

PLATEAU

June / July 2020

MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA

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The Lamp

During quarantine, I learned via Facebook post that one of my favorite high school teachers, Mr. Neel, had contracted COVID-19. Mr. Neel taught my senior year honors civics class. I both loved and feared him. As my classmates and I studied and debated the Constitution, Mr. Neel would share historical concepts through the lens of current events.

For every position we argued Mr. Neel would offer an equally good counter position. For an entire year, my seventeen-year-old black and white understanding of the world dissipated. For a while, I was determined to not form an opinion. Leadership in student organizations and public speaking were the carrots that coaxed me out of my introverted shell. How could I possibly feel empowered as a young leader in this new world of multiple perspectives? How would I ever be able to make a decision with an understanding that sometimes there is no clear answer? If I genuinely did master the concept that I should both know and empathize with my opponent's views to strengthen my own, as Mr. Neel said, how could I ever find the clarity to act?

The scales of justice weighed heavily on my mind as doubt of finding a perfect balance left me petrified. Surrounded by civics, I found the lifeline I was looking for in a quote by Patrick Henry. "I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of

no way of judging of the future but by the past." In those words, I discovered a tiny illuminated path leading me out of the unknown.

I have thought about that honor civics class a lot since March. I've thought about doctors and scientists. I've thought about leaders and business owners. I've thought about lamps on dark paths. With quickly changing information and vast uncertainty, we've been reminded that we don't know what tomorrow may bring. What we do know is what yesterday held. Yesterday there was a promise of tomorrow. Because of yesterday, we are reminded of the people we are today.

This issue of Plateau Magazine talks about a lot of things- our history of tourism, our nonprofits and businesses, our love for nature, our favorite cuisines. Some of these things we won't be enjoying in 2020 the way we did in 2019. But on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau, we hold a lamp. With this lamp, we know who we are and thus who we will be. Our lamp of experience burns bright. So does our future.

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Run Free

The final installment of our three-part series invites your inner child to play at this year's CHS Designer Showhouse

By KAT FORD

A serene natural environment

WHEN TOURING SILVER Run Reserve with Liz Harris, an observant onlooker might notice the twinkle that dances across her eye or the grin that manifests in the corner of her lips. On first speaking with her, one may assume that those refined expressions of excitement are from her appreciation of showing a property she loves. That would not be wrong. Liz learned from her mentor, A. William McKee, that the key to real estate success is falling in love with the properties you represent. But this particular twinkle is one that would require the observer to share a common thread. If you talk to Elizabeth long enough, you will find it. The eureka moment. That glimmer—that very special twinkle, is one of a childhood that knew the joy of running free.

Liz Harris grew up on a ranch in Canada, surrounded by gardens, animals and fields. It should come as no surprise that Liz fell in love with Silver Run Reserve. It represents the youth she cherished, the one she chose for her children, the one she knows is promised at Silver Run. Liz is now one of the owners of McKee Properties, the place where A. William McKee first took her under his wing. It is no wonder why she is pas-

sionate about all that Cashiers has to offer, great schools, vibrant local businesses and a promise of the American Dream—she's experienced it firsthand.

Jay Hurt, the principal owner and developer of Silver Run Reserve, has been coming to Cashiers from his home in Texas for the past 12 summers. Jay was a friend of A. William McKee and shared his love for an active outdoor lifestyle. Jay learned from McKee's pioneering vision of Cashiers, highlighting the importance of responsible development and being true to the land. Preserving the natural, understated casual luxury that Cashiers is known for is paramount. This is found in the master plan-

ning at Silver Run, thanks to Beau Welling Design. On the very same property that allows a child to run free in rolling hills and fish in lakes, a family can enjoy fine dining and sipping cocktails by the pool. The effortless feeling of nature blending with leisurely modern conveniences echoes in landscapes crafted by Reed Hilderbrand. To get an insider's look from Silver Run's team, don't miss the Opening Day Insiders' Tour from 9 am - Noon. The team includes developer Jay Hurt, developer and builder Ben Harris, land planner Beau Welling, architect Myer Greeson Paullin Benson, head of marketing and sales Liz Harris, design director Michael Fernandes, lead spec de-

An effortless feeling of nature blends with leisurely modern conveniences.



