

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., May 18, 2023

The facts, not misinformation, about Highlands Renovation/Pre-K Project

By Kim Lewicki
& Brittney Lofthouse

The article in the May 11 edition entitled "Shearl disappoints

but asks for patience" solicited comments and misinformation that was disseminated on Facebook.

Misinformation is not only

dangerous, but it tends to spawn more misinformation which somehow these days becomes fact.

• See **FACTS** page 4



Anne Lord Bailey, left and Caitlin Rawlins are finalists for the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal in the Science, Technology, and Environment

Bailey and Rawlins in the running for VA's People's Choice Award and more

The Department of Veterans Affairs has created a nationwide network that is enabling its medical centers to use immersive technology like virtual and augmented reality to transform the way it treats and cares for our nation's veterans.

Due to their work using

virtual reality for pain management, Highlands School graduate and salutatorian Class of 2004 Caitlin Rawlins and her colleague Anne Lord Bailey are finalists for the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal in the Science, Technology, and Environment

• See **PEOPLE'S CHOICE** page 12

Lynch to follow in Baldwin's footsteps

*Dr. Chris Baldwin
Superintendent of MC
Schools to retire Sept. 1.*

The Macon County Board of Education is pleased to announce that Mr. Joshua W. Lynch has been selected to serve as the district's next Superintendent, effective July 1, 2023.

Current Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin will officially retire on September 1, 2023.

As a product of the Macon County School System, Mr. Lynch has a compelling desire to give back to the community in which he lives and serves.

During the beginning of Mr. Lynch's career, he served Macon County Schools as a 3rd Grade Elementary Education Teacher at Cowee Elementary School. In

• See **LYNCH** page 10

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Mental Health begins with Kindness: 'Bee Kind'



**Ophelia
Contreras 10th
Grade 2nd Place**

The inspiration behind this artwork is to be kind. Sometimes all you need is someone to help you bloom. It is okay to ask for help dealing with mental health.

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month. Highlands Middle School and High School students created 22 artworks that illustrate acts of kindness and the importance of mental health awareness. The top three winners are being printed in successive issues of the paper. 1st Place winner, 7th grader Arabel Aulisio (May 11). 2nd Place went to 10th grader Ophelia Contreras and 3rd Place went to 12th grader Alisia Johnson.

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Fire station dedication and tour is Fri. from 4-6p; Town Board meeting is tonight at 7

On Monday, I had the honor of awarding town scholarships to the graduating seniors at the annual Highlands School Honors Day program. This year \$56,000 in scholarships were awarded to the graduates. College students who are still in school at colleges, universities, and technical schools are also given scholarships. I want to thank everyone in the community who supported this important program for our young people.



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Contributions to the Town of Highlands Scholarship program can easily be made by including an extra check in your utility bill payment. Simply make the check-out to The Town of Highlands Scholarship Fund. Or deliver a check to Town Hall when you drop off a utility bill. Donations are tax-deductible.

Thursday is the May meeting of the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners. Our new town attorney, Bob Hagemann, will be joining us by way of Zoom. Going forward, an attorney from Bob's firm,

Poyner and Spruill, will be at all town planning board and zoning board meetings.

The agenda for tonight's meeting is rather robust. One item will be a budget amendment of \$500,000 as the end-of-the-year true-up assessment from Duke Energy. At the end of each fiscal year, the town gets either an additional bill or a credit for electrical usage as a part of our wholesale contract with Duke.

In the past several years, the town has received credits averaging around \$90,000. This year's soaring fuel costs have produced an additional bill. The money to pay this true-up charge will come from reserved funds, so there will be no increase in electric utility rates. Hopefully, energy-generating costs will be lower in the coming year.

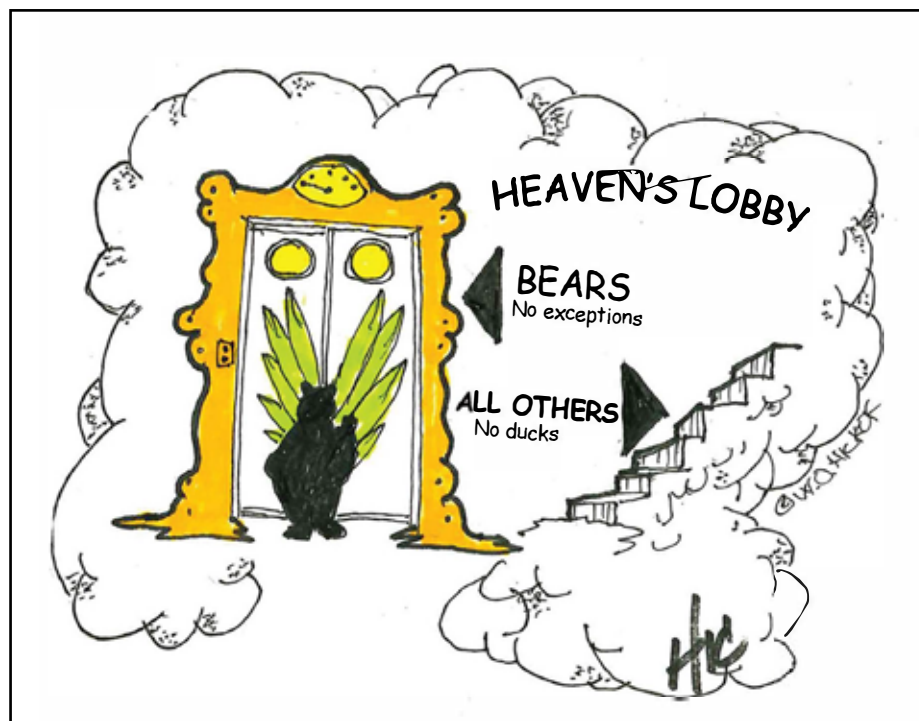
Josh Ward, our Town Manager, will present a proposed budget for this coming year to the board. Josh's presentation is a culmination of staff and board meetings for the past several months in developing a new budget. After this presentation, the board will set a public hearing for the June meeting. A town budget has to be in place by July 1.

Like always, this new budget will have some big-ticket items related to upgrades to critical infrastructure projects. The budget may look larger than usual because of several carry-over items. Due to supply chain and availability issues, a number of purchases and contracts will have to be carried over into the upcoming budget. The funds for these items were appropriated in past budgets but have to be shown in the new budget.

