

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., April 7, 2022



Pictured from left at the proclamation signing: Kirk Dornbush, Past President, Mountaintop Rotary Club of Highlands, Mayor Pat Taylor, Michael Vavrek, President, Mountaintop Rotary Club of Highlands, Andy Walker, Secretary Elect, Mountaintop Rotary Club of Highlands.

Mayor declares April the month to financially help the Ukrainians

Over the past few weeks Mountaintop Rotary has been raising money from the club and its members for Ukraine relief. Recently efforts have expanded to coordinate with the Highlands community with the intent of having a larger impact.

"We have been meeting with other Rotary clubs in the area as well as the Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor," said Rotarian Bill Kirkland. "To that end, the

mayor signed a proclamation declaring April as Ukrainian Financial Relief month."

"Whereas on February 23, 2022, Russian forces, under the direction of Vladimir Putin, launched an invasion of Ukraine the likes of which we have not seen since WWII, killing thousands and creating a crisis on a global scale, forcing millions of civilians to flee, and blatantly violating international law, I encourage all citizens of Highlands to join the Mountain-

top and Noonday Rotary clubs of Highlands in providing financial relief to help millions of Ukrainian citizens displaced by this horrific war," reads the proclamation in part.

Kirkland said as the Ukrainian crisis unfolded, members of the Mountaintop Rotary Club of Highlands decided it wanted, in some way, to provide support for the civilians in Ukraine.

A program was quickly de-

•See UKRAINIANS page 16

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- Part 3 -

Mission nurses are overburdened; patients are suffering

By Barbara Durr
Asheville Watchdog

One nurse on a surgical floor at Mission Hospital reported "patients lying in stool for an unknown amount of time," pain medications and insulin being administered late, and "irate family members."

A nurse caring for the sickest patients on a surgical floor at Mission documented "delayed and

missed medications due to RNs having 7-8 patients ... Inadequate staffing led to patient fall."

Still another nurse on an intensive care and cardiac care unit reported an "inability to care for critically ill patients at appropriate high level," resulting in an increased risk of possibly serious harm to patients.

The alarming concerns were

•See NURSES page 9

Wilmington, NC, STR ruling handed down

Parts of it could affect Highlands STRs

Everyone - lawyers, municipalities, homeowners for Short-term Rentals and those against them have been waiting with bated breath for the NC Court of Appeals to rule on DAVID SCHRO-

EDER and PEGGY SCHROEDER, Plaintiffs, v. CITY OF WILMINGTON and CITY OF WILMINGTON BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT.

•See WILMINGTON page 22

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Warmer weather means infrastructure repairs

Highlands is moving toward spring, and activities will pick up in Highlands. I'm ready for the cold days and nights to go away.

Stillwell and Associates has begun replacing the old, outdated waterline on Moorewood Drive. There will be some disruption as crews dig and install the new six-inch waterline. The trenching will be mostly on the side of the road. Some plants and small trees will have to be removed. American Rescue funds are being used for this project. Water system improvement fall within permitted uses of the plan.

There are two sidewalk projects in the current budget that should get underway as we see warmer days. The sidewalk in front of the Presbyterian Church will be restored. The concrete under the brick pavers is crumbling and will be replaced.

There will be a sidewalk installed on US 64 between the new residential development across from the ball field and down to the Wells Hotel. The developer of the residential development had to put in side-



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

walks in front of the development as a part of the Highlands master sidewalk plan. Ironically, there was about a 400-foot gap between the sidewalk of the development and where it continues near the Well Hotel. The board decided last year to connect the two portions of the sidewalk. This new sidewalk project will also include better stormwater drainage.

As we move toward spring, town road crews will be doing cleanup and clearing operations in the ditches and drainage areas on town roads. With recent storms and high winds there has been a lot of fallen tree debris and runoff that fill these road drainage systems. I anticipate NCDOT will be doing similar operations on the roads that they maintain both in and outside town.

Now let me address the dreaded P word; that is potholes in roadways. As area asphalt plants resume production and temperatures increase, our crews will be filling the potholes in town that have developed over the winter. I know motorists become frustrated about potholes popping up during the winter, but efforts to make repairs in cold weather at best last for only a few days.

WLOS News recently ran an interesting story. A news reporter covered the Sylva Fire Department moving toward a combined staffing model.

The department will hire a cadre of full-time firemen to staff their department 24/7 this coming year. The Sylva Fire Department will also continue to rely on volunteer firemen. The combined model is a growing national trend.





What caught my interest was that the fire chief said they had built a new department a few years ago with a barracks section. He indicated they built this larger facility with the aim of hiring full-time firemen. The chief pointed out that the full-time staffing would reduce response times which will keep insurance rates down. That model and strategy is exactly what the Highlands planned with the construction of our new fire department that also has a barracks section.

• HIC'S VIEW •



"I know it's fun to tease Ralph. But dogs have feelings too."

• WEATHER •

Thu, 7-Apr	Fri, 8-Apr	Sat, 9-Apr	Sun, 10-Apr
			
56°F 34°F	46°F 30°F	39°F 29°F	56°F 36°F
Partly sunny	Colder with a shower	Mostly cloudy and cold	Sunny and warmer
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High: 60° Low: 43°	High: 45° Low: 33°	High: 35° Low: 27°	High: 61° Low: 30°

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• LETTERS •

Tax rate is targeting the wrong people

Dear Editor,

Three-card monte is a street game where passersby are suckered: Attention is misdirected when they try and track the Queen of Hearts as it and two other cards are moved on a table. “Bystanders” (shills) encourage the patsy to bet. I saw it in New York, but until I started reading about the proposed Macon County sale-tax increase to fund capital projects in the school system, it had slipped my mind. Now the Macon County Commission wants a proposed sales-tax hike to fund capital projects in our school system. It will be on the November ballot and it makes me warm and fuzzy for the urban hustle, which was entertaining and not government sanctioned.

