

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Sept. 29, 2022

Community wants HS soccer field fixed

Though the soccer field at Highlands School was heralded as a huge step forward for school soccer, it's been plagued with environmental problems since its inaugural season the spring of 2009.

Now, 13 years later, school

officials, parents and community members are asking the school board and the county to help remedy the situation.

At Monday night's School Board meeting held in Highlands, architect, parent and recently re-

tired soccer coach Jeff Weller, who has been involved with the soccer field since its inception, asked the board to replace the current soccer field with a turf field.

The price tag is \$840,000 not

• See **SOCCER** page 7

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BOC OK's RFQ for Highlands School Pre-School

By Brittney Lofthouse

Seven months after the Advancing Highlands Education Committee (AHEC) spoke to the Macon County Board of Commissioners about the need for the expansion of Highlands School for a pre-school classroom, the project is moving closer to reality.

The board of Commissioners gave County Manager Derek Roland the approval to move forward with the RFQ (Request For Qualifications) process for architectural design services for the project.

Macon County Schools currently has space for just under 100 pre-school spots, all of which are located in the Franklin area be-

• See **PRE-SCHOOL** page 17



At Monday night's School Board meeting, members traveled to the moon with VR goggles.

— Photo by Kim Lewicki

AHEC enriches learning with VR Goggles

Thanks to Highlands Advancing Highlands Education Committee (AHEC) learning at Highlands School is reaching new heights.

AHEC was initially formed to fill a void in technology at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but since then the committee has worked to address other needs within the school system most recently supplying (Virtual

goggles) VR goggles and tackling bigger issues like early education opportunities at the school.

At Monday night's Macon County Schools board meeting held at Highlands School, 7th and 8th grade students shared the out-of-this-world educational opportunities they have experienced with the goggles.

Eighth-grader Isaac Wardwell said his science class used the VR

goggles to take a trip with Artemis 1 on its planned uncrewed moon-orbiting mission, the first space-flight in NASA's Artemis program, and the first flight of the agency's Space Launch System rocket.

"Using the goggles we saw the course it's going to take around the moon and back to the earth. We started by exiting earth's atmosphere and then touring the moon

• See **GOGGLES** page 8

Cherokee Cty Schools cancel VB games with Highlands

By Brittney Lofthouse

Instead of facing Andrews High School last Thursday for their scheduled match, the Highlands Volleyball team went to Kilwins for ice cream and team bonding. The impromptu trip was a distraction for the players after finding out that the Cherokee County Board of Education voted in an Emergency Called Meeting to forfeit all remaining games against Highlands School JV & Varsity volleyball teams.

Cherokee County Board of Education members were notified of the Emergency Called Meeting via email on Tues., Sept. 20 at 3:58 p.m. The meeting was scheduled for the following day, Wed., Sept. 21 at 6 p.m. for the purpose of

• See **CHEROKEE** page 10

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Shared concerns across Western Carolina

As the mayor I continually meet with community groups, both here in Highlands and also in the Western Carolina region. These meetings constantly reminded me of our shared concerns.

Last week the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners met with the Highlands Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. It was a productive meeting where ideas and concerns were exchanged, as well as lines of communication reaffirmed.

A major topic was discussing what the chamber and visitors center can fund with the room occupancy tax that they receive. There is an array of special local legislation that governs how these tax funds can be spent throughout a varying state system of tourist development authorities.

Macon County has a TDA that oversees this process in Highlands, as well as in Franklin and Nantahala. The common core of all of the enabling legislation is that the tax revenue is to be spent on tourism promotion. So, when Commissioner Patterson brought up the idea of these tax funds being used to clean the downtown bathrooms, chamber members had reservations as to



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

whether that would meet the legislative criteria of promoting tourism. The counter argument is that such expenditures directly support tourism, by providing clean and necessary services.

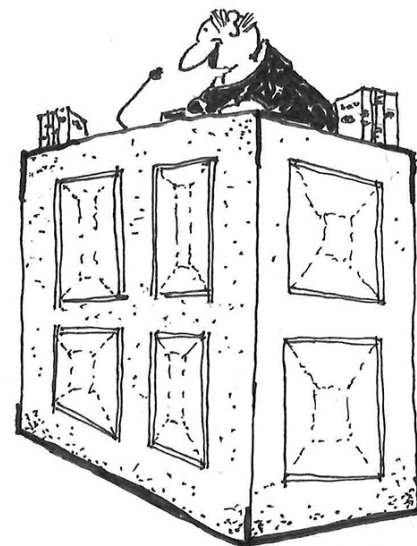
Last week, at the joint meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners and the boards from Franklin and Highlands, a similar concern was raised by Franklin Councilman David Culpepper. He asked why room tax funds could not be used for infrastructure projects that support tourism? David's question not only relates to our situation in Highlands, but similar questions have been raised across the state. It may be time for the legislature to review the issue and revise how room tax funds can be spent. This review might be in order given the influx of tax dollars coming into local Tourist Development Authorities (TDAs) coffers from Short Term Rentals (STRs). With the increase in tourism comes pressures on local governments to expand services throughout their communities.

I attended the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission quarterly meeting on Tuesday. I presided over a session of the Transportation Advisory Committee where an interesting presentation was made by staff members of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians on plans to convert their school bus fleet to electric powered vehicles. Their school system already has one electric bus in service. Several elected officials were very interested in electric vehicles and asked a lot of questions. I sensed that many communities in the region are beginning to address the electric vehicle trend and want as much information as possible. Everyone wants vehicles that have clean emissions, but those officials at the meeting were seeking answers and solutions on how to implement this major transportation shift.

The Highlands Town Board will be working with the Highlands Chamber on implementing an EV charging program. A provider of an EV charging system will be scheduled to make a presentation at the October board meeting.