Finally, I hope everyone will come visit the new fire station on Friday 4-6 pm. At 4, a dedication ceremony will be held, followed by tours of the new facility. The fire chief, Ryan Gearhart, tells me we are making very good progress in staffing the station with full-time personnel. In the coming weeks, shifts for the new firefighters will begin.

Parking at the new station is limited. I suggest parking at other nearby sites and using the sidewalk to access the facility.

• HIC'S VIEW •



• WEATHER •

Thu, 18-May	Fri, 19-May	Sat, 20-May	Sun, 21-May
64°F 49°F	67°F 51°F	68°F 51°F	71°F 53°F
Mostly cloudy	Sunny to partly cloudy	Cloudy with a thunderstorm	Partly sunny and pleasant
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• HOSPITAL NEWS •

Launch your nursing career at H-C Hospital and Eckerd Living Center

If you or a loved one has ever experienced a hospital stay, it's easy to recognize how important nurses are to every patient's healing. What is demanded of nurses is extraordinary, from advanced medical expertise to understanding the subtler signs of what patients need, whether that's a medical necessity like medicine, or simply sensing when they need a listening ear or a hug.

Many in the nursing field describe their work as a true and urgent calling, or something that it was impossible not to do. I identify with this, as do many in hospital leadership, since scores of us started our careers in healthcare as nurses.

Now nurses are seen in virtually every arena in healthcare. In addition to work at the bedside of patients, nurses hold hospital administrative leadership roles, work educating other nurses, earn credentials to treat patients in specialty areas like geriatrics, emergency nursing, and more.

Not only do I deeply appreciate the excellent, driven, and compassionate nurses here at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) and Eckerd Living Center, but I am also proud that we are recruiting individuals who want to start pursuing a career in nursing and begin their educational journey. At Eckerd Living Center (ELC), we offer a paid-to-learn CNA Training program. We are offering this course two to three times per year and will be recruiting for our next class soon.

The significant benefits of this six-week-long course include relevant full-time training, Monday through Friday, which for many of our students serves as a springboard to further nursing education. It is a critical entry point for beginning a career in healthcare where the sky is the limit in terms of what direction a person can move toward. Students are paid with benefits as a Patient Safety Attendant, which involves assisting patients with everyday living tasks.



Tom Neal CEO, CNO
Highlands-Cashiers
Hospital

Students who have earned their high school diploma or a GED are eligible to participate in the training course, and must commit to attend 100% of the classes. At the conclusion of the course, each student is prepared to take the North Carolina Nurse Aide test in order to receive their license. Then, graduates have the opportunity to work at any Mission Health facility as a patient care technician (PCT) and receive a sign-on bonus.

For those reading this who are interested in this opportunity — or know someone who might be — this website, <https://careers.hcahealthcare.com/jobs/9656380-cna-training-program-at-eckerd-living-center>, is where more information can be found.

Programs like this are designed to streamline the process of earning licensure to enter the healthcare field and kickstart your nursing career, which is vitally important in a time when there is a concerning nationwide nursing shortage. The deficit can be traced to multiple challenges, including burnout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a growing older population in need of care, and rising numbers of nurses retiring, among other factors.

The life of a nurse is rewarding, challenging, and unquestionably fulfilling — just find a nurse and speak with them about their work. We are lucky to have a stellar corps of nurses at both HCH and ELC. They routinely exhibit loyalty and commitment to their patients, deep and genuine concern for every one of their patients' comfort and wellness, and a unique humanity.

Next time you meet a nurse, I urge you to thank them for their dedication and care. Their primary concern, no matter how they are serving you at your routine office visit or even an unanticipated hospital visit, is your wellbeing while in their care and afterward. We are grateful for our nurses' impact on the overall health of our community.

...FACTS continued from page 1

Hopefully, the following will clear up the misinformation that is circulating.

Commissioner John Shearl, who was elected this past November has made himself available to his constituents recently — first at the April 20 Highlands Town Board meeting to defend the county commission's stance on the Highlands Renovation/Pre-K proj-

ect (see <https://www.highlandsinfo.com/PDFs/23april27.pdf>), again at a community meeting at the Rec Park, Thursday, April 27, which was reported in the May 4 edition (see <https://www.highlandsinfo.com/PDFs/23may4.pdf>) and again at the May 9 county commission meeting as reported in

• See FACTS page 7

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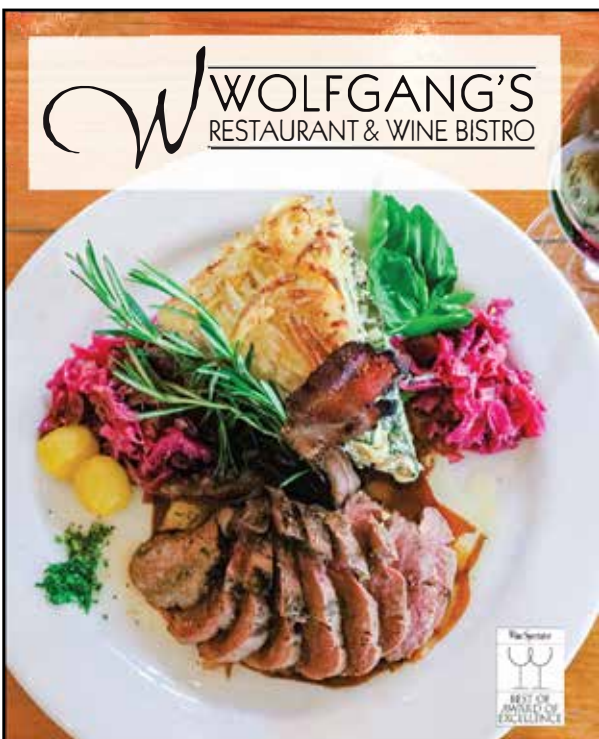
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• DINING •

...FACTS continued from page 4

the May 11 edition (see <https://www.highlandsinfo.com/PDFs/23may11.pdf>)

Each of those meetings were recorded by the news media and by citizens – at the Highlands Town Board, at the community meeting and at the May 9 County Commission meeting.

The following will clear up the misinformation being circulated about what Commissioner Shearl said in recordings as well as where the county and the school board stand -- and has stood for years -- regarding Pre-K education within the county's school system.

A Facebook post stated: "The first PreK was started in 2011."

That is false. While the Macon County Board of Education is currently unable to verify the exact start date of pre-kindergarten classes within the Macon County School System, according to an article entitled "School Days Start" published in the Franklin Press on August 29, 2006, East Franklin Elementary School operated a Pre-K classroom with 12 students enrolled and South Macon Elementary School with 18 students enrolled in what was called the "More at Four Program," which was the name of the state's prekindergarten program prior to the name changing to the current NCPReK.