Every news story quotes Macon County Commission Chair Jim Tate asking “Would you rather pay for [the projects] with an increase of property taxes, or [...] by letting some of our visitors who pass through this county also help pay for it through a quarter-cent tax increase?” P.T. Barnum couldn't have put it over more smoothly. Sales taxes are the most regressive kind; those who can least afford it pay the most, proportionally. If you live and work here but can't afford to own your own home, who cares? You'll be too busy trying to stay afloat to put up a fuss, and that's what they're counting on. If Macon Republicans are now the party of tax hikes, what will our hapless Democrats have to rally around this fall? Vegan Thanksgiving?

As for visitors anteing up: We've already got a room tax on the books. But revenues from it must go to support tourism. By that logic, why not pay a shaman to come here and perform rain-&-fog dances?

How many houses – and certainly the most expensive ones – on the plateau are second, third or fourth residential properties? (To use “home” in this instance would be a sad abuse of its true meaning, pace real-estate agents.) Most of the time their owners are in Atlanta, or Birmingham or Palm Beach (when they aren't in Europe). And while these same non-residents pay thousands for routine seasonal maintenance of their gardens and grounds, not a dime in sales tax is charged. But if a local high-school student comes into the store where I work and spends \$3.00 on a used volume of Thoreau's essays, I add an additional 20 cents to the bill. You do the math.

Let property taxes pay for the schools, as they are meant to. In 2019 – the last time Macon County did a property revaluation – the town of Highlands and Highlands township amounted to 46% of the tax base. Can you imagine what those figures will be after the skyrocketing prices here? I bet it will be at least 60%. Recently tax administrator Abby Braswell told commissioners she was projecting an almost 40% increase in values over the 2019 revaluation. So property-tax rates could actually be lowered and there'd still be enough for the schools.

**Stuart Ferguson
Highlands**



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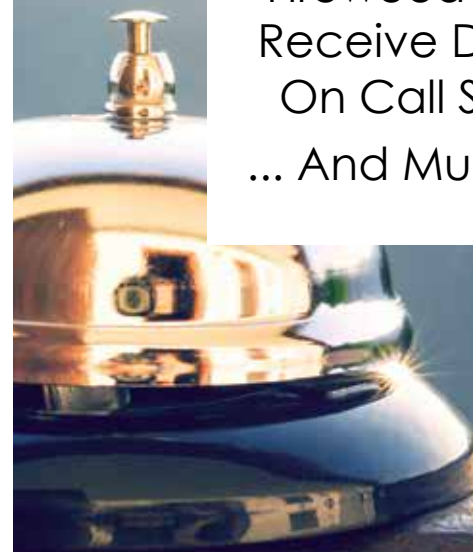
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• MILESTONE •

Bob and Sammie Houston Celebrate their 65th Wedding Anniversary



Bob and Sammie Calloway Houston celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on March 19, 2022. They were married on March 14, 1957 just before Bob left for Japan for an eighteen month tour in the Air Force. Sammie graduated from Highlands High School during that time.

They have one daughter, Karen Potts (Joe) of Cashiers, NC, and one son, Timothy Houston of Lawrenceville, GA. They are blessed with four grandchildren; Danae Westendorf (Scott) of Highlands, NC; Trent Reese (Stephanie) of Berlin, Germany; Matt Houston (Jenny) of Snellville, GA; and Melissa Toller (Ben) of Snellville, GA. Their 8 great grandchildren have brought them so much joy: Adisyn, Charlotte, and Camden Westendorf of Highlands; Maeve Evelynne Reese of Germany; Lucas, Emma, and Levi

Houston of Snellville; Olivia Toller of Snellville. Melissa and Ben are expecting another little one around the end of September which will be the 9th great grandchild.

They have worked hard all of their years together. As long as they were able to attend, they were very active in their church, Highlands First Baptist. Bob enjoyed over 50 years with the Highlands Fire and Rescue Department. Sammie has a beautiful voice, singing at church, many weddings, funerals and other events. They enjoyed traveling some, and especially spending time with their family. Everyone enjoys their time with Be-ba and Mumzie.

Their family honored them with a luncheon at Karen and Joe's home. Time spent with family was such a blessing.

Highlands goes quiet for good part of Tuesday

Monday night and again Tuesday morning emails, texts and calls went out to the media and the Chamber of Commerce to alert the town – its businesses and citizens – that power would be cut town-wide from 9a to 1p on Tuesday.

According to Mayor Pat Taylor, a tree fell on a house in the Cashiers area and subsequently on to a main Duke transmission line serving Highlands.

"Today at 9 am Duke will cut power service to Highlands to remove the tree and repair their main transmission line," said the Mayor. "The outage will be for several hours and power should be restored to Highlands around 1 pm. All of the Town of Highlands

will lose power during this period."

Highlands staff was at Town Hall to man the phones for those who didn't get the message about the planned outage.

Highlands School opted to close Tuesday as did many businesses.

By 1 p.m. the power still wasn't on.

The mayor said there was no word from Duke. It was suggested Duke was behind schedule perhaps there were issues between the Thorpe power station in Tuckesegee and the site of the problem in Cashiers.

But finally at 2 p.m., the power was back on and the town was up and running.

– Kim Lewicki

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...NURSES continued from page 1

reported by nurses on forms known as Assignment Despite Objection (ADO), a formal complaint system developed by the labor union representing Mission nurses to document unsafe assignments that, in their professional judgment, put patients at risk. The forms are completed only after the nurses have informed their supervisors with no resolution.

Nurses at Mission have filed more than 200 ADOs since July 2021, when the nurses' union contract was ratified. Asheville Watchdog requested the forms from the union and obtained 45 of them with the nurses' names and identifying information redacted.

The forms, along with interviews with current and former nurses, paint a picture of a hospital that was once highly regarded and a source of community pride, but that has degenerated, the nurses said, into a punishing workplace, where staffing reductions and shortages have diminished the quality of care.

Mission denies that quality of care has suffered under HCA ownership and points to an "A" grade in the latest Leapfrog rating of hospital safety metrics. Mission also rightly notes that staffing shortages are a nationwide problem and not unique to Mission Hospital.

Mission was a family

As a nonprofit for more than a century, Mission Hospital was not only Buncombe's largest employer but also a "destination" hospital, where nurses planned to spend their entire careers.

