the result until 2008 through 2010. What I didn't count on were the other problems second-homeowners faced, such as losing their jobs/forced early retirement, businesses closing, stock market instability, etc. There were many homeowners who had to sell their mountain homes for less than they had paid for them within the last 1-5 years. Instead of robbing Peter to pay Paul, they had to kill Peter in order to pay Paul, but everyone seemed to be grabbing at any liquidity model they could find.

Quote #5 -- This one is self-explanatory

• See INVESTING page 14

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# Spring Home Improvement 2022

## 5 Exterior Home Upgrades That Deliver a Return on Investment

(StatePoint) Want to make some serious exterior home

upgrades that improve your safety and comfort, add beauty to your home and deliver a return on your investment? Here are five projects that do just that:

1. Install storm doors: Storm doors give you the option of letting in more light and ventilation on fair weather days, while protecting your entry door from harsh conditions and weath-

ering. There are many ways to customize this upgrade to meet your aesthetic and functional needs. Options from ProVia include retractable screens at the top and bottom for more venting options, as well as stylish designs and colors for instant curb appeal. Families might want to consider storm doors featuring heavy-duty, non-removable stainless

steel screens ideal for keeping children and pets safely inside.

2. Get summer-ready: Extend your home's outdoor living area just in time for summer -- plus substantially increase your home value -- with the addition of a deck, patio or porch. Whether you add a small hibachi grill or get as involved as installing a full outdoor kitchen, be sure to include an area to prepare and enjoy meals. A few key touches, like string lights and potted plants, along with cozy furniture, can make the space feel homey.

3. Replace patio doors: If your patio doors are drafty or get stuck easily, it may be time for an ENERGY STAR-certified replacement. Endure sliding glass patio doors from ProVia come standard with ComforTech Warm Edge Glazing, a high-tech glass package that measurably improves thermal performance for greater efficiency and reduced interior condensation. These doors also have increased sound abatement and meet the most stringent industry standards for storm protection, ease of entry and forced entry. Additionally, options for interior woodgrain and ex-

terior paint colors, varying internal grid styles and patterns, and multiple choices for decorative glass, internal blinds and hardware allow for customization to fit your personal aesthetic.

4. Lower bills: Did you know that you can lower your bills and add natural beauty and privacy to your property by planting trees strategically? In summer, the shade that trees create can help keep your home cool. In winter, they can help block wind and prevent drafts. The Utah State University Forest Extension recommends locating trees no closer than 2.5 times their mature height to the south of a building to avoid winter shading. They also suggest knowing the size and other characteristics of a particular species before planting to avoid future problems, such as hitting power lines.

5. Protect your home: If you live in an area prone to extreme weather -- heavy rain, hail, driving wind, frigid temperatures, or scorching heat -- your home needs protection against the elements. CedarMAX insulated vinyl siding provides defense against these harsh conditions and improves

• See UPGRADES page 13



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# Spring Home Improvement

energy efficiency as well. The insulation contributes to the rigidity of the panel, increases durability, and provides five times greater impact resistance over hollow siding, protecting against damage by hail, high winds, or contact with your child's fastball. Color and beauty are also huge factors in this home improvement decision; CedarMAX offers many options to customize the look with both neutral and

bold colors and coordinated accessories. It's resistant to fading, chalking, cracking, peeling, and thermal expansion and contraction, making it a sound investment for years to come.

It's important to see a tangible return on larger home upgrades. The best projects to consider are those that increase your home value, save you money, and add beauty and comfort to your home.




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## ...INVESTING continued from 11

ry. The housing market for work-force rentals is virtually non-existent, but the goose is not responsible for the lack of work-force rentals. I hope when the STR decree is given, the town will have considered all the

good things that come from short-term rentals. There are many local people who depend on jobs relating to STRs.

Connect the dots. It's a math game, and most of us need to be re-schooled.

# Experience MATTERS

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# • HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

### Rec Pool Schedule:

• Lap Swim Monday-Friday 6am-10am, Monday and Thursday 11:15am-7pm and Tuesday and Wednesday 11:15am-3:30pm 6 lanes AND 3:30-7 (shared Pool) and Saturday 10-11am 6 lanes. Adult Swim Monday-Thursday 11:15am-7pm. Call ahead for Public Swim Weekend schedule due to staff shortages. 828-526-1595.