Hope to see you at the community coffee tomorrow, this Friday at the Hudson Library. The coffee begins at 11 am. Our legislative delegation will join us.





• HIC'S VIEW •



HIC

"This court does not condone eating Hikers. But given your childhood, single parent home, I will dismiss the charges, if you only catch and release."

• WEATHER •

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(Lewis Grizzard)

Oh yes, there's a relationship between owning real estate in Highlands, the Fall, and the sport of College Football. It's everywhere, it's sensory, and it's important to both Buyers and Sellers. And to be perfectly candid, it breaks through the monotony of talking about STRs all the time.

My wife went to Auburn (War Eagle!), and I went to the University of Minnesota, home of the Golden Gophers (Row the Boat!). We've sold homes to Clemson fans (Go Tigers); LSU Fans (Geaux Tigers!), and more Auburn fans (Go Tigers!) ...I know, it's confusing because the Tigers are everywhere, and if you throw in the Missouri Tigers it's downright mind boggling.

As you walk around Highlands in the Fall, you hear the battle cries everywhere... "How 'bout them Dogs" or "Roll Tide!" I even heard one guy say, "The Beavers are back!" I guess there's a few Oregonians here as well, and I did see a beaver on Mirror Lake the other day.



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You see, being here is more a lifestyle decision than a housing decision.

Lifestyle is considering the beauty and importance of all four seasons, especially Fall which is my favorite time of the year. Fall and College Football need to be thought of in the same vein as hiking, golf, fly fishing, tennis, pickle-ball, croquet, canoeing, kayaking, birding, eating, drinking, shopping, or simply sitting on the deck on a cool morning with a Yellow Labrador and a hot cup of coffee.

If you truly choose the lifestyle, I promise you we'll find you the perfect place to live it and love it!

So, this weekend, I'll suggest you head for Highlands or Cashiers wearing your finest quarter-zip sweater with the college logo on the breast, go for a hike, play a round of golf, take in the fall splendor, and watch a little college football. That's the way we roll in Highlands! I'll leave you with one more quote from the late-great Lewis Grizzard who once wrote: "The South is the last place with a sense of place." C'mon Up!

• Pat Gleeson, Bee Gleeson, Christal Green and Gemma are proud to be a team of "Helpers" and Real Estate Brokers at Highlands-Sotheby's International Realty in downtown Highlands (Kitty Corner from Old Edwards Inn). You can reach all of us at 828.526.8300. Please stop by for coffee and conversation.

Here's my question. If you can't be at the game in-person, is there a better place to watch College Football than in the mountains of the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau? I doubt it!

In the purchase or sale of real estate, here it's important to be mindful of the Fall and College football. Do you have a deck or patio (that holds at least a dozen football fans)? Is there a big screen TV on that deck?

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Highlands School fledgling Middle School swim team is holding its own

**By Steve Hott
MS Swimming and Diving Head Coach**

On Friday, Sept. 23, Highlands Middle School (HMS) hosted a swim meet with Macon Middle School (MMS), Rabun Gap Nagoochee School (RGNS), and Valley Springs Middle School (VSMS).

The boys team, led by Jack Sumner and Chase Kenter, defeated RGNS and finished behind VSMS and MMS.

The girls, led by Trinity Fernandez-Faust beat VSMS and fell to MMS and RGNS.

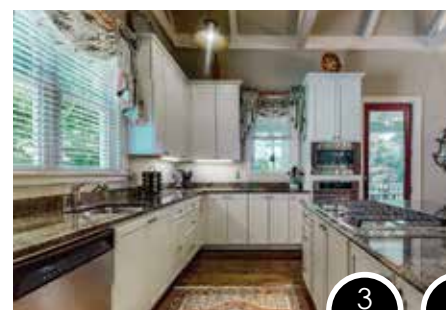
Sumner won both of his individual events and scored 56 pts. Kenter scored a first

and a second to garner 53 pts. Fernández-Faust got a second and third for 45.5 pts.

Ian Batista brought home 44 pts and 2 personal records (PR), Sadie Green scored 39.5 pts, Ivan Shchegachov scored 34 pts, and Cassie McDowell brought home 26.5 pts. All 4 had 2 of 2 best times.

Hayden Andrews scored 28.5 pts. Timmy McDowell continues to be on injured reserve but was able to participate in his first practice this season Monday, Sept. 26.

The next meet for HMS is on Thursday, September 29, at RGNS.



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...SOCCER continued from page 1

including in-kind work from area companies. The funds would have to be OK'd by the school system and provided by the county. The first step was asking the school board to move the issue forward.

Some history

The placement of the field on school property was meant to fix the problem of the school not having a regulation-size soccer field. But underlying environmental issues have plagued the field and caused an uproar from parents and students because games are postponed or canceled when the field is water-logged, which is often.

"We get 100-125 inches of rain per year in Highlands," said Weller at Monday's School Board meeting. "So far this season [one month] we've had 9 ½ inches of rain which means the field can't be played on."

Prior to the field's construction, soccer practices were held on a small open area at the school and all "home" games were played at Macon Middle School in Franklin.

The first boys soccer team at Highlands School came

in the mid-1990s. The first varsity girls season started in the early 2000s. Now, Highlands School has boys and girls teams for varsity High School as well as Middle School.

The construction of the Buck Creek fields for soccer and softball on the only flat area big enough on the plateau was a county feat in itself and was greatly needed. However, the soccer field wasn't regulation size and so school teams had to get a waiver from the state to use it and that is still the case today.

Eventually, the county and community came together to build a field on Highlands School property. The choices were the track or the area behind the school.

Both sites had issues.

The track spot wasn't long enough for a regulation field. State regulations require a minimum length of 100 yards by 50 yards wide.