"It was very much a family," said Kelley Tyler, who has been a nurse at Mission for 36 years. "We all looked out for each other. We all celebrated and cried with each other."

Susan Fischer, a registered nurse who has been at the hospital for 16 years, said that when she came to Mission, "I thought I had fallen into heaven. It was exactly what I always wanted nursing to be."

The nurses said they took pride in their work and their employer. "You felt you are a part of a great thing," Tyler said. "And I honestly can't say that about my job now."

After profit-focused HCA Healthcare took over from nonprofit Mission Health in 2019, nurses told Asheville Watchdog, their workload increased as management cut positions from housekeeping to food service. Nurses left, often replaced by part-time or traveling nurses, if at all.

'I cannot do it all'

Tyler's 44-bed unit used to have one



Mission RN Kelley Tyler

nurse for every three patients. Most days now, she said, there is one for every six.

Tyler said she recently received a phone message for off-duty nurses from Mission that said, "We desperately need nurses. Tonight, we only have four RNs."

"I mean, do the math, that's 11 patients apiece," Tyler said.

Claire Hubbard, who worked in the Office of Decedent Affairs before HCA eliminated it, and then became a part-time nurse, said traveling nurses at Mission told her, "Oh my god, I never expected to have this many patients."

Fischer said higher workloads mean less time for each patient. "If it is six patients, that's 10 minutes an hour, seven patients it's 8.5 minutes an hour, eight it's 7.5 minutes an hour," she said.

And some patients need more care than others. "You might walk in there and they're incontinent, so they must be changed first," she said. "You could be in there 20 or 30 minutes when you were just going to pass medications."

Mission's patients come from across western North Carolina, where the population tends to be older and sicker than average.

Nurses have taken on other tasks as HCA cut back on support staff, including housekeeping. "We're not beyond doing this," Fischer said. "But when you have six, seven, eight patients ... garbage is not going to be your priority."

Recently, nurses have been asked to draw patients' blood because of a shortage of phlebotomists, technicians who would normally perform the task, Fischer said.

Certified nursing assistants (CNAs) have also been cut. Tyler's unit is supposed to have four, she said, but "It's very common that we only have one or two."



Mission RN Susan Fischer

One day in September, Fischer and Tyler said, the dietary staff was so short that breakfast was not served.

"We have patients that are diabetics that absolutely need to be fed and they had no food," Fischer said. Nurses, she said, scrounged up peanut butter crackers provided as snacks on the wards, and gave them to patients.

Fischer said traveling nurses have told her, "I cannot do it all."

Unsafe assignments

Registered nurses at Mission, concerned about deteriorating working conditions and patient care, voted to join the National Nurses United union in September 2020. The Mission nurses who spoke to Asheville Watchdog for this story are union members.

Mission nurses have protested at union-organized rallies, including one in February over what they described as unsafe working conditions during the pandemic. In response to nurses' complaints, the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the North Carolina Department of Labor on March 22 cited Mission and proposed nearly \$30,000 in fines for violations that included failing to ensure employees wore properly fitted masks and safety equipment and not reporting an employee's death from COVID-19.

"The safety and well-being of our patients and caregivers is our top priority," Lindell wrote in an email to news media. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of one of our caregivers. We have no evidence that directly ties their illness to the loving care they gave our patients."

Mission has requested a conference on the citations with the Occupational Health and Safety Division, but a date has not yet been set, Jennifer Haigwood, spokes-

woman for the Department of Labor, said Wednesday.

Nurses say their nursing licenses are on the line if something goes wrong.

"Their big fear is losing their license permanently, not just losing a job at this one hospital," Tyler said. "Management is faulting the nurses if things aren't done right."

Fischer said she knows of nurses who have asked for more help, and "the house supervisor has threatened them with insubordination." The Assignment Despite Objection (ADO) forms are meant to protect nurses and their licenses.

"Today's assignment is unsafe and places my/our patients at risk," the form says. "As a result, the facility is responsible for any adverse effects on patient care."

Melanie Wetmore, Mission's Chief Nursing Officer, said, "We have gone to great lengths to solicit the voice of our caregivers."

In a statement to Asheville Watchdog, Wetmore said that in addition to monthly meetings, town halls, and other venues for communication such as staff meetings, "I make regular rounds on all of our hospital units to personally review operations and to speak with staff. Our supervisors are among the best I have worked with and we appreciate and respect our nursing teams at Mission Hospital."

'Substandard care'

The ADOs reviewed by Asheville Watchdog show a pattern of recurring concerns: too many patients per nurse, too few nursing assistants, and delays in such essential care as administering medication and taking vital signs.

"Patients placed inappropriately on a unit required a higher level of care than could be provided," wrote a nurse on a medical/surgical unit.

"Meds late, unable to turn patients and stabilize per unit standards, substandard care when assignments are too heavy," wrote a nurse in an intensive care unit.

"Full COVID unit inadequately staffed for acuity of floor," said another.

One nursing assistant reported being bitten by a patient.

"Personal patient care cannot be given in a timely manner when RNs have too many patients and there is 1 CNA [certified nursing assistant] for 36 patients."

The union's Professional Practice Committee shares the ADOs and their recommendations with Mission's management in monthly meetings. The Chief

• See NURSES page 10

• OBITUARIES •

Della Catherine Norman

On March 22, 2022, Della Norman died peacefully at her home at Chestnut Hill Assisted Living in Highlands, NC. She is survived by her children Donald Fulcher, Carolyn Wolz, William Foss Jr., and Jay Norman. She is preceded in death by her son James Fulcher and husband Norris Norman. Della was extremely proud of all or her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren and boasted about their accomplishments to everyone she met.

Della Catherine Howell was born on December 20, 1929, and lived a full life. She was well known for her joyous Christmas decorations, and she welcomed all to her home to share in her vibrant celebrations. Throughout her life, Della

traveled extensively around the world. She was a self-taught artist, a successful business woman owning her own salon at the Colonnades Hotel in Singer Island, Florida, and enjoyed spending time at her "mountain home" in North Carolina where she grew beautiful gardens.