PHOTO COURTESY SILVER RUN RESERVE

signer June Chamberlain, and community consultant Sam Lupas.

Nonprofits like the Cashiers Historical Society are also a part of that uniquely understated Cashiers equation. Jay understands the importance of philanthropic work and, as a developer, is committed to continuing them through efforts like the showhouse. McKee Properties has teamed with the CHS Designer Showhouse on numerous occasions. Selling the showhouse is a big deal for CHS, they receive a portion of the commission of the sale which helps pay for programming. This year, McKee Properties is upping the ante and contributing a portion of the commission of any Silver Run Reserve sale made during the showhouse.

With August quickly approaching, the event schedule for the 2020 Designer Showhouse is shaping up. The Opening Night Party will be hosted by Flavia Harton and Epting Events. Workshops include cocktail gardening with landscape architect Mary Palmer Dargan, outdoor yoga with Cashiers Valley Fusion, baking with Valley Bakery, cooking with James Beard Award-Winning Chef Nathalie Dupree, children's fly-fishing with former ESPN host Chad Foster, hiking with the Knoxville Hiking Club, floral demonstrations, live painting, designer panels, vendor showcases, and much more. Designer Showhouse Chair, Melissa Warren Hudson and her team are most certainly putting Silver Run Reserve's offering of outdoor and recreational activities to full use. The Silver Run development team is excited for attendees to experience the property's unique active lifestyle offerings.

With over 125-acres of enhanced communal parkland surrounded by 70 residences on 300 breathtaking acres, the intent of Silver Run Reserve has always been to build a responsible development that maintains native beauty without creating too much density. Homes built in a mountain modern style continue the effort to preserve a serene natural environment in an exciting and current way. Inside, big windows capitalize on views while high ceilings and light floors create a bright and open comfort. Fourteen regional designers have been tasked with taking a blank slate and making it a home within the style guidelines of Michael Fer-



(above) Active lifestyle offerings allow children to run free in rolling hills and fish in lakes; Mood-boards, like this one from Lynn Monday, allow interior designers to explore ideas and set the tone.



nandes, Director of Design.

Lynn Monday of Cashiers based Lynn Monday Home has been partnering with the CHS Designer Showhouse for years. Monday often works with an architect, rethinking spaces and creating desirable flow. She excels at starting with the bare bones, creating connecting points that effortlessly navigate a space from room to room. But in the showhouse, each designer is only responsible for one living space. Monday loves a challenge. Artists are often credited for thinking outside of the box, but design work requires a level of abstract thought that can juggle logistics and aesthetics, both the big picture and small details. If Monday excels in starting from the bottom, she transcends in breaking out of the box. With a personal aesthetic of mixing modern, antique, and industrial, she offers this teaser for what to expect from the Great Room: a mixture of French and Italian antiques mixed with cottage florals and contemporary accessories.

Ann Sherrill of Rusticks Furniture in Cashiers has been curating mountain chic furniture for plateau homeowners for decades. When hinting at her creative plans for the patio of the showhouse she reveals in an enchanting chuckle, "All Southern cottages should have a swing." It's a knowing statement that implies a setting for future lemonade afternoons and cocktail evenings.

Many a family memory was made on a front porch swing.

The Cashiers Historical Society's 2020 Designer Showhouse kicks off with an Opening Night Preview Party on August 21st and will be open through September 5th. Tickets are on sale now, www.cashiershistoricalsociety.org lists the showhouse's full and updated calendar of events with dates and times. With a such a strong lineup, this summer celebration will not be one to miss. **P**

2020 CHS Designer Showhouse Lineup:

Ann Sherrill – *Rusticks Furniture*, Front Porch, Cashiers

Holly Laughridge – *Old Edwards Inn*, Foyer, Highlands

Kerry Howard – *Tribus Interior Design*/ *Dillard Jones*, Master Bedroom, Cashiers/ Greenville