The area behind the school was a pond long ago which meant water problems, but it could fit a field 108 yards long by 55 yards wide.

To deal with the inherent water problem, a "herring-bone" drainage system was constructed under the entire field. In addition, the field was sloped for surface drainage.

Throughout the years, maintaining the soccer field – grass treatment, fertilizer, mowing, aeration, overseeding – has all been accomplished through private donations and significant volunteer hours.

"As far as we are aware, in the past 13-14 years, there have not been any requests for county participation since the field was completed," said Jeff Weller.

When the field isn't playable

High School and Middle School Boys soccer is played in the Fall but due to the rainfall Highlands gets and the characteristics of the field, 5-10 home games have to be postponed, delayed or cancelled.

"Some of these dates are postponed more than once. It is also very common to lose matches of non-conference games due to postponement with no ability to reschedule opponent schedules," said Weller.

Due to the weather in Highlands, the boys' season typically ends around the end of October. The girls' season starts the middle to end of February, which means the field can't recover effectively between seasons due to the temperatures.

"We can't repair damage and overseed during that time to "reinforce" the playing area for the High School Girls and Middle School Girls teams. So, the girls generally start the season on a damaged field and play their season prior to any repairs being made. Sometimes the field can't be used because the ground is frozen," said Weller.

"We typically get 2-3 games into the season before outdoor practices are even possible."

When scheduling the Spring soccer seasons, the schedule is usually front-loaded with 6-8 away games because of frozen ground conditions.

When the field finally does start to melt, any rain causes bigger issues because the frozen ground below the first few inches keeps the field from draining properly.

"All schools have weather-related schedule changes, however, the impact of weather in Highlands' case, with the exception of severe weather, is limited to the time that the weather is taking place," said Weller. "What we are referencing in the postponements and cancellations related to the



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...GOGGLES continued from page 1

from the perspective of a rover before coming back to earth.

Seventh-grader Juliana Edelheit said her science class also used the goggles to go to space.

"We observed the earth's atmosphere,

and we went to the moon with them and observed Mars," she said.

AHEC bought one classroom set – 30 virtual goggles – to enhance learning opportunities for the students at the school.

According to Media Coordinator,

April Getz, during the week of Earth Day, 51 students in 3rd – 5th grade used the VR headsets and program to visit several different environments and endangered animals around the world.

"They visited the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and saw wolf tracks. They discussed how the refuge provides a home for animals amidst the commercial activities (such as logging, oil drilling, etc.) that take place in Alaska. They visited the rainforest and saw capuchin monkeys eating fruit, and then discussed the importance of conserving the rainforest as a habitat for animals. They joined an African safari and discussed the dwindling habitat of the cheetah," she said. "The ability to place themselves in each of the environments made the activity much more realistic and enjoyable for the students, and they were therefore more invested in the discussion.

In the second grade, 28 students used the VR headsets and the VR life cycles playlist to explore the life cycle of the cabbage white butterfly using 3D images of each stage of the butterfly's development.

"They also visited different environments in the spring and fall to see the different stages of plant life cycles, and explored 3D models of different seeds and plants," she said.

The media center staff has developed an online scheduling system for use of the headset cart. Teachers can schedule time to use the headsets in the media center or in their classrooms to augment and enrich their science, social studies, language arts and art and design lessons.

"Using this system, the headsets and the accompanying activities have the potential to reach the entire student population of our K-12 school," said Getz.

"Once one class used them, word spread and other classes asked to schedule a VR session. Students who have used the headsets are already asking when their next VR lesson will be."

The total cost of the goggles was \$19,862 and they were funded by a grant from the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation to AHEC.

– Kim Lewicki



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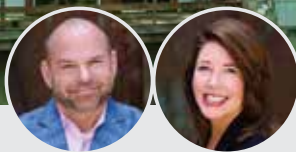
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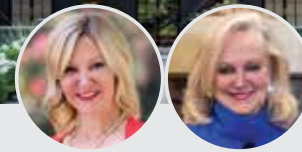
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...CHEROKEE continued from page 1

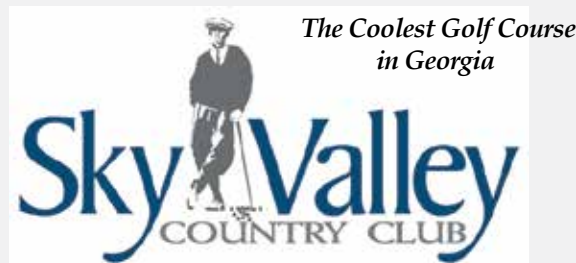
"student matters."

According to Greg Chapman, Administrative Assistant/Board Liaison for Cherokee County Schools, it was during that meeting on a motion made by Board of Education member Jeff Tatham and seconded by Joey Shore, "That we as a County will not participate in any volleyball games, varsity or junior varsity, against Highlands due to safety concerns."

The vote to forfeit the three remain-

ing games on the schedule for the Volleyball season passed by a vote of 5 to 1 with Kee-sha Curtis casting the lone dissenting vote.

In a follow up email, Chapman explained that, "Last Wednesday, the Cherokee County Board of Education determined the varsity and junior varsity volleyball teams within Cherokee County's high schools will not play the Highlands School volleyball teams due to safety concerns for Cherokee County Schools' athletes."



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Chapman said the board made the decision after a Hiwassee Dam High School volleyball player sustained head and neck injuries the previous week in a match against Highlands School. The injury occurred when a Highlands athlete spiked a ball, which forcefully struck a Hiwassee Dam athlete in the head.

When asked for clarification of the incident including the following questions:

"Was it unsportsmanlike from Highlands?"

Was the Highlands player intentionally attempting to cause another player harm?

Did Highlands not handle the injury during the game?

Was the Highlands player ejected from the game?

