

SERVING HIGHLANDS, CASHIERS & SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

No contest: Commissioners unopposed in November election

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Seats on the Highlands Board of Commissioners will be uncontested in the upcoming Nov. 4 general election.

Incumbents Amy Patterson and Eric Pierson are seeking reelection to their current seats on the board. Jim Tate is seeking to fill the seat left vacant when Commissioner Brain Stiehler vacated his seat on the board on July 31.

Stiehler moved outside the town limits, making him unqualified to remain on the Highlands' board.

Highlands mayor Patrick Taylor is also up for reelection and is unopposed.

Early voting will begin Thursday, Oct. 16, at the Highlands Civic Center, 600 N. 4th Street, Highlands. Hours will be 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Early voting on Saturday, Nov. 1 will be from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Absentee ballots will be mailed to voters

who request them. A voter can fill out an absentee ballot request at votebymail.ncsbe.gov or by filling out a request form provided by the Board of Elections office in Franklin. The request must be received through the website or by the Macon County Board of Elections by 5 p.m., Oct. 21.

The deadline to register to vote in this election is 5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 10. Eligible residents who are not registered by that deadline may register and vote at the Highlands

Civic Center during early voting. New registrants are required to provide documentation of their residence.

ID required

Voters will be asked to show a photo ID when they vote. Voters who do not have an ID can get one for free from the Macon County Board of Elections.

For information contact the Macon County Board of Elections office at 828-349-2034.

SUPPORT FOR LITERACY



Submitted photo

Author David Baldacci signs a copy of his newest book "Strangers in Time" for Becky Harris of Highlands. Baldacci was the guest speaker for the Literacy and Learning Center's annual "Celebration of Education" fundraiser on Sept. 30. The event included a talk with the author Thursday afternoon at the Performing Arts Center and a VIP Patron Dinner that evening at Old Edwards Club.

Baldacci gives \$50,000 to Literacy & Learning Center

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Author David Baldacci touched on a range of topics – some serious, some humorous – during his talk the afternoon of Sept. 30 as part of the Literacy and Learning Center's "Celebration of Education" fundraiser.

The annual event featured Baldacci's presentation at 2 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center and later that evening patrons enjoyed a dinner with him at Old Edwards Club.

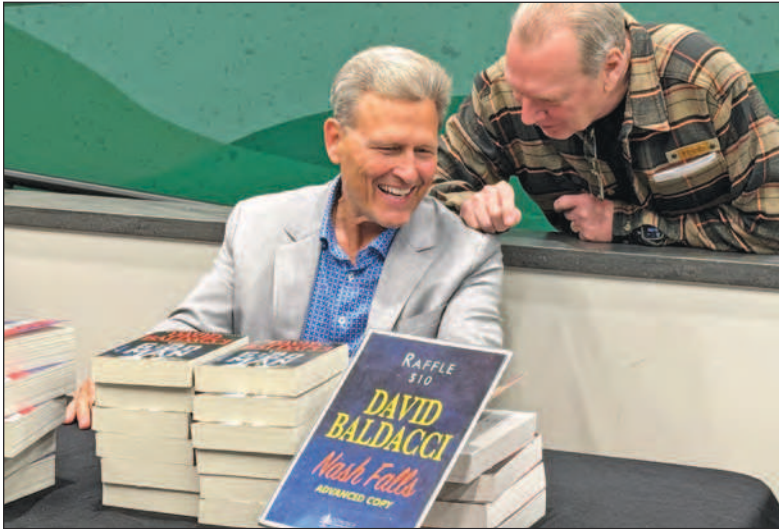
During the hour-long presentation, Baldacci – "the Italian" not be confused with John Grisham – talked about the inspiration for his some of his books, adventurous boat rides, standing up for democracy

and the importance of literacy.

Baldacci gave \$50,000 to the Literacy and Learning Center of Highlands.

"We had guests of the event become so inspired by his offer that they have also pledged \$50,000 as a matching grant," said Anna Norton, the center's marketing manager. "Our hope is that others will take the challenge giving us a total of \$150,000. We expect additional donations to come in over the coming weeks."

Baldacci recalled as a child going to the library and checking out as many books as he could. He found it was a way to learn more about people and the world, saying he read about people who didn't look like him or dress like him, didn't think like him.



Submitted photo

See **LITERACY**, Page 7A A patron shares a laugh with Baldacci during his book signing.

Village Green Leaf Festival begins Oct. 10

Thousands of "leaf peepers" travel through the Cashiers area every October to enjoy the wonderful hues of red, orange, and yellow that signify the beginning of the fall season.

To celebrate this season, The Village Green holds the annual Cashiers Valley Leaf Festival. This free three-day festival features 100 artisan vendors spread throughout The Village Green park, from the Gazebo at the crossroads to the Commons Lawn off of Frank Allen Rd. The Leaf Festival will start on Oct. 10 and end on Oct. 12. The hours are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Residents and visitors will find unique handcrafted wood, metal, pottery, jewelry, textile artists, soaps, fine art and much more on display and available for purchase throughout the weekend.

All products at the Cashiers Valley Leaf Festival are made by the artisan from start to finish making each product truly one-of-a-kind.

To add to the festivities, live music performances from local musicians such as Alma Russ and Young Mountain Magic will take place each day of the festival at either the gazebo, the commons lawn, or the newly constructed pergola.

Elevated Kitchen Food Truck and Chile Loco will be at the festival serving food Friday through Sunday. You can also find pastries from French Broad Pastry and beverages from Immortal Juice Company and Crossroads Custard and Coldbrew.

During the festival, The Village Green will be selling their 2025

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High Hampton donates conservation easement to HCLT

The permanent protection of 47.97 acres of ecologically significant land has been donated to the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust (HCLT) by High Hampton. This private conservation easement ensures the preservation of unique natural features such as rock outcrops, mature forests, headwaters, floodplains and mountain bogs - while surpassing annual conservation acreage recommendations made in the 2020 Urban Land Institute's Report:

Vision for Sustainable Growth in Cashiers.

The newly conserved property is characterized by a very diverse terrain. Connecting existing HCLT/High Hampton conservation areas now totaling 463.04 acres, this new addition begins at the base of Rock Mountain, where steep granitic upland habitats descend into dense swamp forests and Fowler Creek forms unnamed at its headwaters before later flowing into the Chat-

“We are incredibly grateful to High Hampton for their commitment to conservation and their generous donation...

Lance Hardin
Executive Director of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

tooga River. Mature and vibrant forests surround expansive ecologically signif-

icant, globally rare Southern Appalachian Bogs; one of North America's rarest and most imperiled ecosystems. These newly conserved places are home to many globally threatened, state endangered, imperiled and significantly rare species, some of which include plants such as:

- Biltmore Sedge (Carex biltmoreana)
- Button sedge (Carex bullata var bullata)
- Granite Dome bluet (Houstonia longiofolia var. glabra)
- Granite Dome golden-

rod (Solidago simulans)

- Tawny cottongrass (Eriophorum virginicum)

"This easement formalizes protections for state and globally rare species and habitats - it's not every day you get to say you've helped to protect some of the rarest plants and places on the planet," said Owen Carson, Senior Ecologist at Equinox Environmental, consulting ecologist on the project.

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Local artists showcase work at The Bascom

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All God's creatures

Clergy gather at Blessing of the Animals

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