### Pickle Ball

• There are three indoor Pickle Ball courts and six outdoor Court open once again. Pickle Ball will be played in the gym every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10am-1:pm (days and times have changed).

### Nature Center Spring Hours

• Friday & Saturday: 10 AM to 4 PM. Closed: Sunday - Thursday

### 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](http://www.maconncliteracy.org), call 828-526 – 0863 or email [info@maconncliteracy.org](mailto: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 10:15-11am.

### 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.

• New Mobility Class with Anna Norton It's all about movement. 5:30-6:30pm and Wednesday 6:45-7:45. For more information, call Anna 267-825-0716.

### Mon. & Thurs.

• Drive-thru flu clinics at the Public Health Center at 1830 Lakeside Dr. in Franklin from 1-4 pm \$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 am-1 pm.

### Mon, Wed, Fri

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class 8:30-9:30am. \$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 am.

### Tues. & Thurs.

• Pilates-Strength and Stretch with Autumn Lucas

• New Zumba class with Gay Chalpin from 4:30-5:30p.

• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with many different types of exercise.

### 1st Tuesdays

• Indivisible Highlands from 5-6:30 pm at the Hudson Library.

### Tuesdays

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

### Thursdays

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

• Free Covid vaccination clinics – 9 am to 5pm at the Rec Park. (Closed for a half-hour lunch break) 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.

### Every Fri., Sat. & Sun.

• 1st run movies at the Playhouse on Oak Street. This week: April 1-3 - The Lost City. 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. [www.mountaintheatre.com](http://www.mountaintheatre.com)

### 2nd Saturdays

• The Western North Carolina Woodturners Club meets in Highlands at The Bascom at 10 a.m. March and November.

### 3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in their Community Room/ 909 Chapel. We serve breakfast at 9AM and hold our monthly meeting at 10AM We invite ALL Veterans to attend. Contact Ed McCloskey, Commander for any information @828-787-1660.

### Fri.-Sun.

• Movies at The Playhouse 1 and 4p. [www.mountaintheatre.com](http://www.mountaintheatre.com)

### Thurs., April 21

• Wildflower Walk at the Highlands Nature Center from noon to 1 p.m. 828.526.2623 [paige@highlandsbiological.org](mailto:paige@highlandsbiological.org)

### Fri. April 22

• The first-ever Justice Matters Tours at our Highlands/Cashiers office to find out how you can join Pisgah Legal Services in standing for justice. This interactive in-person tour is 10-11:30 a.m. and delves into how Pisgah Legal addresses domestic violence, housing, immigration, access to healthcare, and community economic development and explains how community members can get involved. Tours take place at Pisgah Legal Services, 209 Hospital Dr., Suite 203, Highlands, NC. Limited space available. RSVP to Megan Quattlebaum at 828-



# • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

575-1353 or email [Megan@pisgahlegal.org](mailto:Megan@pisgahlegal.org).

• The Democratic Women of Macon County will hold an Earth Day Potato Supper, Friday, at the Carpenter Community Center, 1288 Georgia Road. Supper includes a baked potato, all the fixings, a dessert and a drink. \$12 for adults and \$6 for children 12 and under. Eat in or carry out from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Democratic candidates for the US Congressional seat will be greeting voters. Tickets may be purchased from members of Democratic Women or by calling (678) 357-7718.

## Sat. April 23

• Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 [paige@highlandsbiological.org](mailto:paige@highlandsbiological.org)

• Due to Easter Weekend falling on our typical 3rd Saturday Meeting Date, the Highlands American Legion Post 370 will meet on Saturday at 9 AM for breakfast followed by our monthly meeting at 10 AM the First Methodist Church's Community Room to the rear of the main sanctuary at 315 Main Street in Highlands. All veterans are welcome. Any questions call Commander Ed McCloskey 828-787-1660.