There will be a celebration of Della's life Saturday, April 2, 2022, at North Brevard Funeral Home, 1450 Norwood Avenue, Titusville, Florida. Viewing will be at 10:00 a.m. with Funeral Service at 11:00 a.m. Interment will be at Oaklawn Memorial Gardens next to her beloved Norris.

Moffitt Family Funeral Care and North Brevard Funeral Home are honored to serve Mrs. Norman's family.

Willis Eugene 'Gene' Billingsley

Willis Eugene "Gene" Billingsley, 84 of Scaly Mountain, passed away on Friday, April 1, 2022.

Gene was born in Macon County to the late James Newton Billingsley and Lillie Hazel Brown. In addition to his parents, he was preceded by nine brothers and sisters. Gene loved gardening, raising cabbage, and working with flowers during his favorite seasons of Spring and Summer.

His is survived by his wife of 61 years Eunice Taylor Billingsley; children, Debra Jean Billingsley Allred (Sidney) of St. Augustine FL; and Ronnie Eugene Billingsley (Tina) of Scaly Mountain, NC; one sister, Gail Head of Scaly Mountain, NC; 3 grandchildren, Clay Allred, Amber Allred, and Kristi Stockton; three great grandchildren, Clara Woods, Abigail Woods and Cam English; and several

nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends and loved ones from 12 pm to 1pm on Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at Macon Funeral Home.

A graveside service will be held at Scaly Mountain Methodist Cemetery at 2pm on Wednesday, April 6, 2022.

Rev. Don Bates will officiate.

Pallbearers will be Clay Allred, Keith Billingsley, Chris Gilbert, Jamie Holt, Steve Holt, and Scott Vinson.

Honorary Pallbearers will be Donnie Billingsley, Johnnie Billingsley, Jody Taylor, and Kevin Earp.

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

...NURSES continued from page 9

Nursing Officer is supposed to respond with a solution within a month, according to the union contract.

"Sometimes they ignore us or are completely dismissive of the things we recommend," said Kelly Graham, a nurse who is on the union committee.

The union did stop one practice: placing patient beds in the hallways to reduce congestion in the emergency room, said Tyler, the long-time nurse at Mission.

Nancy Lindell, director of public and media relations for HCA Healthcare's North Carolina Division, said, "The Hospital reviews the ADO forms to assess the substance of the objection and the appropriateness of the assignment. This review is done by the supervisor and charge nurse on duty as well as by the manager and director."

She said Mission management addresses the recommendations that come from the practice committees, and that "staffing is reviewed every 4 hours every day."

Nursing shortage, then COVID

Like hospitals across the country, Mission is grappling with a shortage of nurses, exacerbated by the pandemic. Mission Health has a total of approximately 2,100 registered nurse positions, but as of March 30, a Mission job board listed 429 registered nurse openings, almost all of them in Asheville.

"The country's critical nursing shortage reaches beyond Asheville, as estimates indicate that last year more nurses retired than ever before with an additional 500,000 retirements anticipated by 2022," Lindell said.

Research by the Sheps Center for Health Services Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill estimated that the state would have a shortage of 12,500 nurses by 2033, with the greatest shortfall, 10,000, in hospitals.

Lindell said Mission is recruiting to fill nursing jobs as quickly as possible and is offering signing bonuses, recruiting internationally and partnering with "multiple nursing programs."

But on social media, Mission's reputation under HCA may be interfering with some of those recruitment efforts. A Reddit thread on traveling nurses, for example, warns against working at Mission because of unsafe working conditions. "I've heard from nurses that they underpay and under-staff," one job seeker wrote.

Hannah Drummond, a former traveling nurse now on staff at Mission, said that on online traveling nurse sites, "HCA has a reputation across the country for terrible working and staffing conditions, and Mission is known within that circle well."

Temporary travelers fill in

Traveling nurses, or travelers, working under contract typically for four to 13 weeks, are helping fill the gap at Mission. Healthtrust, a subsidiary of HCA, provides job placement for contract nurses, although Lindell said that travelers at Mission are not exclusively contracted through that company.

Mission staff nurses told Asheville Watchdog that roughly half of the hospi-

• See NURSES page 14



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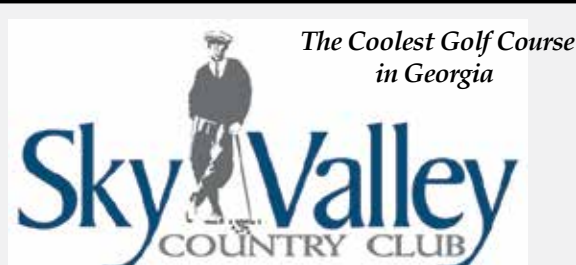
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Do covid buyers have regrets?

Last week I was watching the news and there was a segment on the "Great Resignation Regret," discussing how many people resigned from their jobs during the early part of Covid and now regret that they did so. Some reports show that up to 70% of the people who resigned or changed jobs regret the decision that they made. That got me questioning how many Covid buyers may be regretting their purchase of a house on the plateau. Maybe they made a quick decision and have started to realize that they miss the city or the convenience of all things available in a metro area. Or, that they cannot work as efficiently because of internet speed or cell service. Perhaps they had not thought about what a winter would be like with snow, ice and power outages. I know of some who realized it was more challenging to get here than they originally planned. Whatever the reason, do those buyers have regrets?

I spent some time going back through data in the MLS, primarily beginning June 1, 2020 which is when the real estate market took a turn with the amount of activity, number of sales and the change from a buyer's market to a seller's market. Between June 1, 2020 and March 31, 2022 there were 2096 single family residential transactions in our MLS. The average number of days on the market dropped from 249 to 126 and the average sales price increased from \$668,000 to \$917,000.

I wasn't able to analyze 2100 transactions, but did take a close look at the 153 sales that occurred in the first quarter of this year. Of those, 15, or 10% of the sales were re-sales of homes purchased since June of 2020. All of the sales prices were above the prior closing price, with a range of 3.2% to 121%, with the average increase being 58.8%.

Looking more closely at the sales, some were what would be classified as flips, with significant improvements made before coming back on the market. Others may have had some cosmetic work or repairs done and some had been beautifully furnished and offered as turn-key. There were some that had been turned into rentals and sold as such. There were very few cases where nothing much had been done.