Also posted: "There are 5 Pre-K classrooms now in Macon County – 90 students, out of 1,900 Pre-K age kids in Macon County."

This statement is misleading.

There are currently five Pre-K classrooms within Macon County Schools – not in all of Macon County. Other facilities, such as Macon Program for Progress also have Pre-K classrooms serving the county's estimated 1,900 Pre-K age children. Their enrollment includes 150 preschool children; Highlands Community Child Development Center enrollment includes 15 and The Gordon Center enrollment includes 16 students.

In that same post it was said: "69 are public-paid and 21 are private-pay."

Those numbers reflect the number of private-pay Pre-K students in the school system's Pre-K classes, which is 21 and the number of publicly funded Pre-K spots which is 69.

However, the publicly funded Pre-K sports are not fund-

ed through local, county tax dollars, but rather are part of the state's NCPReK program, which serves low-income students or students with disabilities.

Again, in that post, it was said: Out of the five existing Pre-K classrooms never has the county commissioners been involved in these Pre-Ks. They have been done solely by the school system."

This is categorically false.

Under NC General Statute, county governments are responsible for funding the construction of school buildings – which is all the school board and specifically board member Hilary Wilkes and citizens were requesting at the community meeting held April 27, not "program" funding, which, according to the recording, Commissioner Shearl appeared to be referring to at the May 9 County Commission meeting.

When both South Macon Elementary School and Cartoogechaye Elementary School elected to include prekindergarten classes within the elementary school, they did so within the existing footprint of the schools, which were previously built and funded by the county commission. Therefore, it was the school board's decision to use existing space within those two elementary schools to establish prekindergarten programs within the public school system following the 2002 state initiative to introduce the "More at Four" prekindergarten program.

Consequently, when Iotla Valley Elementary School was constructed in 2010, the design plans and scope of work for the new construction included identifying space for prekindergarten classrooms prior to being built.

Therefore, when the county approved the project plans for the Iotla Valley Elementary School, they specifically discussed the need to include space for Pre-K – and provided the funding necessary for Pre-K space to be included at that school.

Also, the latest six-classroom addition at South Macon includes two new classrooms for Pre-K with a dedicated drop-off and playground. which the county funded.

Commissioner Shearl has said he never promised funding for the Highlands Renovation/Pre-K Project, but he did promise a conversation with the commission. The public had

• See FACTS page 10



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• LETTER •

Bear Shadow kicked off Highlands 'season'

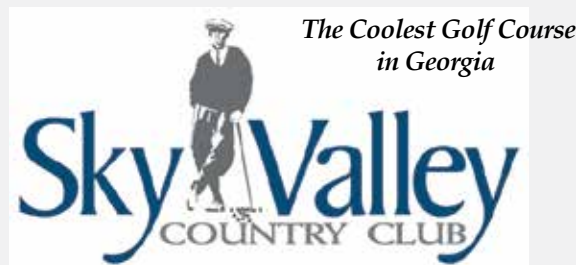
Dear Editor,

The 2023 Bear Shadow Festival was a fantastic kick-off to our season and did a great job fulfilling its mission to bring folks to the plateau during what is often a slower time of year!

As a board member of Highlands Festivals Inc. and a retailer in both Highlands and Cashiers, I was thrilled to see many local food vendors and merchants participating on-site and in town throughout this three-day event. Our stores always see an uptick in traffic during these shoulder-season festivals, and we appreciate how they have bridged the gap between the high season and holidays and winter months.

Many thanks to all who support these events!

Hilary Wilkes
Highland Hiker



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To survey or not? The answer is "Yes!"

In my 19 years as a broker, we begin with a tax plat initially with our clients to view the lot and improvements thereupon but ALWAYS recommend a survey. Many buyers think that title insurance will protect them in the event they find part of their home is on the adjoining lot. This is not true, and many buyers don't understand what title insurance does and does not cover as far as encroachments and easements.

In the past year, my firm has seen major encroachments that a survey would have shown but without it disputes and lawsuits could arise. I will try and shed some light on the importance of good title insurance and a survey.

What is a plat map? This question arises many times and it often gets confused with a survey. A plat map is a map of a town or subdivision indicating the location and boundaries of individual properties. A plat generally shows details of a property like lots, blocks, streets, and public easements. County assessors and municipalities generally require that a plat be preliminarily submitted and approved by local government entities in order to subdivide land and sell off individual lots as part of a subdivision in a neighborhood.

What is the difference between a boundary survey and a plat? A survey establishes the boundary lines of a single property and includes measurements of lot lines, dimensions, position of improvements like houses and garages. A boundary survey also determines whether there are any existing encroachments, easements, party walls, and compliance with setback line requirements.

This type of information can be extremely valuable to a buyer of property who may have future building plans like a house addition, pool, or even to install a fence around the property. So, while a plat shows the boundaries of several lots, a survey shows the boundaries of a single lot, and oftentimes gives a more detailed depiction of that single lot. In most cases, a boundary survey is required for a title company to provide survey coverage on a title insurance policy. Be sure to ask your closing attorney if this is required to be covered completely.

There are 2 types of title policies. One is the owner's title insurance policy and the other is the lenders title insurance policy. It



Pat Allen BIC
 Allen Tate Realtors/Pat Allen Realty Group.

is important to know the difference:

1. An Owner's Policy typically protects the home buyer from the most common risks, including: conflicting ownership claims, such as will complications and similar disputes, outstanding lawsuits, liens and other encumbrances against the property that invalidate the seller's legal claim, and erroneous or flawed public records, including honest mistakes such as incorrect signatures.

2. The Lender's Title Insurance Policy coverage is limited and a lender will

always require the borrower to purchase a lender's title insurance policy before obtaining a home loan, and the policy is usually issued by the title company to mark the conclusion of its title search.

The basic functionality is the same as that of an owner's policy: to protect the lender against potential losses if the seller is not legally able to transfer title rights. The lender is covered up to the loan amount. ONLY the lender is protected by such a policy, however.

If you end up saddled with back taxes and aren't personally insured, a lender's policy won't protect you, but an owner's title insurance policy will.