Has the Hiwassee Dam player recovered?"

Chapman responded and said that the original statement regarding the board's vote was all the information he was given and that minutes of the Emergency Called Board Meeting would not be available until after the Oct. 13 board of education meeting.

Although Chapman said that the decision was made due to an injury that occurred the previous week, according to the schedule, the last match up between Highlands and Hiwassee Dam was on Sept. 1.

According to meeting bullets available online, there was no discussion of the injury or player concern addressed at the video recorded and public meeting of the Cherokee County Board of Education held on Sept. 15.

Despite "safety concerns" from an injury that occurred on Sept. 1, Highlands School competed against Andrews High School on Sept. 5, winning 3-0, before the Sept. 22 game against Andrews was forfeited.

Macon County Schools Superinten-

dent Dr. Chris Baldwin said that he did not have any response from Cherokee County Schools regarding the alleged injury that led to the board's decision, but that he did speak to Cherokee County Superintendent Dr. Jeana Conley.

"I have spoken by phone with the CCS superintendent. She notified me of the CCS Board's decision to cancel (forfeit) the remaining volleyball games with Highlands," said Dr. Baldwin.

Cherokee County Schools vote applies to Andrews High School, Murphy High School, and Hiwassee Dam High School.

Dr. Baldwin noted that because the schools are forfeiting, the three remaining games on Highlands' schedule against Cherokee County Schools will be counted as a win for the Highlanders. Highlands will also advance in the conference tournament and state playoffs if paired with any of the Cherokee County teams.

Highlands is part of the Little Smoky Mountain 1A conference and out of the three Cherokee County high schools, Hiwassee Dam is the only school that shares the conference.

Highlands is currently undefeated in conference play and 7-8 overall, while Hiwassee Dam has not won a conference game this season and has lost 13 out of the 14 games they have played, with their solo win coming against Andrews High School on Aug. 22. Both Murphy and Andrews are part of the Big Smoky Mountain 1A Conference.

Highlands was scheduled to play Murphy High School on Wed., Sept. 28, however that game was forfeited. Because of the forfeiture, Murphy's 11-3 record will now change to 11-4 as the Highlands match-up will be counted as a loss for the Bulldogs.

This means Murphy has lost its 2nd place ranking. Hiwassee Dam is scheduled to play Highlands on Oct. 11, however that game will no longer occur.



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OCT. 14

Southern Highland Band

OCT. 21

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OCT. 28

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OCT. 15

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OCT. 22

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Fall Home Improvement - 2022

What to Do if Your Mortgage Application is Denied

(StatePoint) If you dream of homeownership, having your mortgage application denied can be devastating. If this does hap-

pen to you, it's important to remember that you're not alone. Thirteen percent of all purchase mortgage applications -- a total of nearly

650,000 -- were denied in 2020, according to federal government data.

Before quickly reapplying for a loan, it's important to first understand the reasons your loan was denied. The lender is required to disclose that information to you within 30 days of its decision. You can also call your lender for further explanation. Having this knowledge will help you work toward building your eligibility for a mortgage.

In some instances, the situation involves a quick fix, such as providing missing or incomplete documentation. However, if the reasons cited for your application denial involve down payment cost, a low credit score, an adverse credit history or a high debt-to-income ratio, here are six steps you can take toward recovery:

1. Consult a Housing Counselor. Consider speaking to a community-based credit counselor or a HUD-certified housing counselor. They can help you create a plan to increase your savings, decrease your debt, improve your credit, access down payment assistance or take advantage of first-time homebuyer programs.

2. Improve Your Credit. In a 2022 Freddie Mac survey of consumers denied a mortgage application in the past four years, three in five cited debt or credit issues as reasons given for their initial denial. If this describes you, take time to improve your credit profile before applying for another loan. Good credit demonstrates responsible money management and gives you more purchasing power, opening doors to better loan terms and products. Visit creditsmart.freddiemac.com to access Freddie Mac's CreditSmart suite

of free financial education resources that can help you understand the fundamentals of credit and prepare you for homeownership.

3. Pay Down Debt. In the application process, lenders will look at your recurring monthly debts, such as car payments, student loans and credit card loans. By lowering or paying down monthly debts, you can build a positive credit history and lower your debt-to-income ratio. Not sure where to start? Tackle your debt with the highest interest rate first.

4. Obtain Gift Funds. If you're short on money for your down payment, you may be able to use gift funds from a family member to decrease the amount you need to borrow.

5. Find a Co-Signer. A co-signer applies for the loan with you, agreeing to take responsibility for the loan should you default. The co-signer's credit, income and debts will be evaluated to make sure they can assume payments if necessary. In addition to ensuring your co-signer has good credit, you should make sure they are aware of this responsibility and have sufficient income to cover the payment.

6. Look for a Lower-Cost Home. Remember, you should only borrow an amount you feel comfortable repaying. You may need to look for a lower-cost home than you're financially prepared to purchase and maintain.

If your home loan application is denied, don't panic. There are ways to build your eligibility so that next time, your mortgage application is more likely to be approved.



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Fall Home Improvement

5 Ways to Save Energy in the Kitchen

(StatePoint) The kitchen is the heart of the home, it's also a space where you can waste a lot of energy if you're not careful. By making a few simple adjustments to your habits in the kitchen, you can easily cut your energy bills and do your part to help the environment.

"The appliances you select for your kitchen have effects far beyond the food you eat," says Peter Weedfald, senior vice president of Sales and Marketing at Sharp Home Electronics Company of America. "From the appliances you choose to how you use them, you can make a real difference in your energy consumption today."