Carl Romberg, BIC
Landmark Realty Group's
Highlands Office.

There is no doubt that some sellers saw an opportunity to make a quick profit and yet there were probably some that were sold due to the usual circumstances caused by a job relocation, divorce or health reasons.

Beyond looking at what sold during the first quarter I looked at what was currently active, in due diligence or pending. There were 260 listings in these categories with 35 being resales, or 13.5%. So, even if the numbers

of resales are starting to climb, I don't see an indication of widespread buyer's regret. Certainly not 20% or more, even with the opportunity for those buyers to not only recoup their investment but to make a nice profit.

Other factors that indicate the lack of buyer's remorse include the number of lots that have been sold with the intent to build. These buyers are willing to forego the satisfaction of being able to immediately use a property for the long-term benefit of building exactly what they like where they want to be. Numerous properties are currently under construction and will close as soon as they are completed. There are still plenty of buyers that are on the sidelines waiting on the right property or opportunity. Even with the increase in prices these buyers are still ready to invest in real estate on the plateau.

It is rare that real estate is considered a short-term investment. A pandemic, along with other factors may have turned our market, but it is apparent that buyers don't have remorse. Maybe the slow internet or poor cell coverage provides opportunities to get away from work and enjoy the beauty that nature provides us here on the plateau. Or possibly those buyers have realized that they don't need the conveniences from a city and are glad to slow down, enjoy the cultural offerings and support locally owned businesses. Although I relocated to the mountains well before a pandemic, those are exactly the reasons why I don't plan to make a change.

• *Carl Romberg is the Broker-in-Charge of Landmark Realty Group's Highlands Office. Stop by his office on Main Street to say hello or reach him at 678-936-9309 or carl@landmarkrg.com.*

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Spring Home Improvement 2022

Landscaping Tips for Instant Curb Appeal

(StatePoint) One of the best ways to achieve instant curb appeal, according to the experts, is to ef-

fectively layer shrubs, plants and flowers in your front yard. Doing so can create a cohesive visual experience that naturally guides visitors to the front door.

Landscape designer Doug Scott describes plant layering in art terms: "Just like in a painting, you need to have a background, a middle ground and a foreground. Each layer serves

a purpose, and there's no more important place for them to be on full display than your home's entrance."

To help homeowners understand the purpose of plant layering and identify the best types of plants for each layer, Scott has joined forces with Exmark, a leading manufacturer of commercial mowers and equipment for landscape

professionals and serious DIY-ers. Here they break it down for you:

1. **Background:** The background layer should consist of taller evergreen shrubs to ensure that no matter what's in front of them, you and your visitors will always have something green to look at. This layer provides a cohesive backdrop and a bit of living color in every season.

2. **Middle Ground:** Here's where to step it down a notch in height and add interesting shapes, colors or stripes that provide contrast against the darker green of the background layer. Herbaceous perennials, like lavender, are a good choice for this purpose.

3. **Foreground:** Finally, the foreground layer should help transition the planting beds to your lawn space or sidewalk, and should therefore be lower than the back two layers. It's also where you can keep things fresh and get your hands dirty throughout the year by changing out annuals with the seasons. Or, if you want a lower-maintenance entrance, you can choose smaller perennials, evergreens or creeping ground covers. Use the foreground

layer as an opportunity to add pops of color at ground level and draw attention to your home's entrance.

Scott lays out a few other important tips to keep in mind:

- Choose plants consistent with your home's style. For instance, if you have a craftsman home, you should probably skip tropical plants. Or, if your home is more minimalist, avoid an overabundance of different plants.

- Don't obstruct views of your front door from the street with plants. Likewise, visitors shouldn't have to maneuver around plants as they make their way down the sidewalk. Neither is convenient or welcoming, so you'll either need to keep pruning plants to size, or choose plants that won't overgrow their space without a ton of pruning.

- To make your entrance "the star" it should be, the plant material in the rest of your front yard shouldn't be distracting. Rather let it frame the intended view.

Through effective plant layering, you can boost curb appeal and give your home the grand entrance it deserves.



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Spring Home Improvement

Spring Cleaning: Is Your 'Junk' Worth a Fortune?

(StatePoint) If your family is like most, you have "junk" in your basement, garage or attic, such as sports cards, memorabilia and toys. Before you toss them out during spring cleaning, consider that the prices of sports cards, games and other ephemera are skyrocketing.

How can you determine if your stuff is valuable and, if it is, how can you sell it?

A widely accepted rule for sports cards, memorabilia and toys is that older

items are worth more. However, these days even more recent items are also commanding high prices.

"Vintage sports cards from the early periods of a sport are almost always highly collectible, especially of Hall of Famers," says Al Crisafulli, Auction Director at Love of the Game Auctions, an internet sports and memorabilia auction that helps families sell collectibles. "But don't assume sports cards or other memorabilia have to be old to be valuable. Modern cards of

such stars as Tom Brady, Mike Trout, LeBron James, Michael Jordan, Derek Jeter and others can sell for lots of money."

He is offering tips to help determine if your belongings are valuable:

Older Sports Cards

Cards from the 1960s and earlier are collectible, and those from before the 1940s can be extremely valuable. Big-name Hall of Famers like Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Lou Gehrig, Honus Wagner, Mickey Mantle and others bring high prices.

With old cards from the 1880s and early 1900s, look for tobacco and candy brands, such as Old Judge, Piedmont, Sweet Caporal or American Caramel. Really old Sports memorabilia from the 19th and early 20th Century, such as photographs, postcards, bats, gloves and balls are also collectible.

When opting to sell sports items, consider a specialty auction, such as Love of the Game, which has the expertise to professionally

• See JUNK page 14



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...NURSES continued from page 10

tal's nurses are now travelers, and in some units, almost all are.

On Fischer's floor, typically just one nurse is a full-time employee, and the rest are travelers, she said. As a result, "there's almost no continuity of care," she said.

Travelers have been crucial to fill staffing shortages, Fischer said, but they lack a commitment to the hospital "and that makes a huge difference."

Elle Kruta, a nurse case manager who handles patient transitions to their homes, said that employing travelers "makes good business sense, but doesn't make good patient care."