Standard policies do not insure against unrecorded special taxes, assessments for public improvements levied or assessed as of closing, or title problems that would be disclosed by a survey of the property. This means there is no coverage against encroachments into the boundaries of the property from another structure, fence, wall, driveway or other improvement from adjoining property or similar encroachments from buyer's property onto a neighbor's property; unrecorded joint use agreements such as community driveways, party or retaining walls; or claims of a tenant or another person who, as of the date of the policy, is in possession of all or a part of the property pursuant to agreements not of record. Buyer's claims related to other unrecorded matters may not be covered such as unrecorded liens for unpaid labor, services or materials for work-related the property; unrecorded utility easements, rights of way and public roads; and possessory claims not shown by public records, including pre-

• See INVESTING page 11

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...LYNCH continued from page 1

2011, Mr. Lynch was named Assistant Principal at East Franklin Elementary School. In 2013, Mr. Lynch was named Principal at Cartoogechaye Elementary School. In 2020, Mr. Lynch was named Director of Federal Programs, Testing & Accountability, and K-12 Curriculum Director for the Macon County School System. In 2021, Mr. Lynch was named Associate Superintendent for the Macon County School System.



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Upstairs and Across the
Walkway at Falls on Main
Highlands

...FACTS continued from page 7

hoped to be privy to that conversation because according to the recorded transcript from the community meeting, it appeared that conversation would be had and possibly more done regarding the request to complete Phases 2 & 3 of the project.

"I will promise you tonight. I will have a conversation with LS3P [the Highlands Expansion/Pre-K architects] tomorrow. I will find out what phase of this contract before we have to go further into ... once you go to the 3rd phase of this contract then you are getting into deciding on when those doors and everything else and then it goes back to bids," said Commissioner Shearl in the recording.

"So, I will have a conversation with them. I will also have a conversation with my fellow commissioners, and I will express to them exactly what the people of Highlands are asking for.

"It seems to me like you are asking for \$150,000 to finish Phase 2 or Phase 3 of this contract with no path moving forward. Is that

what you are asking?"

To which everyone said: "Yes!"

"OK, I will have this conversation with my fellow commissioners tomorrow, but I will tell you this. There is no guarantee that the funding will be there to complete this project."

Highlands School Board representative Hilary Wilkes said:

"I did talk to the architect yesterday so I can save you a phone call. What we need are Phase 2 and Phase 3. Phase 1 is complete. You go through Phase 2 -- Phase 2 is actually the design/development -- and Phase 3 is the construction document and bid readiness. So, Phase 2 and Phase 3 and I believe that's around \$150,000.

"Thank you, John," she continued, "for agreeing to trying to move that forward for us. But I will save you that phone call. We need Phase 2 and Phase 3 going ahead and I think I can say the school board is wholeheartedly behind that and again, we can't get anywhere if we don't start walking. So, let's do it."

To which Shearl replied:

"There again, I am going to have a conversation with LS3P and my fellow commissioners and see if we can get back on board for Phase 2 and Phase 3 and design phase of the expansion of Highlands School and the Pre-K project. And from that point, I will get a consensus from my fellow commissioners, and you will see action in our next county commission meeting May 9.

"You are my constituents. I represent you and I will do it with every ounce of energy I have in my body. I am one vote of a board of five. Without their support we can't go anywhere.

"That's my promise to you and I'm sorry it took so long to get that promise out but there again, I can't promise you anything with my commissioners, but we will have that discussion and I will do my part."

Completing phases 2 and 3 would make the Highlands Renovation/Pre-K Project "shovel ready," which would qualify it for funding from the state or possibly funding

• See FACTS page 11

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Highlands**



...FACTS continued from page 10

through grants. If it's not "shovel ready" nothing can happen in that regard.

Commissioner Shearl may have had that conversation with his fellow commissioners, but those conversations were not held during the public session, so citizens at the May 9 meeting didn't hear anything about Highlands being discussed among board members.

Based on his promise made at the community meeting that "You will see action at our next community commission meeting May 9," citizens expected to hear something.

What they heard was a soliloquy regarding funding for Pre-K programs, nothing about funding for the completion of Phase 2 and 3 of the architect plans which would cost about \$150,000.

The money for all phases of the architect plan -- \$329,000 -- was voted on and budgeted for in October of 2022 and about \$35,000 was paid for Phase 1 of the plan.

However, once the new board took office, it cancelled the remaining architect phases and put the remaining money in the county's General Fund, where it sits today.

The School Board and Highlands citizens simply want Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the architect plans completed for the approximate cost of \$150,000 so the Highlands Renovation/Pre-K project can be "shovel ready" should funding come available.

Instead, at the May 9 commission meeting Commissioner Shearl said: "I am your representative. I will do everything, everything I can and I will give you every ounce of my energy to represent you. The biggest thing since our meeting is that I have had conversations with the board of education and also there has been communications with the state leadership in education and so I think there is a lot of information we are trying to gather through this Pre-K and everything as a whole. And how it is funded and everything else. And hopefully we can get to the bottom of this for all the school systems for the Pre-K needs. But all I ask you is for patience. I am working, we are working, we are working for everybody. We are

...INVESTING from page 8

scriptive claims for an easement or ownership arising from another's past use of property (adverse possession). Loss or loss of use related to the exercise of eminent domain or regulations or codes restricting property development, construction, planting vegetation, conducting business, converting a home to an apartment, and leasing the home to more than one family are not covered.

I hope this gives a better understanding of the importance of a survey and obtaining the right title insurance for your home or property. We have seen a garage having to be moved 10 feet because a survey after closing revealed an encroachment on the neighbor's land and a seller having to pay a neighbor thousands of dollars for part of a driveway they thought they owned, just to name a few. A good broker will always advise you to obtain a survey! Be sure and discuss with your closing attorney exactly what your title insurance policy does and does not cover. Knowledge is money saved!

• *Pat Allen is broker-in-charge of Allen Tate/Pat Allen Realty Group in the downtown office at 295 Dillard Road. She is a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist, consistent award-winner, and a top producer every year for her real estate career of 19 years. You may reach her at 828-200-9179 or email her at pat.allen@allentate.com*

going to try to do this to benefit our children and the working families in Macon County. So please just give us patience and a little time."

That statement confused Highlanders, because there was no open discussion between the commissioners as insinuated at the April 27 meeting, and it sounded like Commissioner Shearl was looking for "program" funding not "project" funding.

It's "project" funding that is needed -- specifically about "\$150,000 that is sitting unencumbered in the county's General Fund.

Wilkes said a joint meeting between the Board of Commission and the Board of Education is in the works during which she and her board members hope a discussion will be had.

"I'm glad the conversation is still on the table, and I hope that we will have movement on this issue sooner rather than later."