• The annual Plateau Pickup is scheduled for Saturday, April 23. Volunteers will tackle stretches of US 64, NC 28, NC 106 and several high traffic streets inside town limits. Volunteers will be supplied with a light breakfast

to start, orange vests, gloves, garbage sticks, a boxed lunch afterwards and a thank you t-shirt. Please send an email to [events@highlands-chamber.org](mailto:events@highlands-chamber.org) if you'd like to participate. Volunteers Needed! Mark your calendars!

## Sun., April 24

• Chef Dinner at OEI's The Farm, Italian-inspired Spring Fling with chef Craig Richards. Book at [OldEdwardsHospitality.com/chefdinners](http://OldEdwardsHospitality.com/chefdinners)

## Wed. April 27

• Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 [paige@highlandsbiological.org](mailto:paige@highlandsbiological.org)

## Thurs. April 28

• Wildflower Walk at the Highlands Nature Center from noon to 1 p.m. 828.526.2623 [paige@highlandsbiological.org](mailto:paige@highlandsbiological.org)

## Sat. April 30

• Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 [paige@highlandsbiological.org](mailto:paige@highlandsbiological.org)

• Women's Fellowship Brunch. A time for fellowship and encouragement. 10 a.m. at the Highlands Community Center on N. 4th Street in Highlands. For more information email [womensrefillandrefuel@gmail.com](mailto:womensrefillandrefuel@gmail.com)

• Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Free Public Concert at the First Presbyterian Church at 5 p.m., featuring Rasa String Quar-

ter. Sponsored by the Cullasaja Women's Outreach.

## April 29-May 1

• Bear Shadow Music Festival. For tickets go to [bearshadownc.com](http://bearshadownc.com).

## Sun., May 1

• Dixon Pond BioBlitz with Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust from 1-3pm. Learn about pond life and contribute to science. Free, family-friendly program. To sign-up or more info contact: Sarah Pursel, [hclt\\_ed@earthlink.net](mailto:hclt_ed@earthlink.net), 828-526-1111, [www.hicashlt.org](http://www.hicashlt.org).

## Thurs., May 7

• Family Bird Walk at the Village Green in Cashiers with Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

and Highlands Plateau Audubon Society from 9:30-11:30am. Free, family-friendly program. To sign-up or more info contact: Sarah Pursel, [hclt\\_ed@earthlink.net](mailto:hclt_ed@earthlink.net), 828-526-1111, [www.hicashlt.org](http://www.hicashlt.org).

## Thurs., May 12

• Winter stories will be held at the Highlands Dive from 2-4, a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

## Sun., May 15

• Chef Dinner at OEI's The Farm, May Day Celebration with Celebrity Chef, author and lifestyle expert Chadwick Boyd. Book at [OldEdwardsHospitality.com/chefdinners](http://OldEdwardsHospitality.com/chefdinners)



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## Rasa String Quartet Free Public Concert

Saturday, April 30th @ 5 PM

1st Presbyterian Church in Highlands

School programs at Highlands, Blue Ridge and Summit  
and a visit to the Fidelia Eckerd Living Center also planned.

Sponsored by the Cullasaja Women's Outreach.

## Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival

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## ...PRIMARY continued from page 10

are the only two positions in the county that directly report to the elected commissioners.

"I have been a part of the county's management team since 1985 and I have worked with every County Manager except the very first one," said Lightner. "I have worked with all the commissioners since 1985 either Democrat or Republican. My 85,000 hours involved with all county issues prepares me to make a difference on day one. I have retained the knowledge of how the county established procedures and dealt with issues for the past thirty-five years."

*What do you see as being the biggest issue facing Macon County?*

Lightner: "The largest items in a small community vary very little from that of a large community. The top four items are items of safety, education, economic growth, and budgets. Macon faces all these issues just as our larger sister counties in NC. We need to have public safety adequately funded but not at the cost of short-changing other vital services such as education and senior services.

Economic Development is mentioned to me by everyone I meet. We need to establish an office of Economic and Grants Director within the county. We already have the funds in the budget to do so. We see the importance of grants with some grants recently making the local news."