Some Mission nurses have left to become travelers, who typically are paid far more than staff nurses, and receive a stipend for living expenses, which staff nurses don't receive.

Fischer said a former Mission colleague is now a traveling nurse in South Carolina, where she cares for fewer patients and has more nursing assistants. "She feels like

she can take good care of her patients now, and she's getting paid three to four times more a week than I am," Fischer said.

Another Mission nurse told Fischer she'd be paid \$4,100 a week as a traveler between her salary and stipend; at Mission, she makes \$900 a week.

Quitting Mission, leaving profession

Between working conditions and the lure of travelers, nurses at Mission are leaving, with some quitting the profession entirely.

Under HCA management, Hubbard, the former nurse in Decedent Affairs, said the nurses she knew at Mission are looking for other jobs or have gone to hospitals in nearby Hendersonville.

Fischer said nurses stressed from caring for too many patients or acutely ill patients "with no help" have left to become travelers, or in some cases to take lower-paying office jobs. "One nurse," she said, "actually quit the profession altogether."

Tyler, the 36-year Mission nurse, said some travelers leave

before the end of their contracts.

"If they are not willing to stick out their 13-week contract or even their four-week contract," Tyler said, "it opens your eyes to how dire the situations and conditions are at the hospital."

• *Asheville Watchdog is a non-profit news team producing stories that matter to Asheville and Buncombe County. Barbara Durr is a former correspondent for The Financial Times of London. Contact her at bdurr@avl-watchdog.org.*

• *This story was originally published by Asheville Watchdog, www.avlwatchdog.org.*

• *To read part 1 & 2 of the Asheville Watchdog series on HCA/Mission go to www.highlandinfo.com, click on local news and scroll down to the March 24 edition for Part 1 "Attorney General's office had great concerns the Mission-HCA deal was rigged from the beginning" which begins on page 12. For Part 2, "How many doctors have left Mission? HCA won't say" download the March 31 edition and go to page 12.*

...JUNK continued from page 13

research sports items and maintains lists of bidders specializing in this area, to get top dollar. More information is available at loveofthegameauctions.com.

Modern Cards

Prices on recent baseball, basketball and football cards have risen rapidly. The three keys are condition, star power and cards from early in player careers.

Do you have major current stars, like Mike Trout, Patrick Mahomes, Tom Brady and LeBron James? Or do you have greats from the recent past, like Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, Magic Johnson, Derek Jeter or Joe Montana?

Check if your cards are denoted as Rookie, Prospect, Draft Pick or other indicators they're from a player's first season. And condition is king, as cards that look pack fresh with sharp corners and

a well-centered image command highest prices. Additionally, unopened packs and boxes from almost any year can be valuable.

Memorabilia

Do you have old advertising posters depicting sports stars or famous entertainment personalities together with food, tobacco or sporting goods brands. Many original signs, store displays and promotional items are collectible, especially those dating from the early 1900s into the 1960s. But low-quality reproductions aren't. Look for memorabilia spotlighting sports heroes, superheroes, early Walt Disney characters and Star Wars subjects.

So, while you're spring cleaning that attic, basement or garage, don't rush to the garbage. Before throwing out old "junk," determine if it's valuable!

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...UKRAINIANS continued from page 1

veloped whereby members could donate to a variety of causes accompanied by a dollar-for-dollar club match.

Online donations can be made to the *Rotary Foundation Disaster Response Fund*, a Hungary Rotary club on the Ukrainian border as well as organizations addressing specific needs -- *ShelterBox* for housing, *Doctors without Borders* for medical, and *World Central Kitchen* for food. Currently the club has raised over \$25,000 for Ukraine relief.

The war in Ukraine is having devastating consequences on civilians including the loss of homes, livelihoods, as well as families and friends.

"Gratefully people in Highlands and Cashiers are often very supportive of those in need. And we believe together we can have an even greater impact," said Kirkland. "The mayor's proclamation is a strong call to action to

the Highlands community unifying our support for Ukraine and its people."

Mayor Taylor called for the citizens of Highlands to stand together with the people in the towns and in the rural areas of Ukraine as they are being savagely attacked by Putin.

"As a mayor I can't image the devastation of a community of people being indiscriminately bombed by foreign military forces," he said. "Our hearts and prayers go out to the brave Ukrainian people. Highlanders will respond with financial support also."

To donate, go to respective sites online. Send the receipt of the donation and Mountaintop Rotary will match it dollar-for-dollar. Donations can also be mailed to the club at PO Box 372, Highlands, NC 28741. Make checks out to Highlands MountainTop Rotary and put Ukraine in the memo line.

— Kim Lewicki

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• HIGHLANDS AREA 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-1pm (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, 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 10:15-11am.

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+). Insurance will be filed; please bring your insurance card with you. Questions? Call 828.349.2081.

Mon, Wed, Thurs

- Indoor and outdoor Pickle Ball 10:30 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

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

Fri-Sun, April 8-10

- At The Playhouse, the movie, "Cyrano." at 1 and 4 p.m.

Thurs., April 7

- Wildflower Walk at the Highlands Nature Center from noon to 1 p.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

Sat. April 9

- Garden Tour at the Highlands Nature Center from noon to 1 p.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

Sun., April 10

- DEATH CAFE, Sunday, 2-4 pm, Wayfarers Unity Chapel, 182 Wayfarer Lane, Dillard, GA DEATH CAFE is a global movement started in the UK whose only objective is: "To increase awareness of death with a view of helping people make the most of their finite lives." Join Jan Brewer, M.A., CMT, for a group-directed conversation in the welcoming space of Wayfarers Chapel about death and dying/life and living. Come talk about all things death-related with others wanting to join the discussion. For further information please contact Jan at (510) 684-5555 or visit www.death-cafe.com.

Wed., April 13

- Early Bird Stroll at the

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

Highlands Nature Center from 9-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org.

- Hudson Library, in partnership with Vaya Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health, held on the second Tuesday of each month throughout 2022. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health issues of particular interest to them. Wednesday held at 2 PM, is titled "Covered Up: What You Need to Know about Hoarding."

