

SERVING HIGHLANDS, CASHIERS & SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Weekend earthquake shakes WNC mountains

By Shelby Powell
The Franklin Press

A magnitude 4.1 earthquake near Greenback, Tennessee, rattled the weekend as homes throughout Western North Carolina felt the shaking. The earthquake, which occurred at 9:04 a.m. on Saturday, May 10, alarmed many locals in Macon and its surrounding counties.

For Dave Schneider, who was visiting Highlands for the weekend, the occurrence of an earthquake brought back memories.

“I was sitting on the porch of my friend’s home and my coffee cup started to rattle on the table,” he said.

“It was only a few seconds, but it was definitely noticeable. It made me think back to when I lived in California.”

A flurry of activity on social media followed the quake, with area residents expressing surprise at the rare event. It also prompted calls to 911 from people looking to confirm what they had just experienced or inform first responders of what had happened. May 10 saw 79 calls between 9 and 11 a.m. By comparison, Saturday, May 3, saw 37 calls over that same period.

Todd Seagle, Macon County 911 supervisor, said callers were likely trying to be helpful, but urged locals not to call unless the quake had caused

injuries or structural damage to their properties. Seagle said no injuries had been reported.

The United States Geological Survey estimated Macon County saw shaking characteristic of a magnitude 3-4 earthquake, which is to say light or weak shaking with no damage. The earthquake occurred 15.5 miles below the surface, there is a 9% chance of a small aftershock though the end of the week, and it is estimated that there will be no fatalities and little economic loss as a result of the initial quake as of 10 a.m. on May 13.

According to USGS, quakes in the Eastern Tennessee Seismic Zone are less frequent than those in the West-

ern United States but are felt over a larger area. The ancient fault lines of the Appalachians also frustrate attempts to identify the specific faults responsible for earthquakes, information provided by the Survey said.

Earthquakes are more frequent in Tennessee, especially in and around Knoxville. Only a handful of earthquakes have impacted Western North Carolina in the last 10 years, of which Saturday’s was the most serious. Three quakes have landed in and around Macon County in that time, with one originating in Cherokee, one near Bryson City and one about halfway between Franklin and Dillsboro. All three were around mag-

nitude 2.5, according to USGS.

State Farm agent Amy Manshack said her office had received several calls from concerned locals Saturday. Only one called to report some very minor damage from the earthquake, but most were simply curious about what damages their insurance might cover. Manshack said because Macon County has a lot of second homes, it is entirely possible that more damages will be noticed as people come back to the county for the summer.

After experiencing an earthquake, residents should be on the lookout for potential gas leaks, broken glass,

See **QUAKE**, Page 2A

Lessons learned on the links



Sixth grade students from Summit Charter School were led through a series of science, technology, engineering and math lessons while on a field trip to Wade Hampton Golf Club this week.

Photo by Kevin McCall/Staff

Wade Hampton Golf Club plays host to national education initiative

By Kevin McCall
reporter@highlandsnews.com

A group of 29 sixth graders from Summit Charter School were given the opportunity to explore various STEM subjects through the lens of golf at a field trip to Wade Hampton Golf Club, sponsored by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

The trip was brought to the area via First Green, a nationwide program that seeks to bring STEM activities to middle school students using golf as the central component. The initiative itself has been around since 1997, according to Greg Burleson.

“We like bringing kids out to the golf course to use it as a learning lab and to expose them to the game,” he said.

Burleson said the mission behind the field trip was to showcase how environmentally conscious the golf club is, presented via five different stations that the students rotated between.

“We talked about how important water is, not only the dust, but the plants and living things,” he said. “And we talked about the use of water on golf course and how we use weather stations and computers and a lot of different measures to conserve water when we do use it.”

Burleson said an example was demonstrated through the golf course’s sprinklers, which could be turned on through radios and phones. In addition to this, another station, which Burleson named “Cool Tools,” presented to the students

See **LESSONS**, Page 8A



Photo by Kevin McCall/Staff

Summit Charter students got a lesson about water conservation as part of a STEM field trip at Wade Hampton Golf Club.