In addition, throughout the April community meeting, Commissioner Shearl kept referring to Pre-K as childcare. Citizens and those who work in that field, tried to set him straight.

Both Bonnie Potts, Director of the Highlands Literacy & Learning Center and Demitra Passmore of the HCCDC program said Early Childhood Education is not childcare, and though important, referring to it as such somehow diminishes the importance of early childhood education.

Studies have shown that attending Pre-K programs helps ensure students will excel not only in Kindergarten but during their entire school experience.

• See FACTS page 14

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...PEOPLE's CHOICE continued from page 1

category -- these are like the Oscars of Federal Service!

Winners will be announced in October, but in the meantime, all finalists are in the running for the People's Choice Award.

Rawlins says they have stiff competition in their nomination category, so they are hoping they can at least win People's Choice Award.

People can vote once a day through June 30 at <https://servicetoamericamedals.org/peoples-choice-award/>

The Veterans Health Administration's Extended Reality, or XR Network, has implemented the latest immersive technology, offered training to front-line staff and expanded its reach to more than 160 medical centers and outpatient clinics to address some 20 medical issues such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, pain management, spinal cord injuries and palliative care.

"The value to the veteran population has been incredible. This sets the stage to change and save veterans' lives through an early adoption and refinement of

new immersive technology," said Kristopher Teague, executive director of the VHA Innovation Ecosystem.

The VA has immersive technology options in every state

Immersive technology involves user-controlled equipment and software to merge the real world with a digital or simulated reality to deal with physical, emotional and mental health issues.

More than 1,700 clinicians and front-line staff are now engaged in learning about and using this technology in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

"Anne and Caitlin have allowed us to be a leader in the American health care system in trying to figure out how these new technology tools fit into our service delivery," said Blake Henderson, director of the VHA Diffusion of Excellence, which spreads promising new health care practices throughout the organization.

Thanks to the team's work, clinicians have used virtual reality to distract patients who remain conscious during surgery or are re-

ceiving chemotherapy, to help veterans cope with PTSD by easing them back into the setting where a stressor event occurred, and to improve individuals' psychological well-being by transporting them to peaceful scenes during mental health therapy sessions.

Employees also have used this technology to participate in empathy training to better understand the needs of veterans with dementia and those identifying as LGBTQ+.

In one evaluation, 67% of VA patients said the technology eased pain and 84% experienced a reduction in anxiety level. Nearly all who tested it called it simple to use and wanted more of it in VA facilities.

"They have taken technology that is making a big difference in several important areas of health care and activated it throughout the VA hospital system," said Walter Greenleaf, a neuroscientist and digital health expert at Stanford University.

Acceptance of the new technology required persistence

Bailey and Rawlins oversee and are now expanding the program.

While a nurse in the Western North Carolina VA Health Care System, Rawlins observed how opioids were often dispensed to treat pain and began studying other options.

Her initial attempts to jumpstart the VA's use of immersive technology were rejected twice. She and Bailey had to overcome VA-wide hesitancy to embrace an initiative that required new acquisitions, patient consent and cybersecurity guidelines. Rawlins began piloting the clinical implementation of her proposals in 2018 and, more than a year later, she and Bailey began expanding the XR Network across the VA.

Rawlins said they want to make sure the technology becomes an option for veterans in any patient setting, including in the veteran's home. "We are in the business of improving the veteran experience and patient outcomes, and immersive technology has the

potential to increase access to and engagement with care through virtual experiences that can be personalized to a patient," she said.

Bailey said this new technology is about transforming how care is delivered and experienced. "Through immersive technologies like Virtual Reality, patients are reporting decreased pain perception, anxiety and boredom while expressing increased enthusiasm about life and well-being," she said.

ABOUT THE SERVICE TO AMERICA MEDALS

Each year, the nonpartisan, nonprofit Partnership for Public Service honors outstanding federal employees who have made a significant difference in the lives of the American people.

The Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals (Sammies), also called the "Oscars of government service," provide powerful illustrations of the value our government workforce delivers and the positive impact they have on our lives every day.

The honorees are chosen based on their commitment and innovation, as well as the impact of their work on addressing the needs of the nation. Medal recipients are chosen by a committee that includes leaders from government, academia, the private sector, media and the philanthropic community.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

From more than 350 nominations, there are an inspiring group of 27 finalists. While the selection committee will vote for the medal category award winners, the American public—including other federal employees—have a vote!

All Sammies finalists are eligible for the Service to America Medals People's Choice Award. Through June 30, the public can vote once per day for the individuals and teams that make them most proud of our federal government. The People's Choice honoree will be announced during an event on July 18th and recognized at the 2023 awards gala on October 17th in Washington, D.C.

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• BIZ & ORG NEWS •



Old Edwards Inn and Half-Mile Farm are honored to be included in the 2023 Travel + Leisure World's Top Hotels List

The 2023 T+L 500 list went live on April 21 with both Old Edwards Inn & Half-Mile Farm included! The news was announced online, and the full list appears in the May issue of T+L which is on stands now. Thank you for spending your days with us and sharing your love for Old Edwards Inn.

Each year, the readers of Travel + Leisure vote for their favorite destinations,

city hotels, resorts, and more in the World's Best Awards survey. Drawing on the 2022 World's Best Awards survey results, Travel + Leisure recognizes the 500 best hotels around the globe in the 2023 edition of the T+L 500. The T+L 500 properties are divided into eight geographic regions, designed to serve as a trusted resource for millions of enthusiastic travelers. The T+L 500 is not a ranked list.



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Highlands Volunteer Event

**Are you looking to get involved?
Join us to learn more about volunteer
opportunities in Highlands!**

**Thursday, June 8
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**Highlands Community Building
71 Poplar Street**

Light refreshments will be served.

This event is hosted by the
Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC.

For more information:
highlandschamber.org
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2023 GRAND OPENING

OF THE

Highlands Historical Society Museum



**SATURDAY,
MAY 27**
11:00 - 12:30



*Food, Refreshments and Entertainment
by Charles and Leila Wood*

THE MUSEUM IS LOCATED AT 520 N. 4TH STREET

OPEN 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, THURSDAY - SATURDAY
THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2023

...FACTS from 11

However, in a post last week once again daycare was lumped in with Pre-K education and suggested it is not the scope or authority of the county commission but instead that of the school system. "This is a school-related matter not a commissioner matter," read the post.

However, the Macon County Comprehensive Plan says otherwise.

The purpose of the Economic Development element of the Macon County Comprehensive Plan is to make recommendations necessary to maintain a healthy, vibrant and sustainable economy. The county's plan, which was adopted and approved by the county identifies the economic impact of ensuring the sustainability of preschool.

