

# Highlands Historical Society

Summer 2011

To preserve and promote the rich heritage of Highlands

Highlands, N. C.

## EXCITING EVENTS FOR 2011

### **“HISTORY LIVE” June 24th - 26th A Real Success!**

Our summer season is well underway, inaugurated by our “History Live,” formerly “Walk in the Park,” event held June 24th through 26th at the Historic Village and the Performing Arts Center. All actors were local Highlanders portraying their characters with great enthusiasm for Highlands history. It was a great success, and next year’s performance promises to be just as informative and fun.

### **MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE - Fall 2011**

HHS is introducing several new exciting events in 2011. In this regard, HHS will be offering a membership challenge this fall for community support to continue our educational initiatives and preservation of the history of Highlands. HHS membership support is essential, and your volunteer and financial donations will make our goals for the future possible.

STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGE!

### **BINGO for HHS - September 1st**

Play Rotary Bingo to earn money for Historical Society. Games are \$1 per card; 15 games per night. Additional funds are generated by “Table Top Advertising”: full page ad \$50; 2 ads per table; if you don’t have a business but wish to support HHS with an ad, you may put “John and Jane Doe support HHS.” Bring your friends, and help us fill the Conference Center. One hundred and twenty people needed plus thirty advertisers. Bring your friends, and fill a table.

### **DAHLIA FESTIVAL, Sept. 17th, 1 - 4 p.m.**

An exciting new event is the first annual Dahlia Festival to be held at the Historic Village. Registration forms will be available in and around Highlands and Cashiers at various locations. Make sure you look for them, or call Joyce Franklin at 526-9418, or visit the HHS website at [highlandshistory.com](http://highlandshistory.com). Cost for registering is \$10.00.

All dahlia enthusiasts are urged to join in the competition. Prizes will be presented in multiple categories. Don’t be concerned; this is not a serious competition; it is to celebrate the beauty and enjoyment of these gorgeous flowers that grow so well in our beautiful mountains. Come and bring your blooms to share with other dahlia lovers.

### **FALL FESTIVAL, Oct. 8th, Noon - 5:00 p.m.**

The season finale for events is a Fall Festival held at the Historic Village. This is a family attraction, so bring the kids and grandkids. Some of the activities planned are pumpkin painting, face painting, bobbing for apples, clogging, apple cider, hot dogs, and some good ole’ bluegrass music. Hope to see you there!

### **KELSEY KIDS, Oct. 10th - 14th**

A 5 day camp which provides children ages 9, 10 & 11 an interactive program that personalizes the history they learn in school. They learn about Highlands’ history through field trips and fun activities like a field trip to Foxfire Museum in Mountain City where they see brooms made, try blacksmithing and woodworking. A visit to the Prince House teaches them about life during the Victorian era. Quilting expert, Liz View, teaches them about quilting and the kids get to watch a cow being milked, plus much more. For applications contact HHS at 787-1050.

Joyce Franklin and Linda New, Co-Chairs

## President's Letter

Dear HHS Supporters:

The 2011 season is off to a fast start. Wow, it is already July, and you are receiving the first of two newsletters that we at HHS plan to produce this year.

First and foremost, thank you for your support of HHS and all that we strive to do. We know that for many of you times are tight, and you receive requests for support from many organizations. We appreciate each of you for your donation of your time and your money to help HHS.

This year we have several exciting events planned throughout the season. Please be sure to read about these events highlighted elsewhere in the newsletter, and plan to invite your friends to come enjoy a fun time as you support HHS.

It's easy to get so engrossed in what you are doing that you fail to see what is being accomplished. I recently discovered a scrapbook here at HHS that Director Kathleen Wilson had made during her term as Publicity Chairperson. In that scrapbook I found pictures of the Prince House in early 2000 sitting on barren ground. When you look at the beautiful landscape surrounding the house today and the Events Garden in the rear, it is hard to believe that these are the same properties.

I bet many of you remember watching on April 23, 2000, when the Hudson library was moved from its former location next door to the Episcopal Church to where it resides today at the Historic Village. Completing the structures at the Historic Village is one of the original "Bug Hill" Cottages from Dr. Lapham's sanatorium, which stood where the Highlands Rec Park stands today.