*Commissioners are faced with more and more request for public education funding. What is your stance on county's role in funding public education? Do you think the current levels are adequate or do you think they should be increased/decreased? Do you support the sales tax referendum that will be placed on the ballot in November?*

Lightner: "Education is one of the pillars of our community. In fact, public education started in our county by parents and their neighbors coming together and paying for the small schools in areas like Ellijay, Cowee, Clarks Chapel, and many other areas. Locally we spend 19% of our budget on education while our neighbor, (Jackson) a very similar county, spends 24.06%. North Carolina law establishes that the county is responsible for the school facilities. Our children deserve schools that meet 21st century needs and not that of the 1950s. The question is how do we pay for them? We can establish a tax district for the schools just like the fire districts we have. By doing this, we can see where every dollar is budgeted and spent. No longer will school dollars be misinterpreted going to different programs or lost in the general budget.

Yes, I support the sales tax increase of ¼ cent. Many travel to Clayton or Asheville to shop and pay a higher tax there to support their needs so why would we not want our services to our citizens to receive the same type of funds?"

*Macon County has completed a large space needs analysis project to address infrastructure needs. What are your thoughts on the current direction the county is taking to address these issues?*

Lightner: "A \$300,000 study was completed in 2019 and has seen little movement on it. Until we commit to keeping our present buildings in good repair, we need

to be frugal on building new ones. We also need to involve the public in the plans on new buildings."

*Any other issues or information you would like to include for your voters?*

Lightner: "We need public input from the beginning, not after hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent and decisions are already in the process of being approved. Citizens' input before monetary output are vital because visions lead to plans that become reality."

### Danny Reitmeier

Danny Reitmeier was raised in Franklin with his sister, Beth Corbin and their brother, Chris. Reitmeier was a student athlete and very involved in student government all through his school years. After graduating from Franklin High School, Reitmeier joined the Air Force and served for 8.5 years. Reitmeier is a proud Veteran, having served in Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm. He is married to his wife, Kim. Reitmeier is a born again Christian, saved by the blood of Jesus and serves as a member of Holly Springs Baptist Church, where I has attended for 28 years.

After the U.S. Air Force, Reitmeier began his professional career where he has experience working as a tax software programmer, landscape maintenance accounts manager, small business owner, operating his own landscape business, as well as working for the U.S. Post Office.

"My reason for running for Commissioner is simple," said Reitmeier, "I love our county and the people that live here. I think it's time for a change. It's time for new ideas, new energy, new personalities, and new ways of looking at things. I want to move our county forward in a positive way and make it economically viable for people to make a good living here and not move away. I am a "people person"...I've never met a stranger. I truly care about people. I believe those character traits will help me connect with the citizens in our county and earn the trust necessary to move our county forward and help all of our citizens. I want ALL of

• See PRIMARY page 19



## ...HCC continued from page 1

Participation is designed to help course personnel plan, organize, implement, and document a comprehensive environmental management program and receive recognition for their efforts. To reach certification, a course must demonstrate that they are maintaining a high degree of environmental quality in a number of areas including Environmental Planning, Wildlife & Habitat Management, Outreach and Education, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, and Water Quality Management.

"Highlands CC has shown a strong commitment to its environmental program. They are to be commended for their efforts to provide a sanctuary for wildlife on the golf course property," said Christine Kane, CEO at Audubon International.

Highlands CC is one of over 900 courses in the world to hold certification from Audubon International. Golf courses from

the United States, Africa, Australia, Central America, Europe, South America, and Southeast Asia have also achieved certification in the program. The golf course was designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in 2003. After designation, courses go through a recertification process every three years. Billy Brooks and Cross Sweet, two of Highlands CC's employees, were largely responsible for the documentation required for recertification.

"We see the site visit as an important component of a course's recertification," stated Kane. "It provides an objective verification of some of the more visible aspects of the course's environmental management activities. In addition, it offers an opportunity for golf course representatives to share publicly some of the voluntary actions they have taken behind the scenes to protect and sustain the land, water, wildlife, and natural resources around them."