Lisa Wester – *Lisa Wester Interiors*, Master Bath, Birmingham

Stuart Pliner – *Stuart Pliner Design*, Main Floor Powder, Cashiers/Atlanta

Cathy Rhodes – *Cathy Rhodes Interiors*, Second Master/Bath, Atlanta

Lynn Monday – *Lynn Monday Home*, Great Room, Cashiers

Tori Alexander – *Alexander Interiors*, Dining Room, Nashville

June Chamberlain – *June Chamberlain Interiors*, Kitchen, Atlanta

Elly Poston – *Elly Poston Interiors*, Mud Room/Laundry Room, Richmond

Francie Hargrove – *Francie Hargrove Interior Design*, Screened Porch, Cashiers

Douglas Hilton – *DWH Interiors*, Second Floor Landing, Atlanta

Doug Weiss – *Douglas Weiss Interiors*, Bedroom 3, Highlands/Atlanta

Zeb Grant – *Zeb Grant Design*, Bedroom Madison/Atlanta



Natural settings and evening cocktails



The tennis courts at Cedar Creek

Serving Aces

Cedar Creek Club's winning points

By KAT FORD



A SERVE IN TENNIS IS A SHOT TO START A POINT. SERVE SEEMS TO BE A PERFECT HOMONYM when speaking about the Cedar Creek Club in Cashiers, as they are well known for both their racquet sports and their service to the plateau. The inaugural fundraising event for Mountain Youth Charities, a local nonprofit whose mission is to enrich the lives of children in the community, was the “Mountain Challenge: Roddick vs. Courier” at Cedar Creek Club in 2013. During this challenge, two of the greatest competitors in tennis history, Andy Roddick and Jim Courier, competed in a rare experience for regional tennis enthusiasts surrounded by scenic mountain views. The game of tennis has a rich history at Cedar Creek. In addition to the Mountain Challenge, they have hosted other greats, including Fred Stolle, Rod Laver and Tim Wilkison.



2019 Cedar Creek Regatta



Clubhouse from Lake Lupton



2019 Cedar Creek Club Croquet

PHOTO ASHLEY MONDAY SELLE; BETTE CROWDER, KEVIN MOIR



Cedar Creek family fun



Fantastic cuisine, a farm to table dinner

Cedar Creek Club rests on 50 beautiful lakeside acres with stunning views of the Blue Ridge Mountains overlooking Lake Lupton. Originally part of a 730-acre residence owned by the Lupton family of Chattanooga, TN in the 1930s, seven-acre Lake Lupton formed after damming a portion of the Horsepasture River. When the property was bought in 1977 by a group of Cashiers investors, A. William McKee bought 150 acres intending to build a racquet club with a surrounding residential development. Small and family-focused, Cedar Creek promotes the Southern hospitality values of kindness and togetherness with an active lifestyle. This can be found in their lakeside activities, such as fishing, kayaking, paddle boarding, canoeing, walking trails and beach volleyball, or in their yearly children's summer camp and annual 4th of July Regatta.

As to be expected from a club that started with a common love of racquet sports in 1982, Cedar Creek Club has a robust offering in racquet centered athletics. The club boasts five Har-Tru tennis courts, one hard tennis court (with three pickleball courts), one racquetball court, and a full-service Pro Shop. Along with selling clothing and accessories, the Pro Shop also arranges doubles and single matches for member tennis

players. Athletics Director and Pro at Cedar Creek Club, Chris Todd, was trained by US Tennis Professional Master Pro Bob Love and is PTR, PPR, and USTA certified while training in USPTA and USCA. Private lessons and clinics are scheduled every week in all sports and are available for all ages; even non-members can book a private lesson in the afternoons.

In recent years Cedar Creek has witnessed the rise of a new sport, croquet. With a full-size turf croquet lawn, croquet socials and interclub matches have proved to be a big success. In 2019 the Cedar Creek Club Croquet Team won the Bill McClanahan Mountain Croquet Challenge, bringing home the coveted crystal mallet. The Mountain Croquet Challenge is an end of year event with clubs from Lake Toxaway to Sky Valley participating in a two-day Golf Croquet challenge for bragging rights as to who has the best Golf Croquet team on the plateau. The winning team gets to display the crystal mallet at their club for the rest of the year.