Here are a few ideas for getting started:

Keep it cool:

Minimize the time you have the refrigerator door open. Cold air falls straight to the floor like water. The longer you leave the door open, the more cool air drains away and the harder your fridge has to work to replace it. Refrigerators that have pantry and

freezer drawers help contain the cold air even when they are open. Keep frequently accessed items in the refrigerated pantry drawer so everyone in the family can help themselves.

Go small or go home:

Whenever possible, opt to use your small appliances. For example, the next time you're reheating food, use the microwave instead of the stove or oven. According to the federal government program ENERGY STAR, microwaves use up to 80% less energy than conventional ovens.

Wash-up smart:

If you find yourself running your dishwasher before it's full, it's time to consider an upgrade. Find a dishwasher that allows you to manage your load size. Features like the half-load option or Wash Zone setting available on Sharp's Slide-In Stainless Steel Dishwashers will focus the water in one area when washing smaller loads to make every drop count.

Unplug:

If you're like most people, you use appliances

like your toaster and coffee-maker for just a few minutes each day. Unplug small appliances like these after you're done to stop "vampire energy," which is the energy consumed by items when they are plugged in but are not in use.

Make an upgrade:

Today's appliances are generally more energy efficient than older appliances, and there are a lot of energy efficient selections. According to ENERGY STAR, induction cooktops are around 5-10% more efficient than conventional electric units and about three times more efficient than gas. Bonus? Making the switch also means you'll no longer be emitting greenhouse gases associated with gas cooking. Learn more about smart, energy-saving appliances at sharpusa.com.

To put a dent in your energy bills and reduce your impact on the environment, be mindful of your habits in the kitchen. Small changes can add up quickly.

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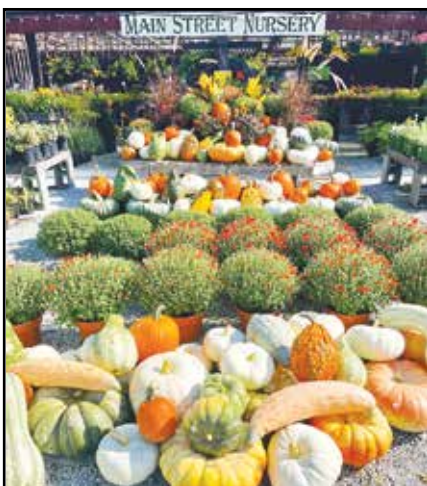
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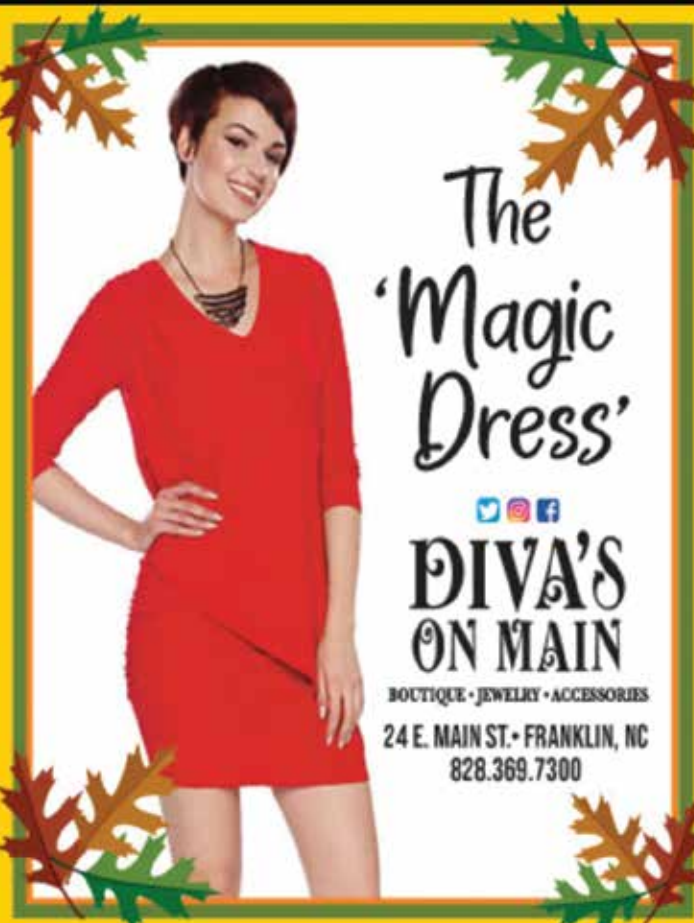
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• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

NEW Rec Pool Schedule

• Public Swim: Mon.-Wed. 3:30-7p; Sat. 11a-6p; Sunday 1-6p.
Adult Lap Swim: Mon-Fri 6-9:45a; Mon.-Thurs, 5-7p. Sat. 10-11a.
828-526-1595.

Mondays

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

Second Mondays

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

2nd Tuesdays

• Highlands Writers Group meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 3pm. Writers still uncomfortable with in-person gatherings may participate via Zoom meetings held on the second or third Tuesday of each month at 3pm. Members receive weekly notification regarding when and how the group will assemble. "We welcome participation from anyone interested in writing, or just hanging out with writers," said Bud Katz. For more information contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at budandlynn@me.com

Wednesdays in Sept.

• Community Yoga Class to benefit the Chattooga River Conservancy from 6-7:15p at Yoga Highlands, facilitated by Rachel Kinback CYT500. Fun and restorative movement. Come as you are. All skill levels are welcome. Suggested donation \$10-20.

Thursdays

• At Hudson Library, Family Storytime at 10:40a. For more information about any of these summer activities, contact Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

• At Hudson Library, Kids Zone at 3:30 pm with a wide variety of STEAM, nature, and craft

activities. For more information about any of these summer activities, contact Hudson Library at 828-526-3031.

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 for every muscle

• 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, 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 w/Tina Rogers 8-9a.

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.

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 different types of exercise.