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# HIGHLANDS

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## Plateau Pickup

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**April 23**

**8:30am – Noon**

**It's time to spring clean our community!  
And we need a little help from our friends.**

**We'll begin at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park,  
Pine Street, Highlands.**

**A light breakfast and lunch will be provided.  
Participants receive a free t-shirt.**



**To participate, send an email to  
[events@highlandschamber.org](mailto:events@highlandschamber.org)**

This event is hosted by the  
Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands.  
For more information: [highlandschamber.org](http://highlandschamber.org) or 828-526-5841  
[visithighlandsn.com](http://visithighlandsn.com)



## Do you suffer from Post-Easter depression?

**Pastor Dan Robinson**  
Highlands Central Baptist Church

I've been apprised of a new phrase this year. It sounds somewhat foreign to me. Out of place. But it has set me to thinking. The phrase is Post-Easter Depression.

Its definition is understood easily enough. Namely: After all of the build up to Easter including dramas, musical specials, Holy Week activities and Sunrise services, a let-down is to be expected and in fact does occur for many.

Some have called Easter the "Superbowl" of the Church. Which, by the way, I think is an egregious way to reference this, the most important day on the Christian calendar.

Nonetheless this dynamic of depression happens both to those inside as well as outside of the church.

If this describes you (or someone you know) may I offer some encouragement which I hope will sustain you and perhaps establish some perspective.

1) Good and Godly people have had seasons of depression all throughout history. The outstanding one in Scripture is probably Elijah. After his remarkable victory on Mount Carmel he prayed to the Lord "Let me die" (I Kings 19:4). And perhaps the most well known outside of Scripture was the Prince of Preachers, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. As early as age 24 he wrote: "My spirits were sunken so low that I could weep by the hour like a child, and yet I knew not what I wept for." And dare we say of either man "They're just not spiritual?"

2) Remember that Easter is about the Resurrection of Jesus from the tomb! It's not about bunnies and bonnets. And the Resurrected Savior is just as alive and knowable today as He was on Resurrection morning. The Christian faith is not about living on an endless emotional high. It is rather about knowing God personally through His Son, Jesus Christ. We then have His indwelling power in the Person of the Holy Spirit. He indeed does give one the courage and strength which sustains them even in times of depression.

3) The Lord Jesus does not chide us when the clouds of depression hover about us. To the contrary, He is not only with us but is praying for us (Hebrews 7:25).

4) Our God is not only "Holy Other" but is also wonderfully practical and matter of fact. Might we not hear Him saying something like: "Since I raised My Son from the grave, is there anything in your life which is too difficult for me?" And surely, we would have to say "no."

You are loved by God and you are precious in His sight. He will never leave or forsake you. Remember these things. He will keep His promises to you. He will see you through the darkest of nights. And thank Him that you don't have to wait for or depend upon a once-a-year Easter celebration. No. The Resurrected Savior will walk with you every moment of every year if you will ask Him.

No wonder that after days of darkness (and no doubt, depression) the disciples were indeed filled with joy when they heard the Good News, "He has Risen!"

God always has the final word about all things. And for the follower of Jesus Christ that final word is always good.

## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

## John 3:16

### BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (706) 782-3965  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7

Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

### BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore. Pastor  
Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

### CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30 Worship 10:30

Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

### CHAPEL OF THE SKY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

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Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

828-743-1701 • 464 Hwy 64E. Cashiers, NC 28717

www.christanglicancashiers.com

Sun. - 9:30am Worship (no music); 10:30am Sunday

School; 10:30am Worship Service.

Mon. Night Bible Study & Dinner. 6pm. call for details.

### CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

Sun. 10:45am. S.S 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.

Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

### CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Jim Kinard

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.

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

Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685

3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands, NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun.: 9:30am - 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 • 526-2968

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

Sunday Services in the Chapel: 8 am Rite I spoken, 10:30 Rite II

with Choir; Morning Prayer Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in the Chapel

Ash Wed. services March 2, 12 p.m., & 5 p.m.

### 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

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter 743-9814

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### 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 Worship is at 9a. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

### HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376

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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.

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### MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

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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.

### 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.

### OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

### CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone - 526-2418

Mass: Wed. noon (Latin); Thurs. noon; 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

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • ufranklin.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 April 3. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

## **April 3**

• At 2:24 a.m., Justine Tate Hall, 22, of Cullowhee, NC, was arrested for DUI when he was stopped for speeding on US 64 east. He was issued a \$2,500 unsecured bond. His trial date is May 18.