The items I have mentioned above are just the easily visible accomplishments that have been achieved by the dedication and hard work of so many people who hold the Historical Society dear to their hearts. It takes a team of dedicated individuals to make all of this happen and to each of them I say, "Thank You."

As a history buff it is easy to say, "I don't want things to change; let's keep everything just like it has been." We all know that this will not happen. Change is inevitable. Within the last two years there have been several major changes to Highlands. The Furniture South building has been demolished along with the Altstaetter House (ca. 1879) to make room for the new post office. The Royal Scot, which has been a part of the Highlands retail scene for thirty years, is no more, as is Cyrano's Bookshop. The Hudson Library building has been beautifully renovated. I could go on and on.

The point here is that when people living in 2060 look back at Highlands' history, they will rely on us here at HHS to chronicle the transitions that are happening today just as we have documented the history of our town at the turn of the 20th century.

With your help we are up to the task and will continue to strive to fulfill the HHS mission, "To preserve and promote the rich heritage of Highlands for present and future generations." With the support of each of you and your friends, we can accomplish the task.

Wiley Sloan

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Current Museum Exhibit (runs thru 8/6/11)

*The Roads that Lead to Highlands*

New Museum Exhibit (begins 8/13/11)

*Golf on the Plateau*

## RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

We hope you will do it now.

Family \$50 • Individual \$35 • Sustainer \$100  
 Business \$250 • Promoter \$500 • Preserver \$1,000  
 Protector \$2,500 • Highlander \$5,000

And we hope you will add a donation, as many of you have done so generously in the past.

Highlands Historical Society

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Highlands, NC 28741-0670

## Book Review

**SATULAH: THE MOUNTAIN • Author: James E. Green • Faraway Publishing, 226 pages, \$50**

From the handsome stone walls and hedges lining its roads to the magnificent views at its summit, Satulah Mountain offers a rare combination of wild beauty and man-made charm. Perhaps, like me, you've wondered who built and lived in these old houses so close to downtown Highlands, yet secluded beyond their rhododendrons? Now, thanks to James E. Green, we can savor a walk or drive on the mountain, knowing more of its human and natural history. His new book is a treasure trove of information on Satulah's residents and structures.

*Satulah: The Mountain* is the result of years of research, including many oral interviews. "This account was written for my neighbors on Satulah Mountain," Mr. Green says in the book's Introduction; "there was no intention of producing anything like what follows." What follows is a concise account of the first years of Highlands; biographies of "early Satulah home owners and land investors" along with architectural descriptions of their houses, title histories of each property through 1975, and more than twenty maps. The book is illustrated throughout with historic photographs.

Every entry is of interest, but I particularly enjoyed reading about the properties where I did yard work when I was growing up, including—going up the mountain—Chestnut Lodge (1892), Windrush (ca. 1916) and Faraway (1898). At Windrush, with its manicured streamside garden and fantastic views of downtown Highlands and Whiteside Mountain, my boss was John Hines, retired

presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church. The Right Reverend always let me know that I was only hired because his back was out, not because he was too exalted to do his own mowing and weeding. But I learned from Mr. Green that the Elliott House, the property just above Windrush, also has Episcopal connections: its builder, Sewanee professor and physician John Gibbs Barnwell Elliott, was the son of the first bishop of Georgia, who later became presiding bishop of the southern branch of the Episcopal Church during the Civil War. Dr. Elliott's architect son (that is, the bishop's grandson), Huger Elliott, designed the Hudson Library; his daughter Charlotte had a sign attached to the hood of her Chevrolet that read—when going into town—"Down car has right of way." Coming home, the sign could be flipped over to say, "Up car has right of way." She'd be right at home on Satulah today!

The survey that placed Satulah on the National Register of Historic Places cited the neighborhood's "integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association." The same could be said of Mr. Green's fine work, whose value and price will only increase over the coming years. (Reviewed by Stuart Ferguson, HHS Docent)

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This book is just one of many books about Highlands' history available at the Historic Museum. Stop by and peruse the variety of items available for purchase there.

## HHS' Oral History Project

Many people think that the major focus of historical societies is to preserve historic buildings and memorabilia of past generations. These are good achievements, but we at HHS believe that there is an even higher calling. We believe that it is the culture of those societies past—the stories and the way they are told—that are really at the very heart of preservation.