Wed. & Sat in October

• Autumn Amble" leaf tours this October. Every Wednesday and Saturday at 4 PM, staff will lead an exploration of the Highlands Botanical Garden to discover what leaves are already changing and (the science of) why. All are welcome to participate in these free guided tours, and no registration is necessary.




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New Arrivals!



• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

Thursdays

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

Fridays

• Friday Night Live Concerts in Town Square on Main Street. 6-8:30 p.m. Bring chairs.

Saturdays

• Saturdays on Pine in K-H Founders Park on Pine Street. 6-8:30 p.m. Bring chairs, blankets and a picnic.

• Live music at **Frog Quarters just before the bridge over the Little Tennessee River in East Franklin.**

2nd Saturdays

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

3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets 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.

Thru Oct. 16

• The Mountain Theatre Company presents Brooklyn: The Musical, A Sidewalk Fairytale at The Playhouse on Oak Street. Wed. - Sat. @ 7:30p and Sat. & Sun. @ 2p. For tickets go to www.mountaintheatre.com.

Fri. Sept. 30

• Community Coffee at the Hudson Library at 11am in the with Mayor Patrick Taylor who will be joined by Representative Karl Gillespie and Senator Kevin Corbin, with a State Legislative Update.

Sat. Oct. 1

• Foxfire Mountaineer Festival 10a to 5p at the Rabun Civic Center in Clayton, GA. Admission is \$8 per person, with kids under 5 free. Games, competitions and vendors.

• Annual blessing of the Animals at 11 a.m., rain or shine at the Village Green Commons next to the post office. Bring you cat, dog or any of God's creatures. Pets should be leashed. Bring a chair or blanket.

Sat. Oct. 1

• SummitFest at 370 Mitten Lane. Games, prizes, Dunk Tank, Food and Fun. 1-4 p.m.

• Pop Up Pipers at OEI corner of Main

and 5th streets from 4:30-5p.

• A contra dance will be held in the Macon County Public Library on Saturday, with a half hour of instruction for beginners at 6:30 pm, followed by two hours of dancing. Attendees will dance on the wood floor of the Library's Living Room, with caller Charlotte Crittenden and live music by the band, Late to the Party, featuring fiddler Larry Barnett. No experience is needed; all dances will be taught. You don't need to bring a partner but are welcome to do so. Wear comfortable clothes; no perfumes or strong scents, please. Admission is by donation; light refreshments will be provided. The Library is at 149 Siler Farm Road, Franklin, Contact the Arts Council for details, 828-524-ARTS or email arts4all@dnet.net.

Sun., Oct. 2

• Empty Bowls fundraiser for the Highlands Food Pantry from 11:30a-1:30p. at First Presbyterian Church. Soups by Blue Hound BBQ in Sacle, Los Vaqueros, Primary, UMC of Highlands, Madison's Four65, Kitchen Carryaway & Catering. Tickets are \$25 and include a glazed stoneware bowl and soup. All proceeds go to the Food Pantry. For more information

cal 828-526-0890.

• Highlander Mountain House Salon Series with Dylan LeBlanc from 5:30-8p. For more information, call Harriet Hurst 864-415-6263.

• At the Highlands Performing Arts Center, A Brother's Revival at 7:30p. For more information call 828-526-9047.

Wed., Oct. 5

• Enjoy the stylings of singer-songwriter Alyssa Bonagura during the live concert series, Orchard Sessions 6-8 p.m. at OEI's The Farm. \$40. Book Online: <https://www.simpletix.com/e/orchard-session-features-alyssa-bonagura-tickets-102651>.

Sat., Oct. 8

• "Fall into Dance" month which also street dance on Franklin's Town Square Gazebo with Motown/Soul band West-Sound on Saturday at 7 pm. Contact the Arts Council for details, 828-524-ARTS or email arts4all@dnet.net.

• "Seriously Funny with Sirius XM's Mike Williams" at Highlands United Methodist Church 6-8:30 p.m. Info and registration at SmokeyPartners.com 828-349-3200.

• See EVENTS page 16

Pop Up Pipers!

Celebrating Highlands' Heritage

Listen for the call of the Highlands Bagpipers as they perform from a different location the first Saturday of each month through October.

Final Performance This Season!

Saturday, October 1

Old Edwards Inn, corner of Main and 4th Streets

4:30 - 5 p.m.

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...EVENTS from page 15

Sun., Oct. 9

- Death Cafe conversation with Jan and Teresa, for a group directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. Light refreshments 2-4 p.m., at Wayfarers Unity Chapel, 182 Wayfarer Lane, Dillard, GA.

Thurs., Oct 13

- Nantahala Hiking Club Program at 6pm at the Franklin Library. Speaker Sarah Adams, ATC Regional Manager GA & Nantahala. "Connections Between the Appalachian Trail and Japan's Shinetsu Trail. All are welcome.

Sat., Oct. 15

- At the Highlands Performing Arts Center Live via Satellite National Theatre Straight Line Crazy at 1p. For more information call 828-526-9047.

Sat., Oct. 22

- At the Highlands Performing Arts Center Live via Satellite Met Opera Medea at 1p. For more information call 828-526-9047.

Sat. Oct. 29

- Highlands Heritage Jamboree featuring traditional music, dancing and crafts at Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park 3-7:30 p.m.

- At the Highlands Performing Arts Center, Sideline at 7:30p. For more information call 828-526-9047.

- Fall into Dance ARTS Saturday at the Macon County Public Library at 10:30 am, for children and young families. Contact the Arts Council for details, 828-524-ARTS or email arts4all@dnnet.net.

Mon. Oct. 31

- Annual Halloween on Main. 5-8 p.m.

Fri., Nov. 4

- At the Highlands Performing Arts Center, Great Art on Screen: Botticelli's Florence & the Medici at 5:30p. For more information call 828-526-9047.