Under the Benefits of Early Childhood Education section of the Comprehensive Plan, it says that children having quality preschool and early learning experiences are well prepared for the school system.

The plan specifically identifies the county's responsibility to act by recommending, and to encourage the local government to provide on-going support and assistance as needed for the Early Childhood Education industry in Macon County, now and in the future.

The section concludes that the goal is to eliminate the current shortage in the preschool capacity and to stimulate and maintain a healthy local growth rate.

Note:

The majority of Highlands Newspaper readers do not participate in Facebook gossip but do depend on the factual information that can be and is backed up with recordings and facts both historical and current. This is what Highlands Newspaper provides every week and has provided for the last 20 years.

I am a degreed journalist who has worked in the industry for 45 years. Those who write for Highlands Newspaper -- specifically Brittney Lofthouse and Brian O'Shea -- are also degreed journalists, and we have all been schooled in the importance of reporting the news factually and with attribution.

We welcome letters-to-the-editor.

BOHO Chic!




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2023 Outdoor Concert Series

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Showcasing traditional mountain music and local talent

MAY 19
Jay Drummonds

MAY 26
Silly Ridge

JUNE 2
Ezra & Katie

JUNE 9
Johnny Webb Vabd

JUNE 16
Steady Hand String Band

JUNE 23
Southern Highland Band

JUNE 30
Byrds & Crows

Saturdays on Pine

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park
Pine St.

Featuring a variety of popular, regional bands and musicians

MAY 20
The Boomers

MAY 27
The Swingin' Richards

JUNE 3
Nu-Blu

JUNE 10
Firecracker Jazz Band

JUNE 17
The Troupers



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THE HEIGHT OF HAPPINESS
HIGHLANDS
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— ELEV. 4118 —

• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •



Dedication and tour of the new Fire Station at Oak and Main streets Friday, May 19 from 4-6 pm. Parking is limited.
- Photo by Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News

EXTENDED POOL HOURS

• Public Swim: Mon.-Wed. 3:30-7p; Sat. 11a-6p; Sun. 1-6p. Adult Swim: Mon.-Wed. 11a-3:30p and Thurs. and Fri., 11a-2p. Lap Swim: Mon-Fri 6a-9:45a and Sat. 10-11a. Water Aerobics: Mon.-Fri. 10-11a. 828-526-1595.

ONGOING

• Looking for a fun, engaging way to explore Highlands with your family? The "Kids

Hike Highlands" trail passport program has been refreshed for the 2023 season. pick up a copy of the Kids Hike Highlands passport map at one of the four prize locations or you can download a copy at www.highlandsbiological.org.

Thurs-Sat.

• Highlands Historical Society Museum at 320 N. 4th Street is open 10a to 4p through October.

Mon-Wed, Fri-Sun

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands Mountain View Group holds open meetings in Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. A ZOOM meeting is available Wednesday at 7PM (ID# 921 817 2966, password CVG2020). For more information, please visit www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-4357

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

1st Tuesdays

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

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. For more information contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at budandlynn@me.com

Tuesdays

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

Mon-Fri

• Water Aerobics 18 years plus 10-11am. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Pickle Ball inside and outside. 10am-1pm, everyone is welcome so come out and enjoy a game of Pickle Ball.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

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

Mon. & Wed.

• New Mobility Class with Anna Norton It's all about movement. 5:30-6:30pm and Wednesday 6:45-7:45. For more info, call 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. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.

Tues. & Thurs.

• New Zumba class with Gay Chaplin

from 4:30-5:30p. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with different types of exercise. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

First Wednesdays

• Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health, at 11a. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and will focus on mental health issues of particular interest to them.

Wednesdays

• 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

Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15am. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• 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.

3rd Fridays

• At the Rec Park, Senior Lunches noon in the meeting room. For any other information call Lester Norris or Maxine Ramey at 828-526-3556.

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.

Through May 31

• The Fontana Regional Library system, including Hudson Library in Highlands, is starting an Active Audio Challenge that will run from March 1st through May 31st. Participants who listen to 25 hours of audiobooks, while being active, will receive a prize. To register for the Challenge, come by Hudson Library and pick up the logbook used to record entries. For more information or to request an accommodation, please call the library at 828-526-3031.

Thurs., May 18

• Mission Health is holding a career fair on Thursday from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. at UNC Asheville's Kimmel Arena, 227 Campus Dr, Asheville. We're inviting all trades and professionals to join us as we will have members from all facilities and departments available

Returning for the 2023 season!



Written by Lucille Fletcher / Directed by Michael Lanzilotta

Thursday–Saturday, May 18, 19, 20 @ 7:30 pm
Sunday, May 21 @ 2:30 pm

Thursday–Saturday, May 25, 26, 27 @ 7:30 pm
Sunday, May 28 @ 2:30 pm

Highlands Performing Arts Center—507 Chestnut Street

For more information:

www.highlandsperformingarts.com/hcp.html | 828-526-9047

• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

to discuss career opportunities with Mission Health. Interviews and offers will take place on the spot for positions at all of our locations including Asheville, Brevard, Franklin, Highlands, Marion and Spruce Pine. Mission offers robust benefits including sign-on bonuses for some positions, Free Online ADN to BSN, Tuition Reimbursement, Student Loan Assistance, 401k Matching, Extended Family Leave and more. Important reminders: Wear your favorite sports team jersey, bring multiple copies of your resume, come prepared to interview 1:1 with multiple hiring managers. Current job opportunities include RNs - All Units, New Graduate RNs, Patient Care, Imaging Techs, Lab Professionals, Respiratory Therapists, Paramedics/EMTs, Housekeepers, Maintenance Techs, Supply Chain Coordinators, Surgical Technicians, Social Workers, Physical Therapists, Behavioral Health Techs, Medical Office Assistants, Leadership and more.

• **BEE KIND:** Satulah Sunset for the Spirit Satulah Sunset for the Spirit. Meet at Kelsey Hutchison park at 7p and hike to Satulah for the 8:30 sunset. Keep the 17th open as well just in case the weather doesn't cooperate! Easy uphill hike with incredible views & the best place in town to soak up the sunset. For more info, call Hope Corbin at 301.523.0445

• At OEI's The Farm from 6-9 PM, James Beard Foundation award-winning Chef Steven Satterfield of Miller Union in Atlanta. "Root to Leaf: A Southern Chef Cooks Through the Seasons" (featured on CBS This Morning). \$185 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Book Online: <https://www.simplerix.com/e/chef-steven-satterfield-dinner-tickets-123309>

Friday, May 19

• Dedication of the new Fire Station at Oak and Main streets from 4-6 pm.