Cedar Creek knows that an active lifestyle doesn't just mean athletics; their social calendar is full of enriching experiences for both the mind and soul. With a roster of excitement for the whole family, members also enjoy fantastic cuisine in three separate dining areas, monthly themed parties, lectures, and specialty nights including gin and trivia. During downtime, a dip in their heated pool, a stroll by the lake, or roasting marshmallows by the fire are the types of memory-making experiences that make Cedar Creek Club beloved by all of its members. There's an unmistakable enchantment when listening to staff and members talk about Cedar Creek, a sort of well-known secret that you have to experience to understand. It's a sentiment akin to the stories you hear from childhood friends that just got home from summer camp. A romantic whimsy that you hope you are lucky enough to see for yourself.

The key to any successful sport is the

willingness to be a team player, and the members of Cedar Creek Club have a proven track record of doing just that. Through the CCC Charitable Fund, members of Cedar Creek Club generously raise and distribute money to charities throughout the area annually, raising over \$130,000 in 2019 alone. With a warm, welcoming reputation and hearts for not just their treasured club, but for those in the community around them, it's clear that the members of Cedar Creek will continue to serve with a smile- both on and off the court. **■**

Notes For The Novice

Defining points of Tennis, Pickleball and Croquet by Cedar Creek Club Pro Chris Todd

Tennis: There are six basic strokes to learn and master in tennis: forehand groundstroke, backhand groundstroke, forehand volley, backhand volley, overhead and server. Once you feel confident with your strokes, footwork becomes the main focus.

Equipment and court facts:

Racquet is 27 inches long with strings.
Court: 120 ft long by 60 ft wide

Pickleball: A great sport with many similarities to tennis, such as the same terms for strokes. Differences include serving technique; you have to serve underhand while in tennis, you serve over your head. A lot of players love pickleball because it can be a fast-paced sport but is on a smaller court than tennis.

Equipment and court facts:

Paddle length cannot exceed 17 inches.
Court: 64 ft long by 40 ft wide

Croquet: Three different grips, Solomon, Standard grip and Irish grip. The sport has different types of gameplay, the two main forms of gameplay are Golf Croquet and Six Wicket. The most popular gameplay on the plateau is Golf Croquet. If you like billiards, golf, strategy and socializing with people, this is the game for you!

Equipment and lawn facts:

Mallets weigh 2 to 3 pounds, the length of shaft varies from 30-38 inches.
Lawn: 100 ft long by 50 ft wide with six wickets.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Caring connects us, even when we are apart

By KAT FORD

There are narratives so intrinsically human that they can be found in civilizations throughout the world. The parable of the long spoons, for one, is in the folklore of multiple cultures. The story begins at a large table. Utensils are long enough to reach the meal but too long for diners to feed themselves. By relying only on their own ability, they are isolated. Upon realizing they can serve each other, all are nourished. The moral of the story is that we are stronger together.



When the unthinkable happened and the world as we knew it paused, every man seemingly became an island. But islands, we are not. It took just a short moment for us to realize that what we thought to be water was only fog. We were still just as connected as ever, involved in mankind.

Being vigilant was a task to which we were all called. Children were asked to study remotely at home. Businesses were asked to close their doors. Employees completed familiar work through unfamiliar processes. Visitors and second home residents were asked to carefully consider traveling and quarantine. Then, as a community, a state, a nation and a global society, we were all tasked with staying home.

We all knew the consequences if we did, but we also knew the consequences if we didn't. I protect you; you protect me.

Some acted early. A week before being required to do so, Old Edwards Inn made a historic decision to close their doors. "We are a family company— which includes our employees, guests and all of our close friends in this community— and we asked ourselves what should we do for our family? We had also touched base with several colleagues in the industry who were struggling with the same decisions and realized everyone was looking to each other for guidance. In the end, for us it simply came down to doing the right thing. A week after we closed, the local mandate came out that

would have required the closing. Our employees continued to be paid in full as we navigated our way through the uncertain times. We encouraged them to stay home, stay safe and be part of the solution," said Old Edwards Inn in a statement provided to Plateau Magazine.