Sat., Nov. 5

- At the Highlands Performing Arts Center Live via Satellite Met Opera La Traviata at 1p. Call 828-526-9047.

...PRE-SCHOOL continued from page 1

tween five available preschools. The school district's preschool classrooms are located at South Macon (two classrooms) Iotla Valley (two classrooms) and one at Cartoogechaye.

The lack of available early learning spots in Macon County is why AHEC requested more than \$8 million for renovations at Highlands School. The renovations would include space for two pre-school classrooms, which according to the AHEC committee, would be filled immediately.

Initially, AHEC was formed to fill a void in technology at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Jeff Weller with AHEC told commissioners Monday night. However, since then, they have worked to address other needs within the school system, most recently focusing on the need for additional early education opportunities in Highlands.

According to the planning study funded by AHEC, Highlands School is in need of two pre-K classrooms at 1,200

square feet each, 36 students and a playground that is 2,700 square feet.

Garnering the support of commissioners to move forward with RFQ process is the next step in the project. Despite the request from AHEC for the expansion, which was backed by the support of the Macon County Board of Education, the county has not fully committed to the project.

The RFQ will determine overall scope of work needed to be completed and will also give a complete cost estimate for such a project. At that point, the Macon County Board of Commissioners will take an official vote on whether to move forward with the expansion.

Commissioner Paul Higdon spoke during the commissioners meeting debating moving forward with the RFQ seeking clarification if the RFQ would "lock them in" to the expansion. He noted that he felt the board was moving swiftly on the Highlands expansion project and wanted to be sure that an official decision wasn't being made regarding actually committing to

expanding the school.

With three of the five seats on the Board of Commissioners up for election in November, it is very likely that the outcome of the November election will

also determine whether the Highlands School expansion project becomes a reality.

Once the architectural design services are completed, commis-

sioners will hear recommendations from a joint committee of members from the school system and county and will decide to move forward or halt the project.

Annual Blessing of the Animals Saturday, October 1 11:00 a.m. Rain or shine at the Village Green Commons (field next to post office)



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Pets should be leashed if appropriate.
Bring a chair or blanket.**



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Gary Hewins**
Community Bible Church

I just recently returned from a speaking engagement in Armenia. During my short stay, this beautiful host nation was invaded by Azerbaijan military forces, hurricanes battered US territories, interest rates escalated here at home and Queen Elizabeth II was laid to rest. I know this because BBC World news was the only English-speaking channel in my hotel room. It was the Queen's funeral that left a lasting impression on me. I admittedly do not fully understand a "monarchical culture." From a distance, I see what you likely see... pomp, ceremonialism and a great deal of ritual and regalia.

The people of the United Kingdom truly mourned the loss of their Queen. Millions of people from all parts of the UK wept. Some lined the streets, and showered the gates, lawns and roadways with thousands of simple floral bouquets.

If you have ever seen the movie King's Speech with Colin Firth, Queen Elizabeth was the King's eldest daughter, a small energetic and loving little girl. This little girl reigned as Queen for 70 years and 214 days. Queen Elizabeth was a consistent influence spanning over seven decades. In our culture, this is rare at best. What was it about Queen Elizabeth that seeped deep into the hearts of her people?

Queen Elizabeth devoted herself to serving her kingdom. She never deviated from her promise to serve and she fulfilled her promise. In the event we have forgotten what that entails in our culture, I will remind you, it's character and integrity. Examples of such are a bit harder to come by in this cultural moment here in the west. Surely it takes more than a promise fulfilled to foster such a love and devotedness from millions.

Not only did Elizabeth do what she said she would do, she did it with a bit of quiet resolve and confidence mixed in with a pinch of British humor. Good for her. She made people laugh and she would even laugh at herself, a great attribute for any leader.

Many can gain the favor of a people for a short time; few can remain relevant to every upcoming generation over seven decades. Queen Elizabeth connected with all peoples, all ages, all colors and nearly all world leaders. Who still does that today? Who has as much class today when it comes to leadership?

There was a recurring word used to describe Queen Elizabeth that was quite difficult to miss. How did she carry out her duties? How did she counsel and earn the confidence of 15 Prime Ministers during her reign? What Elizabeth did, she did with grace. Grace is not heavy handed; it abounds with inclusivity and acceptance. Grace does not divide. It does not alienate. It is restorative, resilient, enduring and appreciated. Grace in American public life is nearly that of an endangered species. Even when demon-

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

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Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

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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.

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Wednesdays: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mondays
4:30pm, Tuesdays 10am; Men's Bible Study: Wednesdays &
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Sanctuary 10:30a; Morning Prayer Mon-Thurs 8:30a in Chapel

Sept 18: 9 AM Morning Prayer, 4:45 Festival Eucharist

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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

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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

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Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road
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Sunday Worship is at 9a. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

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

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Rev. Marty Kilby
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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212
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Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

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Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Sept. 21. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Sept. 21

• At noon, officers responded to a two-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza.
• At 3 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident in Highlands Plaza.

Sept. 22

• At 10:31 p.m., Parker Davis Spackman, 24, of Powder Springs, GA was arrested for Failure to Appear on a warrant dated Sept. 1, 2022. He was issued a \$1,000 secured bond. He trial date is Oct. 20, 2022.

Sept. 23

• At 5 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on Oak Street.

Sept. 24

• At 10:39 a.m., officers responded to a call of someone communicating threat with a firearm. It ended up being a can of WD-40.

• At 11:30 p.m., officers received a report of shoplifting at Satulah Mountain Brewing on Carolina Way.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Sept. 20.

Sept. 20

• At 8:28 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hickory Hill Road.

• At 11:14 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Hicks Road.