Sat., May 20

• "Meander in May," the free, self-guided arts festival includes painting, woodworking and ceramics demonstrations along with performances by a myriad of bands and musicians. The immersive arts experience begins at 11 a.m. and culminates with a free concert by The Boomers in K-H Park from 6 - 8:30 p.m.,

• Shakespeare & Co.'s mystery book club will meet on Saturday at 2p.m. Led by (crime) writer-in-residence Cathy Pickens, this month's subject is amateur sleuths. Delicious refreshments from The Secret Garden. Free. 526-3777 or shakespeareandcompany-highlands.com.

• **BEE Kind** Forest Bathing Walk 5-8p at 111 Lower Lake Road, Highlands. Cost: \$20. In addition to the psychological and emotional benefits, Forest Therapy has a positive impact on human physiology in the form of improved biometric measures and function. Each walk is 3 hours in length, and consists of a series of invitations crafted to encourage the participants to connect with nature through their senses. Events are rain or shine, unless the weather is

threatening. For more info, contact Paige Engelbrektsson, paige@highlandsbiological.org or 828-526-2623.

• **BEE KIND:** Saturdays on Pine Concert Series kicks off with The Boomers, 6-8:30p.

Sun., May 21

• **BEE KIND** Forest Bathing Walk 9a to 12p. 111 Lower Lake Road, Highlands. Cost: \$20. In addition to the psychological and emotional benefits, Forest Therapy has a positive impact on human physiology in the form of improved biometric measures and function. Each walk is 3 hours in length, and consists of a series of invitations crafted to encourage the participants to connect with nature through their senses. Events are rain or shine, unless the weather is threatening. For more info, contact: Paige Engelbrektsson, paige@highlandsbiological.org or 828-526-2623

Thurs-Fri, May 25-26

• "Nightwatch" with the Highlands-Cashiers Players at PAC at 2:30 p.m. Unable to sleep, Elaine Wheeler paces the living room of her Manhattan townhouse, troubled by unsettling memories and vague fears. Her husband tries to comfort her, but when he steps away for a moment.

Thurs., May 25

• At Highlands Mercantile at 322 Main Street, a Jane Iredale Makeup Event 11a to 3p. Call 828-482-0818 for FREE 30-minute consult appointment!

• **BEE Kind** Yoga Movement is Medicine led by Thomas Taulbee 4 pm, Village Green Pavilion at the Commons Lawn in Cashiers.

• At OEI's The Farm, from 6-8 p.m., the talented duo of Jilly Martin and Ryan Brooks Kelly. Tickets are \$40. Book Online: <https://www.simplerix.com/e/martin-and-kelly-orchard-sessions-at-the-f-tickets-124374>

Friday, May 26

• At the Hudson Library, Community Coffee with the Mayor at 11 a.m. in the Hudson Library Meeting Room. There will be a Q&A session with Highlands Zoning Director Michael Mathis.

Sat., May 27

• Highlands Historical Society campus GRAND OPENING. There will be refreshments and live music with Charles and Leila Wood from 11a-12:30p.. There are new exhibits including the history of Mountain Music.

Thurs., June 1

• Highlands Volunteer Fair from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. This free event will take place Thursday from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Community Building, 71 Poplar Street. For more info call 828-526-5841

Thurs., June 8

• At the Macon County Library, on Siler Road in Franklin, Jen Seymour, an avid international hiker, will share one of her eight children's publications guaranteed to inspire and excite at 6 p.m. She's a gear expert, blogger and nutrition advocate.



Meander in May
THE ART OF HIGHLANDS, NC

MAY 20
11 a.m. x 8:30 p.m.



HIGHLANDS
NORTH CAROLINA

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Highlands Chamber of Commerce/
Visit Highlands, NC

visithighlandsnorthcarolina.com

• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

PANDEMIC RISING: Chaos vs. Control

Rev'd Jim Murphy,
Christ Anglican Church,
Highlands-Cashiers, NC



Nearing the close of his earthly ministry, Jesus spent a lot of time preparing his disciples for his departure. It was no secret that he could and would do much more from a heavenly vantage point than he could as a lone force here on earth. Christ had proven the efficacy and success of his power, grace and healing repeatedly. It would soon be time to multiply his impact over sin, sickness and disease by praying from heaven and by sending his Holy Spirit to his followers. God's Spirit would enable his disciples to have the same successful impact over the devil that the Son had. The chaotic world had met its match and would forthwith begin to experience the potential of godly Peace.

At the very beginning of the Bible, in the first verses of Genesis, the picture of the uncreated universe/world was one of a chaotic mess. The existing elements were in a constant state of turmoil. In essence, the rest of the history found in the Holy Scriptures gives the account of the birthing of peace and order out of that unstable mess. Our heavenly Father wanted us, his creation, to experience his unbound love and glory. However, such love and glory was difficult to discern in the anarchy of the disordered muck before Creation. But there was a problem. The Lord's love and glory had a powerful enemy. The rebellious angel, satan, wanted nothing to do with peace and order. The father of lies and deception was and is the opposite of love and glory. Indeed, the more chaos the devil can produce the happier he becomes. He still wants to rule from God's throne and have every one of us as his slave..

In the latter 1960's, for those of you who can remember that time, there was a TV comedy series with the title, "Get Smart." In it, Maxwell Smart, the lead actor, and Agent 99, the lead actress worked for a spy agency that went by the name of "Control." They were the enforcers of peace and order. Their arch-enemy was the rival spy agency, "Kaos." As their name portends, disorder was what they sought to create wherever they went. So, in a manner of speaking, just as God sought to bring peace and order out of the boiling cauldron of elements in Genesis, so did Control seek to have the enemy Kaos behave in a peaceful, ordered manner. It was a funny show.

To say the least, satan ran amok during the covid pandemic. Confusion (chaos) and unsound decisions were made and the effects therefrom have been catastrophic. In much the same way, the devil has been playing havoc with the lives of those who know not the peace and order of

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19

Proverbs 3:5

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

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Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470

www.cashiers.church

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

Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

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

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

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

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Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

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

May 8

• At 9:45 a.m., officers received a report of a breaking and entering at a residence on the Franklin Road.

May 11

• At 9 a.m., Gardner Sharpe, Jr., 74, was arrested for DWI when he was stopped on Main Street. He was issued an \$1,500 unsecured bond. His trial date is June 14.