In a late April blog post, the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital outlined steps that had been taken over the past weeks assuring residents of the plateau that the hospital was prepared and had been working with sister hospitals, local municipalities and the health department for weeks. "Even before a national emergency was declared, we had been hardening our plans to assure we were ready to meet the needs of



(opposite) The Village Green's social media content included virtual walks in the park and Ann Self releasing butterflies on Easter; Second graders from Summit Charter School remotely working on rocketship drawings with Art Teacher Mrs. Kapity via Zoom.

our community," said Tom Neal, CEO of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Neal held community tele-forums as early as mid-March to answer questions. He continued his commitment to providing transparency with the first edition of the HCH Pulse e-newsletter on April 30th.

While staying at home helped to flatten the curve, it also helped to lessen the stress on our medical community and first responders. Emergencies, including heart attacks and strokes, don't stop during pandemics. At the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad, where around 1,000 calls are received in a normal year, COVID-19 required new precautions to protect patients and staff. Working with the health

department and dispatch, they created a plan for segregating ambulance staff and first responders.

During Easter weekend, we discovered that severe storms and falling trees don't stop during pandemics either, a reminder of how quickly a situation can escalate as many were without electricity, some with damaged property. First responders often put their own lives in danger to save others; a situation made even more difficult while trying to social distance. Again, we were reminded of this in early May when a member of the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad was lost in the line of duty.

Outside of the medical community, we learned of many other things that don't

stop during pandemics. Businesses planning for an increase in revenue that comes with the plateau's summer tourist season faced the necessity of cutting costs and applying for loans. Families faced hunger. The plateau wept for her people.

But on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau, the moment between water and fog happened quickly. We have been utilizing the parable of the long spoons for many years. We are not an island, we are a mountain, and strong foundations don't easily crack. We know that we are stronger together, which is why the threads that weave the fabric of our community are tight-knit. Organizations at all levels were able to act quickly because the groundwork was



already in place. To quote Nat Turner, Public Affairs Officer for the Glenville-Cashiers Rescue Squad, "this is a new virus, but not a new plan." As the plateau wept, her people readied their long spoons.

In Highlands, the web of nonprofits, businesses, and civic leaders rallied to action. "Highlands has a strong network of community nonprofit organizations that have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our food pantries and churches have stepped up assistance to residents facing food insecurity. The Highlands Emergency Council has increased their services, while the Highlands Chamber of Commerce quickly created a new volunteer program called Neighbors Helping Neighbors," said Mayor Patrick Taylor.

Through Neighbors Helping Neighbors, the Highlands Chamber of Commerce developed a master list of community services and is recruiting individuals to list their talents to help. With the strain that staying at home places on daily life, especially for people at high-risk, this group of volunteers is assisting with everything from pharmacy pickup and delivery to simple home repairs and remote computer advice. "Our goal in developing NHN is to help those in need and provide that assistance safely. It's as simple as that. A few months ago, no one thought we would be where we are, but we are here, and caring for each other is of utmost importance,"

said Kaye McHan, Executive Director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce.

For anyone already benefiting from the plateau's rich nonprofit and business network, social media feeds buzzed with enriching content for quarantine minds.

*"Highlands has a strong network of community nonprofit organizations that have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic."
– Mayor Patrick Taylor.*

The Highlands Biological Station created a virtual learning center, Yoga Highlands took their classes online, and The Literacy Council launched a reading series on YouTube. Restaurants posted menus and photos of takeout options for those of us longing for our favorite cuisine. The Bascom: A Center For The Visual Arts launched several types of virtual content, including offering their newest exhibitions via video tour. In searching for new ways to implement planned programming, like many nonprofits and local businesses, The Bascom found a promising silver lining.

"The Bascom had scheduled a series of STEM modules in partnership with

Macon County schools for this spring, a program that was interrupted by the school closings. We quickly realized that we could create a version of the program utilizing mobile devices. The program was well received and became part of the distance learning curriculum for students in the STEM program in April. As a result, The Bascom has decided to focus more attention in the future on virtual education programs. This crisis has revealed areas of need where nonprofits can serve in the future," said Billy Love, Director of Education and Outreach at The Bascom.