Library controversy spills into Jackson County

By Kevin McCall
reporter@highlandsnews.com

Following recent discussions about Macon County’s status within the Fontana Library Regional System in regards to an ongoing controversy over some of its content, the topic became a part of the discussion at this week’s county commissioner meeting, where commissioner Barry Breeden noted that the county has no intentions of pulling out of the system.

“I would just like to say that, I

know that it’s kind of popped back up with the library issues with Jackson County, but I would just like to go on record again in saying I’m not interested in pulling out of the FRL,” he said. “I don’t think that’s something we’re interested in doing as a board either.”

In agreement with Breeden, commissioner Danny Antoine said the board continues to remain on their stance with its signed contract. He added that in light of recent developments in Jackson County, the board has no control over what other counties do.

“If they decide to do something like pull out, that’s a Jackson County or Swain County issue, that’s not a Macon County issue,” he said. “If that does happen, we may have to revisit this and try to make sure that we’re moving forward because our intention is to make sure our library stays open and resources stay available because I understand how important this is.”

Over in Jackson County, a large group of community members

See **LIBRARY**, Page 8A



Photo by Kevin McCall/Staff

Tracy Fitzmaurice addresses the crowd at Albert Carlton Cashiers Library during a Fontana Regional Library board of trustees meeting on Tuesday night.

INDEX

Classified.....6B
Crossword/horoscopes.....4B
Obituaries.....2A
Opinion.....5A
Weather.....4A
What's Happening.....8B


1 84264 00019 5



Players to stage Social Security

Comedy set to open May 15 at the PAC

Page 1B



Students learn about careers

Annual event showcases job opportunities

Page 1B

Subscribe today! Call 828-526-4114

News brief

Memorial Day flags

Community members are invited to join Phil Potts and members of American Legion Post 370 to place flags on the graves of fallen military members who are laid to rest at Highlands Cemetery.

The flags will be placed at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 23. Volunteers should meet at the flag pole for their assignments.

Grants

From page 1A

These grants aim to support schools, public libraries, and nonprofit organizations within a 15-mile radius of a Dollar General store or distribution center in implementing new literacy initiatives or expanding existing ones. Funding may be used to purchase new technology, books, materials, or software to enhance literacy programs.

The grants awarded to North Carolina organizations are expected to positively impact the lives of more than 9,500 individuals. Learn more about the Foundation’s literacy grant programs, and how to apply, online at www.dgliteracy.org.

Quake

From page 1A

loose plaster, walls, ceilings or stairwells that could have suffered earthquake damage.

Manshack advised property owners to be on the lookout for weaknesses in their homes’ structures that could put them at risk for damages from another earthquake or aftershock, including sagging crawl spaces or unanchored structures. Inside the home, homeowners can protect against damages by securing breakable objects like glasses and mirrors as well as heavy appliances to prevent them from falling or obstructing an escape route.

The Highlander Publisher Ryan Hanchett contributed to this report.

Obituary

Patricia (Patsy) Mullen

Patricia (Patsy) Mullen passed away peacefully and gracefully in her sleep at her home in Wesley Woods, Newnan, Georgia, on May 10, 2025, at the age of 90. Born in Fort Mill, South Carolina, on November 6, 1934, to Richard Henry Armstrong and Mattie Mae (Pat) Few Armstrong, Patsy lived a life defined by her deep commitment to faith, family, community, and service to others. She was known for her exceptional warmth, kindness, and memorable hugs, leaving a lasting impression on everyone she met.



Mullen

Growing up in Fort Mill, Patsy graduated first in her class from Fort Mill High School in 1952. She attended Furman University for her freshman year before transferring to Winthrop College, where she earned her degree in education in 1956. Her teaching career took her to elementary schools in Greenville, South Carolina, Durham, North Carolina, and Dugway, Utah.

On June 8, 1957, Patsy married Donald Collins Mullen of Greenville, South Carolina. She continued teaching as they started their family, supporting Don as he completed medical school and residency at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina and service for the army in Dugway, Utah.