Thurs., April 14

- Italian Inspired Spring Fling at The Farm with Executive Chef, Craig Richards. Book online at OldEdwardsInn.com
- Winter stories will be held at the High Dive from 2-4, a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

- Wildflower Walk at the Highlands Nature Center from noon to 1 p.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

Sat. April 16

- Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

Tues., April 19

- Nature 101: Beautiful Blooms at the Highlands Nature Center from 1-2 p.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

Wed. April 20

- Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

Thurs., April 21

- Wildflower Walk at the Highlands Nature Center from noon to 1 p.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

Fri. April 22

- Come to the first-ever Justice Meters 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 828-575-1353 or email Megan@pisgahlegal.org.

- The Democratic Women of Macon County will hold an Earth Day Potato Supper, Friday, at the Carpenter Com-

munity Center, 1288 Georgia Road. Supper includes a baked potato, all the fixings, a dessert and a drink for \$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 present to greet voters. Tickets may be purchased from members of Democratic Women or by calling (678) 357-7718. Information about Earth Day and how each person can help invest in the planet also will be available.

Sat. April 23

- Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

- The American Legion Post 370 April Meeting is Saturday with Breakfast @9AM and Meeting @10AM due to the family travel conflicts that arrive as a result of Easter Weekend. May meeting will resume as usual at the Methodist Church.

- 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@highlandschamber.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

Wed. April 27

- Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 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

Sat. April 30

- Early Bird Stroll at the Highlands Nature Center from 8-9 a.m. 828.526.2623 paige@highlandsbiological.org

April 29-May 1

- Bear Shadow Music Festival. For tickets go to bearshadownc.com.

Thurs., May 12

- Winter stories will be held at the High 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, au-

thor and lifestyle expert Chadwick Boyd. Book at OldEdwardsHospitality.com/chefdinners

Fri., May 20

- Come to the first-ever Justice Meters 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 1:30 - 3p.m. and delves into how Pisgah Legal address-



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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •



'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'

- John 1:5

Rev. Angie Ballard
Holy Family Lutheran
Church: ELCA

Growing up I never attended an Easter Vigil, or a Maundy Thursday Service for that matter. In fact, it was almost a decade after I joined the Lutheran Church that I participated in my first Easter Vigil. Don't get me wrong, I love the Palm Sunday Hosannas and the Alleluias of Easter, but it was standing in the dark by a fire outside the church, reading scripture and the litany of prayer that stayed with me.

Since then, Easter Vigil has been, for me, one of the most stirring and profound services of Holy Week as it speaks directly to the daily reality of life. Illness, divorce, low paying wages, food insecurity, and financial hardship are just a few examples of life's uncertainties that keep us up at night and can, in time, lead us into the abyss of anxiety. So, in this way, all of us – some more than others – live portions of our lives keeping vigil in the darkness. While we encounter Christ's agonizing pain on Good Friday followed by the triumph and glory of His resurrection on Easter, Holy Saturday is that in between time; that time of being wedged between the fear of death and certain hope in the resurrection.

Now we know how this story ends and it's a happy one involving resurrection and new life! But what we share with those first disciples is this: we can never be certain what the future holds. We don't know if all illnesses we face will be cured, if marriages will endure, or whether or not our finances will always be stable and sufficient. I am sure my unknowns are very similar to many of yours and like the women and men on that first Holy Saturday, we all live with an uncertain, but hope-filled future. And I would ask that during this Holy Week we consider taking time to pray about our worries and uncertainties, with the knowledge that God is with us as we wander in our darkened wilderness.

Folks, life often feels like every day is Holy Saturday with no resurrection in sight. And when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death it's okay be afraid; to fear evil in whatever form it appears. Still, if we can turn our senses, mind and heart towards God, we will be guided by the light of Christ shining in the darkness! And perhaps along the way when we come across others who are also struggling, we might show them not only love and compassion, but also invite them to join us and journey together. It is when we stand next to one another in the shadows, illuminated by fire, reading the Word, and our prayers rising up like incense that we realize that we are not alone; and the night of Holy Saturday lends itself to the dawn of Easter.

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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

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

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10:45am Children's Program. Youth-12:15 – 2:30pm Tues:

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

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

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• HS SPORTS •



Highlands Addie Westendorf jumps in front of a Murphy player and picks off a pass.

Lady Highlanders defend home turf against Murphy

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Highlands girls varsity soccer team hosted Murphy on Monday and took the win with a final of 5-2. The Lady Highlanders were victorious despite playing without offensive threat Reese Schmitt, who was out due to a leg injury.

Keeping busy on the defensive line was Highlands senior Kaitlyn Doerter.

Doerter said she was happy with the win, but felt it wasn't their best game with some missed opportunities.

"I think we could have played better, but the best thing we had going for us was getting the ball from the back up to the front and scoring goals," she said.

Monday's win against Murphy puts Highlands' season record at 6-2-1.

Doerter said the season is going well and Highlands is gearing up for a rematch against Swain on April 21. The last time Highlands played Swain they lost 3-1 on March 17.

Anchoring the other side of the de-

fensive line is Doerter's sister, sophomore Abbie Doerter.

Abbie said Murphy came at them with speed and good passing, but Highlands was able to keep the pressure off Highlands Goalie Ava Schmitt while the offensive line put points on the board.

"We could have played better as a team and we were without our best striker, but they only got past us a couple of times," said Abbie. "Overall, I think we did a good job stopping them."

Keeping consistent pressure on Murphy's goal throughout the game were Highlands Gaby Diaz Martinez, Hayley Borino, Aislynn Luck, and Addie Westendorf.

Martinez said Murphy had some good passes, but Highlands kept pace with them and were able to pull off the win.

On March 31, Highlands played on the road against Hayesville and won 9-0, and played another away game on April 4 tying Brevard 3-3.

Highlands next plays at home on April 8 against Franklin beginning at 6 p.m.

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from March 22. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

March 22

• At 4:45 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident in the Park on Main garage.

March 23

• At 10 a.m., officers were called by the Highlands Land Trust about destruction to property at the Sunset Rock parking lot where a tree was cut down thereby damaging a sign.