## **April 4**

• At 1:09 a.m., Carlos Jesus Anguiano, 22 of Cullowhee, NC, was arrested DUI when he was stopped for a stop light violation on Shelby Circle. He was issued a \$750 secured bond. His trial date is May 18.

## **April 7**

• At 5:10 p.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at Upper Lake Road.

## **April 17**

• A little after midnight, Charles Anthony Fish, 27, of Dillard, GA, was arrested for DUI when he was stopped for a stop light violation on NC 28. He was issued an unsecured \$500 bond. His trial

date is June 15.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from April 15**

## **April 15**

• At 3:58 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Ravenel Ridge Road.

• At 9:21 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Clubhouse Trail.

• At 9:29 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Holt Circle.

## **April 16**

• At 12:05 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Webbmont Road.

• At 5:42 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a LP gas leak at a location on Main Street..

## **April 17**

• At 10:06 a.m., the dept. responded to a miscellaneous fire at the hospital.

• At 11:55 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

• 5:25 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on the Walhalla Road.

## ...PRIMARY continued from page 16

our citizens to have a true, strong voice that will listen to them and be a transparent, tireless worker for them. They deserve that.”

*What do you see as being the biggest issue facing Macon County?*

Reitmeier: “It’s pretty much impossible to name only one “biggest” issue in our county. However, with that being said, I believe we HAVE to find a way (or ways) to give our citizens the means to find GOOD employment which would allow them to keep their families here while making a good living. Be it some type of industry, making sure we get as many people connected with broadband internet, which would allow people to be employed in ways that were never possible before, or other things like that. We also have to be vigilant when it comes to public safety, our schools and health and human services.”

*Commissioners are faced with more and more request for public education funding. What is your stance on county’s role in funding public education? Do you think the current levels are adequate or do you think they should be increased/decreased? Do you support the sales tax referendum that will be placed on the ballot in November?*

Reitmeier: “I know the county’s role in funding public education is primarily “brick and mortar”. The state is responsi-

ble for pay/salary. The county should fund adequately, based on needs and be prudent economically as those needs are being taken care of. I do support the tax referendum being on the ballot. Our citizens should have their voices heard as to whether or not the tax increase should be put in place.”

*Macon County has completed a large space needs analysis project to address infrastructure needs. What are your thoughts on the current direction the county is taking to address these issues?*

Reitmeier: “The large space needs analysis identified all the county buildings, and their inner workings, that needed attention, repairs, improvements or potentially to be replaced. I think this analysis/report is a great working tool. It should help the decision making process as far as what the priorities are in the future. I know there have already been some improvements made, such as LED lighting, which will help save some money.”

*Any other issues or information you would like to include for your voters?*

Reitmeier: “These are some of the things that are important items/issues in our county that I believe we need to concentrate on. It is not a comprehensive list, but some main points/ideas...”

• See PRIMARY page 22

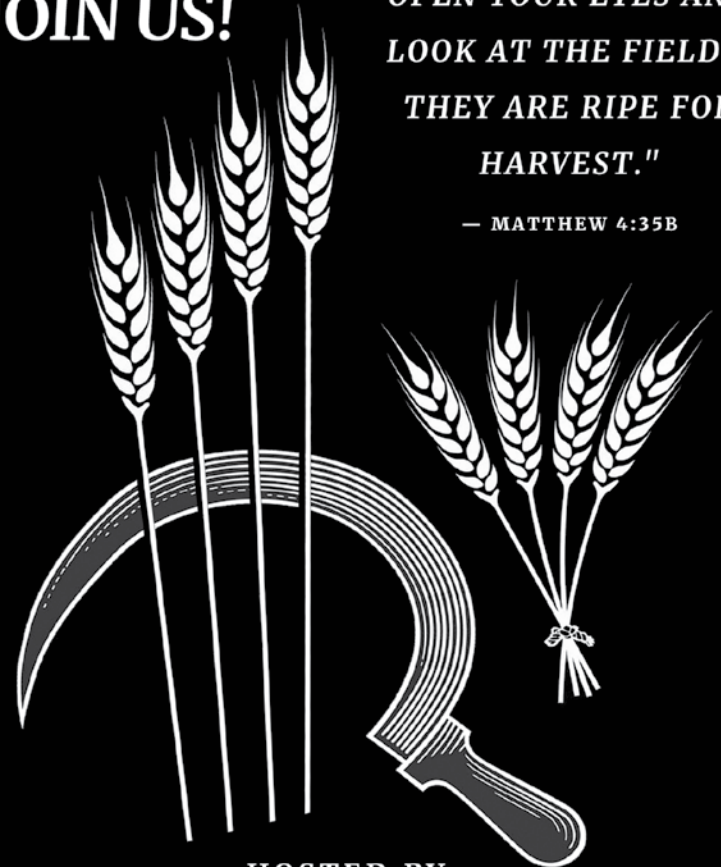
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HARVEST.”