Sept. 22

• At 4:08 a.m., the dept. respond-

ed to a fire alarm at a residence on Hutchinson Court.

• At 5:30 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a downed power line on S. 4th. St.

• At 3:35 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a downed power line on Panther Mountain Rd.

Sept. 23

• At 11:23 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.

• At 1:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a gas leak at a residence on Half Mile Dr.

• At 11:32 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

Sept. 24

• At 7:16 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Skyline Lodge Rd.

• At 8:13 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Falcon Ridge Rd.

• At 11:27 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on White-side Mountain Rd.

• At 6:44 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

Sept. 25

• At 5:19 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Rich Gap Rd.

• At 6:28 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Carolina Way.

Sept. 26

• At 10:38 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.



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...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 18

strated, it is seen to be a ploy to manipulate. Grace is seen in those with class. Another word rarely used in our current culture.

The longer I watched the longest funeral I have ever seen, the more I appreciated the lasting legacy of this particular Queen. Her legacy was that of grace, thus — millions truly mourn her departure. People today thirst for grace in a world of infantile leadership. In a world of bullying and name calling, a lasting living example of grace has faded. If a “ceremonial figure” can affect so many at so many stations in life and do so for so many years, perhaps we need to take note of her approach. I think the tens of thousands of weeping people at the Queen’s funeral this past week know true royal behavior when they see it and they know it is a standard few leaders actually live up to today.

Queen Elizabeth was said to be a woman of faith. Jesus was known to be the Prince of Peace, who ascended the throne to become the King of Kings, after overcoming death, hell and the grave. It seems the old queen entered His royal courts with praise and prayers after all. Wasn’t her life not similar to His life and His reign? Sacrifice. Resolve. Joy. Integrity. Wisdom. Grace. He must have counseled her as she counseled others.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good and his love endures
forever;
his faithfulness continues through all
generations. Psalm 100:4-5

Ryan M. Bears

Branch Leader

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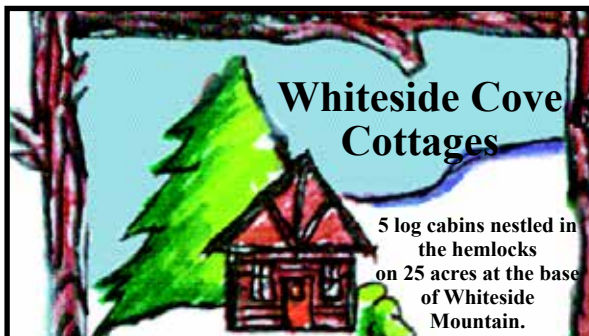
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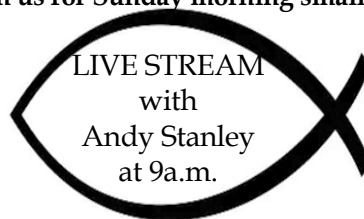
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...CLASSIFIEDS from page 21

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...SOCCER from 7

playability and safety of the field the next day or several days after the rain event."

The solution

Weller submitted a proposal for budgetary purposes from a 'Turf' company that does significant work and installs for major college and professional teams across the country.

"They have done work around this area, too, so we contacted them due to their familiarity with the area and its challenges," Weller said.

The work would include excavating the existing field to a depth of about six inches; haul the spoils away; layout new perimeter corners; laser level sub grade to tie into surrounding elevations; install concrete curb for the perimeter of the field; install a new drainage system to connect into the existing storm drains surrounding the field; install a geo fab liner; install a 4-inch base of stone and two inches of 89 stone laser leveled and compacted in individual lifts; do a final laser level the field; final compact of the field; purchase, deliver and install new Shaw Products Legion NXT 2.0 Synthetic turf and all infill including sand and rubber mix; groom the field; apply center logo and all lines for soccer; and provide a grooming machine.

BOE Chairman Jim Breedlove said he understood the problem, but said the school district has other pressing needs.


"For instance, at Nantahala School, we have a failing septic system that needs to be addressed because if that fails, we have to shut school down. "I am going to ask Hilary Wilkes to take this matter to the facilities committee and to meet with the MC Board of Commissioners."

Wilkes is charged with explaining the issues at Nantahala and the Highlands School soccer field and to get some consensus as far as the county's commitment.

"Based on your report, we will consider taking action at some point in time."

Wilkes is the liaison between the school system's facilities committee and the MC Board of Commissioners.

— Kim Lewicki



Hello my friends, this is Sarah aka "Diva" asking for your help for my sweetheart husband Rick Miller. Rick has been hospitalized 7 times this year from his weak heart and sepsis from UTI infections twice. Sepsis is so serious and he is once again fighting to survive.

I am trying to raise money to enable him to live in his home. We have 22 cement steps and a ramp has to be built to wheelchair him in and a walk-in shower put in for him to function. Currently, we have the old bathtub type and he cannot lift his leg.

As you all are aware, Rick is a strong "American" man and has a strong love of life, his wife, family, dogs and friends. We have been happily married 47 years and together for 52! Many of you know him from Divas on Main, the apparel business in Atlanta and his political and community involvement in Franklin. Anything would help and be very much appreciated.

Love to you all, Rick & Sarah.

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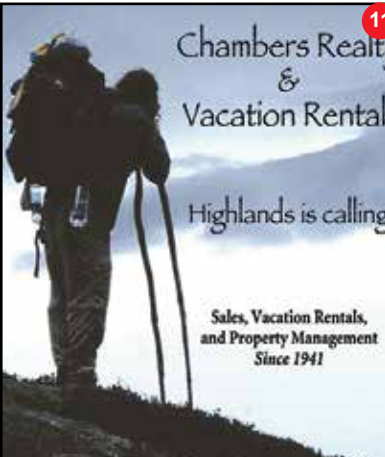
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