March 27

• Issiah Christopher Blanchard, 21, of Highlands, was arrested for DWI and driving without a license when he was pulled over in Highlands Plaza. He was issued a \$1,000 unsecured bond. His trial date is April 20.

March 28

• At 8 a.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on Pierson Drive.

• At 2:30 p.m., officers were called about a larceny at a residence on Upper Lake Drive where 26 pairs of shoes valued at \$5,200 were taken.

• At 8:40 p.m., officers responded to a call

about a missing vehicle on Pine Street.

March 29

• At 8:33 p.m., Cesar Toledo Garcia, 35, of Franklin, was arrested for DUI, speeding and driving without a license when he was pulled over on the Franklin Road. He was issued an unsecured \$2,000 bond. His trial date is May 18.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from March 30.

March 30

• At 6:34 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Buck Creek Road.

• At 1:49 p.m., the dept. provided mutual aid to the Cashiers FD.

April 1

• At 7:16 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Hickory Lane.

• At 8:06 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Buck Creek Road.

• At 9:11 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hicks Road.

• At 2:15 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Azalea Lane.



First Presbyterian Church of Highlands Holy Week 2022

SUNDAY, APRIL 10

Palm/Passion Sunday

10AM: Adult Class

Children's Class

11AM: Morning Worship Service

This service involves hymns, anthems, scripture readings, and a "stripping" of the pulpit area.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14

Maudy Thursday Service & Dinner

6PM in Coleman Hall

Come for a light dinner followed by a worship service that includes the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

SUNDAY, APRIL 17

Easter Sunday

10AM: Adult Education Class

Children's Class

11AM: Easter Celebration Sunday Service

Sacrament of Holy Communion

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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.

...WILMINGTON continued from page 1

On April 5th the ruling was handed down in two parts. Parts of it will make one side happy; parts of it will make one side happier, and some won't like it at all.

The case involved the ability of a municipality to require permits, licenses or registrations of homes by homeowners who want to rent their homes as well as other land use stipulations.

The ruling said that municipalities cannot require a homeowner to register their home as an STR, nor can it require a license or a permit.

In Highlands, a business isn't even required to get a license so requiring homeowners to obtain one didn't make senses from the start.

The landuse stipulations that the ruling upheld include requirements already on Highlands' books regarding parking, trash, etc which homeowners for and against STRs say need to be enforced.

However, signage about the

STR – the owner's name, contact information, etc., which was recommended by the Planning Board was shot down by the ruling. Signage can be inside but not outside.

The ruling does say, however, that STRs can be delegated to certain zoning districts.

Of course that's the sticky part which the ruling doesn't make go away for Highlands – what zones should STRs be allowed in?

The ruling states in part:

It is **AFFIRMED IN PART, REVERSED IN PART, AND REMANDED; CROSS-APPEAL DISMISSED.** by Judges ZACHARY and CARPENTER who concur.

"We hold that the following provisions of the ordinance are not preempted by Section 160D-1207(c) and remain in effect reads the ruling:

(1) the restriction of whole-house lodging to certain zoning districts, i.e., the entirety of Sec. 18-331.1; (That rentals can be allocated to zoning districts.)

(2) the requirement that there be at least one off-street parking space per bedroom, whether on-site or off-site through shared parking or parking space rental agreements, i.e., the remaining portions of Sec. 18-331.5 not held preempted above;

(3) the prohibition against variances by the board of adjustment in Sec. 18-331.6;

(4) requirements that short-term operators comply with all applicable laws, disallow events and large gatherings, maintain adequate insurance, keep adequate records, ensure refuse is appropriately stored and collected, refrain from preparing and serving food, and prohibit cooking in individual bedrooms i.e., the entirety of Secs. 18-331.10-12. and .15-16;13

(5) the requirement that certain information unrelated to registration be posted in the rental, i.e., Secs. 18-331.14(a)-(c) and (e); and

(6) any provisions of the Ordinance not 13 Several of these provisions refer to "property

owners registering a whole-house lodging" or "[r]egistrants," but it is clear from their context that they are intended to apply uniformly to all short-term rentals. Because "it is apparent that the legislative body, had it known of the invalidity of the [registration] portion, would have enacted the remainder alone," Jackson v. Guilford Cnty. Bd. of Adjust., 275 N.C. 155, 168, 166 S.E.2d 78, 87 (1969), we hold these provisions remain valid despite the use of the words "registering" and "registrants."

In conclusion, For the foregoing reasons, we hold that the trial court correctly interpreted Sections 160A-424(c) and 160D-1207(c) in concluding that the short-term rental registration regime enacted by Wilmington was preempted by those statutes.

This means requiring homeowners who want to rent their home as a STR cannot be required to get a permit, registration or license regarding renting their home.

We also hold, however, that portions of the Ordinance, as identified above, are severable from the invalid registration provisions and remain operative. We therefore affirm the trial court's judgment in part, reverse the portion of the judgment declaring the entirety of the Ordinance invalid, and remand for entry of a judgment consistent with our holdings. Plaintiffs' cross-appeal is dismissed as moot.

Highlands has hired a land-use lawyer to go over its Unified Development Code language referring to STRs proposed by the Planning Board which will possibly be in opposition to Attorney Craig Justice who the town had hired and who had previously given his opinion on the UDO language.

"Since the ruling of by the NC Court of Appeals just came out, our attorneys are reviewing the decision and will advise the board on how to proceed," said Mayor Pat Taylor.

– Kim Lewicki

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...CLASSIFIEDS continued from page 21

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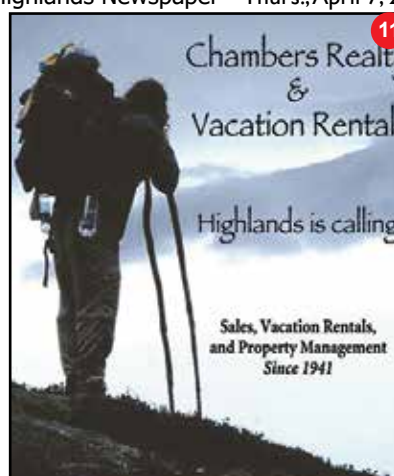
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