— MATTHEW 4:35B



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can build or add to your private practice, provide mental health care to those in need, and be part of a counseling center that is dedicated to the behavioral health needs of all members of the community regardless of ability to pay? Our Center is looking for licensed therapists who share this mission and YOU may be one. If you are interested - or just want to learn more about the Center - let us know by sending an introductory email with your resume to [info@counseling-center.org](mailto:info@counseling-center.org). We look forward to hearing from you. **REQUIREMENTS:** Master's Degree or higher in counseling, psychology or related field; Licensed in North Carolina in related discipline/s; Must have a minimum of 2 years of experience as clinician; Flexibility, creativity, and a spirit of collaboration; Along with full-pay, willing to see clients-in-need at a reduced fee; Counseling Center will reimburse the difference between reduced fee up to \$75. **PREFERRED:** Strong Clinical skills, including areas of assessment; diagnosis; crisis & case management; Independent decision-making skills; Experience and desire to lead workshops and/or groups as outreach to the Highlands community **CRITICAL NEED FOR THE AREA:** Specialty in Substance Abuse; Bilingual (Spanish & English) (st. 4/7)

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• See CLASSIFIEDS page 22

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The Counseling Center strives to strengthen families and individuals by providing access to quality mental health services regardless of financial ability.

## ...PRIMARY continued from page 19

- Education/Invest in our youth
- Emergency Services (All departments – fire, sheriff, police, EMS)
- Economic Growth
- Veterans Services
- Senior Citizens Services
- Keeping Taxes Low
- Broadband Internet Access

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### Gary Shields

Gary Shields was born and raised in Macon County. Shields attended Franklin High School, Walhalla High School and Waynesville Township High School where he graduated in June 1966.

After high school, Shields joined the United States Army where he served two tours of duty in Vietnam before finishing his military service in May 1969. After completing his military service, Shields attended Gardner-Webb College in August 1969 where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts in December 1973 and then beginning his career in public education. Shields completed his Masters Degree in School Administration from UNC Charlotte and later completed my Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling from UNC-C via WCU.

Shields’ professional educational career began in Kings Mountain, NC where he served as a teacher and school administrator for eight years. He then had the opportunity to move back to work in the Macon County School System for 29 years and prior to retiring in June 2010, after 37 years in education. Shields spent his last 21

years before retiring serving as the Principal of Franklin High for 21 years.

After retiring from the Macon County School System in June 2010, Shields served on the MC Board of Education for one term. Shields ran for his first term on the MC Board of Commissioners in November 2014 and was re-elected in 2018.

“In November 2022, my plans are to seek a third term on the MC Board of Commissioners,” said Shields. “I have two major reasons for running for a 3rd term as a MC Commissioner. I have invested time and energy by serving our country that enabled me to recognize my strengths and weaknesses to include an appreciation for the values of the USA. My 37 years invested in education allowed me to view the past while recognizing the need to assist our youth in preparing for their future so they will become productive citizens and leaders in their respective communities. My 29 years invested in the MC School System, working with professional educators, showed patience with me allowing me to grow and reshape my philosophy of life for the betterment of mankind. My 21 years invested as the Principal of Franklin High School was a blessing and due to all the lives that I interacted with, I was blessed because we grew up together. I can say my growth was greater because those “memories” will always be cherished.”