When Don entered private practice in Charlotte, NC, Patsy focused her life around raising five children, with all their various activities in school and church. She was always highly involved in church activities - serving as Director of Children’s Ministry, coordinator to Vacation Bible School, a leader for women’s bible studies and ministry to the elderly, and singing in the choir.

She served as an elder at both Crossroads Presbyterian Church in Milwaukee and at Sunrise Presbyterian Church on Sullivan’s Island. She found great joy in bringing communion to the homebound on Sullivan’s Island.

Patsy accompanied her husband, Don on extended medical missionary trips to Kenya, Malawi, and Papua New Guinea through the Presbyterian church (USA) and Samaritan’s Purse. In 2000, after concluding their international mission work, they settled in Highlands, North Carolina, where Patsy became an active member of First Presbyterian Church and was instrumental in establishing the Highlands Community Child Development Center and the after school program where she loved reading to the children. She also spent many years volunteering with Highlands Cashiers Hospice.

Once in Newnan, Patsy loved serving every week with Feed Our Friends at Central Baptist Church.

Patsy always had a keen sense of play - she loved playing cards (and winning), riding the waves at the beach, and skiing in Park City. She would consider her greatest accomplishments to be: her loving marriage of 64 years, raising her five children, and enjoying her 16 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

Patsy is survived by her five children: Melissa Ballantyne (George), Christy Mullen, Don Mullen, Jr., Julie Ann Hartman (Doug), and Martha Conroy (Brian). She is also lovingly remembered by her grandchildren: Patricia Brawley (Frank), Mitch Ballantyne (Kristie), Christopher Ballantyne, Jonathan Ballantyne (Mary Virginia), Nicholas Pope, Rachael Mullen, Collins Mullen, Maya Sugg, Eleanor Mullen, Benjamin Hartman (Emily), Samuel Hartman (Marilyn), Alexander Hartman, Thomas Hartman, Haley Conroy Busch (Austin), Lauren Conroy (Chase), and Grace Conroy; as well as her great-grandchildren: Frank Brawley, Jones Brawley, Bennett Brawley, Oliver Horn, Harris Horn, Margaret Ballantyne, Isabelle Ballantyne, Brooks Horn, Libby Ballantyne, Collins Ballantyne, and Baby Girl Busch.

A memorial service celebrating Patsy’s life will be held at Central Baptist Church, 14 W Broad Street, in Newnan, Georgia, at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 17, with visitation immediately following.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to The Feed Our Friends Endowment Fund at Central Baptist Church in Newnan, the Mullen Lecture Series at First Presbyterian Church in Highlands, NC, or Habitat for Humanity. Condolences may be expressed to the family online at www.mckoon.com.



THE FARM
at Old Edwards

A TASTE OF
SUMMER

DINNER with CHRIS HALL

June 26



VIEW DETAILS

902559

902550

Tampa Bay Trust
Cares for the Plateau



Hood Craddock, CPA, Director of Family Office Services
James McArthur, Executive Vice President, Family Office Services

You don’t have to leave The Plateau for exceptional wealth management and trust services. We care for our clients like family and we’re right here in your neighborhood.

Contact our Cashiers office to plan a visit.

DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE.



PRIVATE WEALTH MANAGEMENT

tampabaytrustcompany.com

Trust & Estate Services
Investment Management
Family Office Services

828.482.8737
268 Hwy 107 South
Cashiers, NC

The Sanibel Captiva Trust Company’s Fiduciary Services may only be provided from their offices in Florida. Not FDIC Insured. Investments involve risk and are not guaranteed.

Highlands 150 years




Photo courtesy of Highlands Historical Society

Dry Falls in May

Formerly known as Cullasaja Falls (now Dry Falls) on the Cullasaja River seen here in 1883. Photo by John Bundy.

Join us for our 72nd year

NOW OPEN

DINNER / BAR FROM 5 PM

SPRING HOURS:
CLOSED TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY

Ristorante
Paoletti

FINE ITALIAN DINING
SINCE 1953
Main Street, Highlands since 1984

RESERVATIONS : PAOLETTIS.COM

902580