May 12

• At 1:30 p.m., officers responded to a report of shoplifting at Potpourri Eyewear on Main Street where more than \$800 worth of sunglasses were taken.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log

from 5/9.

May 9

• At 7:27 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Billy Cabin Road.

May 11

• At 11:05 a.m., the dept. responded to a medical alarm at a residence on Satulah Road.

• At 3:48 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

May 12

• At 8:34 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible brush fire on US 64 east.

• At 11:43 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Shortoff Road.

• At 11:54 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Upper Divide.

• At 11:12 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Upper Lake Road.

May 16

• At 2:30 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on NC 106.

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 18

Christ Jesus. Homelessness and drug addiction are rampant. Crime and immigration are out of control. Suicide and sexual immorality (including the fabrication of gender confusion) are ruining (i.e., making chaotic) the lives of millions, war and violence threaten the torn fabric of one society after another. The list could go on.

The world is trending more and more toward chaos. In many situations and places control has been all but completely lost. It is not hyperbole to say that the age old pandemic, chaos vs. control, satan vs. Jesus, is rising still. Be that as it may, those who know Christ Jesus take solace in the fact that he said, "These things I have spoken

to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are still of a mind to bring peace and order out of our chaos. Indeed, God is the only one who can, the only One who has overcome the world. What do you think might happen if everyone would trust the love and glory of the Savior? How do you think the world might change if all individuals embraced order instead of chaos, love instead of hate, truth instead of lies? I imagine that it would be heavenly. Pax Christi, jim+

Pancake Breakfast during Nurses Week



Last Thursday, May 11, staff honored the nursing staff at H-C Hospital and the Eckerd Living Center with a pancake breakfast.

- Photo by Kim Lewicki

• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



From left: are Helene Siegel, Board Member from the Counseling Center of Highlands; Leslie Manning, Executive Director of Counseling Center of Highlands; Mayor Patrick Taylor; Robin Tindall, CEO & Executive Director of Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation; and Josh Bryson, Marketing Director of Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

On May 1, 2023, Mayor Patrick Taylor signed a mayoral proclamation declaring May to be Mental Health Awareness Month in Highlands, NC. With this proclamation, Highlands joins communities across the country in celebrating the importance of increasing awareness and reducing the stigmas around mental health and well-being.



From left: Counseling Center Executive Director Leslie Manning; Rotary Bingo Chair Bob Baxter; Super Bingo Winner Scottie Scott; Rotary Bingo Caller and Counseling Center Therapist Tracy Franklin; Counseling Center Board Member Linda Kirkman; HCHF Marketing Director Josh Bryson.

Bingo benefits Highlands Counseling Center

Another popular Bingo night was hosted by Rotary Club of Highlands on Thursday, May 11th, with a nearly full house at the Highlands Community Center. The "Bee Kind" event was co-presented by the Highlands Cashiers Health Foundation (HCHF) and Highlands Counseling Center; and is one of many activities to highlight mental health awareness month. Net proceeds all go to the Counseling Center to further their important mission of providing affordable counseling services for the health and well-being of the residents of Highlands and the surrounding areas. The next Rotary Club of Highlands Bingo Night will be in June, with the date to be announced.

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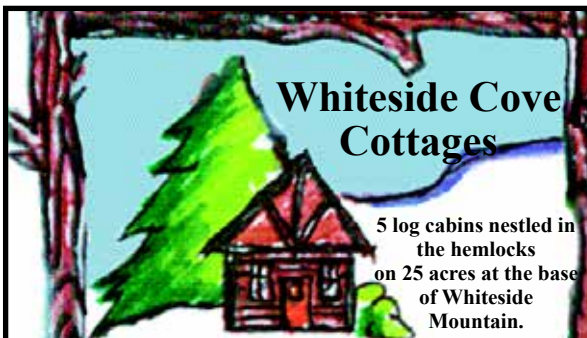
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Lady Highlanders cruise to second round of state playoffs

By Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News

Highlands girls varsity soccer team scored a 7-0 victory against Elkin on Monday in the first round of the NCHSAA Women's Soccer Playoffs.

"It feels really good," said Highlands Addie Westendorf after the game. "We played [Elkin] last year and won 5-2, but we lost 6 seniors. So, we knew we were going to have to play hard."

Highlands Aislynn Luck said she was a bit nervous before the game, but she settled into a groove once Highlands started putting

points on the board.

"I always think they're going to be better than we expect," said Luck. "Don't come in cocky, just play a good game."

The field was wet from earlier rainfall, but Highlands Caitlin Tingen said it wasn't a problem.

"It wasn't bad," said Tingen. "It was a little faster than usual, but good condition to play soccer."

Highlands is 14th seed and moves on to the second round of the playoffs. They face off against 3rd seed Mount Airy on the road beginning at 6 p.m. on May 18.

Mount Airy boasts a 20-0-1

nonconference record compared to the Lady Highlanders' 13-5.

Highlands Co-Conference Champions

Highlands hosted Swain County on May 6 to battle for the LSMC Co-Conference Soccer Championship and won 4-1.

Westendorf said this was the highlight of her season, especially winning by three goals.

Shortly after defeating Swain, Highlands traveled to Swain County and played them again to determine playoff seeds, Highlands lost 2-0.



Highlands Cayden Pierson stops an Elkin drive and sends it back up to the offense



Highlands Abby Doerter makes a B-line for Elkin's goal during the first round of the state playoffs on Monday.

- Photos by Brian O'Shea, Plateau Daily News

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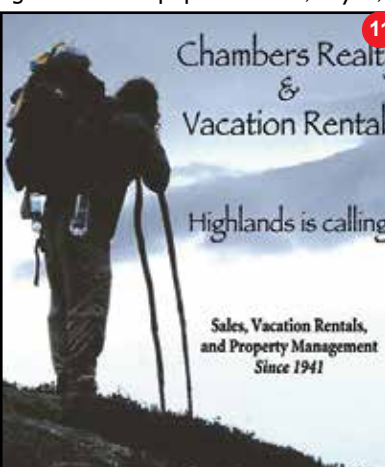
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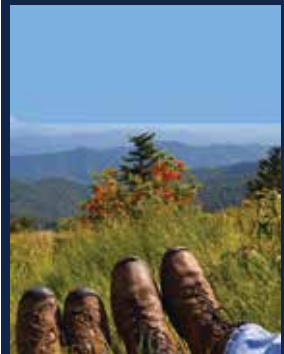
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