Shields continued, “My second major reason for seeking a third term is because of unfinished business,” he said. “COVID-19 exposed our weaknesses when our schools had to transition the classrooms to the living rooms. Regions, states and our nation, as a whole, realized that another ‘utility’ called broadband was a link that had to be addressed. I have been on the MC Broad-

band Committee for 6-7 years and never felt so helpless until recently when federal and state funds were combined in the American Rescue Plan allowing counties to coordinate with federal and state providers.

“These ‘rescue’ monies are once in a life-time and we have a short time to complete a plan and then put the plan in place for broadband services in Macon County

“There is unfinished business in progress:

- Macon Middle School: This renovation began 2-3 years ago and at our last commissioners meeting we are on target to completing this project in 2023?

- Macon Middle School Athletic Building: This project is with the architects at this time as is being built to assist the school’s curriculum and athletic programs played on the MMS campus.

- Southwestern Community College: At this time the state is reviewing the specifications for a new Burn Building on the campus of the National Guard Armory in Franklin. The National Guard Armory was leased to SCC and will be used to expand the curriculum and studies now being taught in the Jerry Sutton Facilities Building

- Nantahala Community Center and Library: This project is in the final stages of completion and will enhance the community opportunities for social events and media and Broadband activities.

- Highlands School Pre-K and school renovations. This need was brought to the attention of the county commissioners via community presentation at the February/March meeting.

- Additional classrooms to be built at Cartoogechaye Elementary and East Elementary School via ESSER FUNDS with a 2024 ending date for funds to be used.”

*What do you see as being the biggest issue facing Macon County?*

Shields: “School Capital needs are ongoing and our schools have to be maintained. Broadband is not a luxury but a necessity for the health and safety of our communities. Quality workforce. Housing/rental affordable. Safety, Health and Education make up 70%+ of our annual budget. Providing senior services Mental Health (young and old),” he said. “Nothing is free so monies have to be allocated accordingly by need and you budget and seek studies that show you the major needs of the county. Our Capital Improvement Plan, with other data, gives the board a guide for going forward and the board does this with high concern of property owners having to provide the necessary funds via increased taxes.”

*Commissioners are faced with more and more request for public education funding. What is your stance on county’s role in funding public education? Do you think the current levels are adequate or do you think they should be increased/decreased? Do you support the sales tax referendum that will be placed on the ballot in November?*

Shields: “I feel the “brick and mortar” via the county, is a hardship for some counties because they do not have a tax base that is sufficient for 2022 public education. The state has looked at counties with “brick and mortar” needs and have designated Lottery monies to assist with school projects but the monies are scarce. My greatest concern is mandates from the state that are not accompanied with funds and the commissioners are held responsible for providing the needed mandated services. The state should supply 100% of the current expenses that are passed on to the county via school mandates,” said Shields. “I do support the .25 sales tax that will be on the referendum in November 2022. Our Region A is made up of 7 counties (Haywood west) and 6 of those counties have passed the .25 sales tax and speaking to many of those county leaders, it is a fair tax that visitors can participate in without all the burden falling on the local property owner. Yes, this is another revenue that the property owner would not have to endure because this revenue would be earmarked for the schools/education.”

*Macon County has completed a large space needs analysis project to address infrastructure needs. What are your thoughts on the current direction the county is taking to address these issues?*

Shields: “The county has completed a large “Space Needs Analysis” and we need to review this analysis often to measure “immediate needs” and “need changes” that occur with time,” said Shields. “Needs” seem to change often and the “new needs” will replace previous “needs” and the “Capital Improvement Plan” and “Space Needs Analysis Plan” should be reviewed often for a summarization of changes needed. I, as a commissioner, should review both products and assess and bring thoughts or questions to the county manager or board for additional input.”

*Any other issues or information you would like to include for your voters?*

Shields: “I am proud to work with each Commissioner or discuss concerns with the total board. As a commissioner, one has to “agree to disagree” in a respectful manner,” said Shields.

• *Next week we will feature candidates for the Sheriff’s Office.*

## ...CLASSIFIEDS continued from page 21

view. (st. 10/7)

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