Each year, as our predecessors die, we lose more and more of these stories and memories of our community. This year, with the help of a grant from Cullasaja Women's Outreach, HHS has expanded its Oral History Project where we document historical happenings of Highlands by interviewing residents who best remember our town's treasured past.

Throughout the year, interviews with early Highlanders will be compiled and made available to the public at the

HHS Museum. Listening to the stories of these folks as they tell about their days in Highlands brings a special dimension to learning about days gone by. The Oral History Project will continue to record as much of our past as possible in hopes that future generations will better understand and appreciate our town's heritage. Many past interviews have already been archived and are currently available to the public at the museum upon request. Drop by the Museum any Friday or Saturday (through October 31st) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. or on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. (Written by Eric NeSmith)

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If you know of an individual whose story needs to be recorded, please contact us at 828-787-1050, or email committee chair Eric NeSmith at enesmith@highlandsnews.com

## APPLY FOR KELSEY KIDS NOW!

The change in the Macon County school calendar this year had the effect of decreasing summer break to only six weeks: from June 13th to August 4th. Few families wanted to use two weeks of that limited vacation time for HHS' Kelsey Kids.

Consequently the program has been rescheduled to the fall intersession, October 10 – 14. The program leaders, Sue Potts and Elaine Whitehurst, have volunteered to spearhead the program again this year, with help from members of the Historical Society board and others in the community.

Kelsey Kids was conceived as a means to provide children aged 9, 10, and 11 with an interactive program that personalizes the history they learn in school. Rather than sitting through lectures, they learn about Highlands history through field trips and fun activities. The program starts with a trip to tour the twenty-two log cabins at the Foxfire Museum in Mountain City, where they learn what life was like in the mountains before such towns as Highlands were founded. There they see brooms made from broom sedge, a mop made from corn shucks, and they try their hand at blacksmithing and woodworking

with such tools as a draw-knife, all under the watchful eyes of adults.

The Prince House, ca. 1877, provides children the opportunity to see what home-life was like in the Victorian era, as well as interesting tidbits of Highlands' history. There they see the first piano brought to Highlands, the portrait of Professor Harbison, and collages of natural materials assembled by John Jay Smith. They also learn that children their age were required to perform such chores as bringing in the wood for the wood-burning cook stove.

Quilting expert, Liz View, meets Kelsey Kids to teach them how to piece quilt squares, which she later quilts, telling them quilts served the purpose of blankets in the early days of Highlands. The Kids watch a cow and a goat being milked, and "help" a chicken farmer gather eggs. They take a walking tour downtown and other hikes.

If you know someone with a child 9, 10, or 11 years old, encourage them to call the Historical Society at 787-1050 to request an application. Children from Highlands School, Summit Charter School, or home-schooled children are eligible. (Written by Elaine Whitehurst)

## 12th Annual "Walk in the Park" "History Live! - The Roads that Lead to Highlands"

The 12th annual Walk in the Park entitled "History Live!" drew nice-sized crowds for each of the three performances. The HHS Board went out on a limb this year to try something different by having the event at the Historic Village rather than having it at the cemetery—Highlands Memorial Park. The change was made because many of HHS' supporters had mentioned that it was increasingly hard for them to stand for the extended time that it took to traverse the hills at the cemetery to hear all the actors.

Even the heavy storm clouds which blanketed the downtown Highlands area on Friday night did not deter the folks from coming. The "Roads Exhibit" was taken down to make room in the Museum for the performance. It was a really nice surprise when I entered the Museum to introduce the actors and found a "standing-room-only" crowd. The audience was mesmerized as the folks heard the stories of how six of Highlands' early settlers strived to make getting about the area a little easier.

Saturday night was beautiful and the folks filled the Events Garden. Although a couple of times the actors

had to struggle to be heard over the noise of the traffic on 4th Street, everyone sat on the edge of their seats as they heard stories of why people were motivated to build roads that would facilitate getting about on the Plateau.

Sunday at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street, we had the largest crowd that we have had at one of these events. I am most proud to note that there were a number of young people at the events. They all seemed to enjoy listening to the stories and hearing of times around the turn of the century.

A DVD of the PAC performance is available at the Museum for purchase. If you missed the event and would like to see what you missed, please stop by the Museum and pick up a copy.

Thank you to everyone who made this event a success—all of you who attended, the actors and actresses, the HHS Board members, and especially the dedicated individuals who researched and wrote the scripts. Without each one of you this event would not be a success.