Across the plateau, students, parents, teachers and staff adjusted to a new way of learning overnight. Virtual education requires more than just programming. Laptops, Wi-Fi, digital applications and platforms all became top of mind for educators and families. Platforms such as Zoom, a popular collaboration tool, were used to connect teachers and students. "I am filled with gratitude by the inspiring response of our students, families, faculty, and community members in rising to the challenge of this situation. We've all had to find a new balance and sense of normal. It has not been easy. But, as we've seen again and again over the last two months, these challenges have also inspired innovation and creativity, and revealed the true strength of our community and the Seven Virtues that anchor us at Summit,"



said Kurt Pusch, Head of School at Summit Charter School.

In Cashiers, volunteer organization Vision Cashiers (VC) called for the development of a community readiness plan in early March. A group of community leaders, including members of the medical industry, local schools, nonprofits, and business leaders, met via phone conference weekly to effectively connect and communicate. Such meetings created committees that sent out two letters, one drafting language for POA leaders to send out of town community members, anxious to learn more about what was happening in their home away from home. A later letter was released to Cashiers at large, offering a sentiment of unity and vigilance. VC also created a committee to provide snacks to local medical professionals and a way for local philanthropic groups to

donate money to the Cashiers Emergency Food Collaborative.

"I continue to be moved by the generosity and caring of the Cashiers community, including many of our seasonal residents. The level of collaboration exhibited during this time is quite impressive!" said Irv Welling, President of Vision Cashiers. Those with boots on the ground were not the only ones concerned. As seasonal residents learned of the community need in a home to which they'd yet to return, donor dollars poured in and interstate committee meetings were conducted virtually.

The Cashiers Emergency Food Collaborative began when two separate restaurants, Slab Town Pizza and The Library Kitchen & Bar, mentioned to the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau (BGCP) that shutdown left them with food surpluses. Within 24 hours, food that was no longer feeding tables at restaurants began to feed families facing food insecurity. With the help of an app already in use, BGCP was able to quickly text families to identify need the Sunday before schools closed, feeding them by Monday. Alternating days with Fishes



(clockwise) Highlands stays home; Staff members from the Boys and Girls Club deliver food as part of the Cashiers Emergency Food Collaborative; The Greystone Inn created a Buy a Meal, Donate a Meal, incentive where patrons could help feed local families in need while enjoying takeout meals like this beef lasagna with green salad and Greek goddess dressing; Mother Nature doesn't stop for quarantine. Old Edwards Inn's Farms, cared for by Matthew Clayton, donated 320 heads of lettuce to the Highlands Emergency Council and then an additional 90 heads of lettuce to the food bank.





Mr. Bill vs. The Box,
one of The Bascom's
virtual programs.

& Loaves Food Pantry, this initiative fed families dinner. The Jackson County Public Schools school bus meal delivery program served breakfast and lunch. As the collaborative grew, sponsors chipped in to help restaurants fit the bill, making sure that funding dollars were working double-time. Philanthropy dollars given to feed families were used to pay restaurants to cook meals, pumping vital funds back into Cashiers' local businesses. It was here that the ability to donate through Vision Cashiers became so crucial. Money going to the food collaborative was not going towards funding BGCP, an imperative distinction. By mid-May, the list of restaurants participating also included Whiteside Brewing Co., Mica's Restaurant and Pub, The Orchard Restaurant, Subway, and Chile Loco. Over \$55k to support the fund had been donated by the Church of the Good Shepherd, Wade Hampton Donor Advised Fund, Colony Club at High Hampton, and Cedar Creek Club Fund as well as by many individual community members.

"When asked to find a new way to serve our children, our full-time program staff said 'yes' and provided a solution literally overnight. Spencer Copen, Vivian Weatherby, and Cameron Ward have been the heart, soul, brains and brawn of this program," said Josh Helms, BGCP Executive Director.

The attitude of saying 'yes' was echoed in nonprofits across the plateau as staff members who had spent months planning programming switched gears to better serve. "What I am seeing is that our nonprofits, like everyone else, are adapting and evolving. Our mission remains, and

we are working harder than ever. We need the support of the community so that we can continue our part in maintaining the fabric of our community," said Julie Schott, Director of Development at the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. Schott brings up an important point; our nonprofits were able to act quickly due to structures that were already in place- much like BGCP already had the infrastructure of a texting app that could reach parents of children possibly facing food insecurity.

"I continue to be moved by the generosity and caring of the Cashiers community, including many of our seasonal residents." – Irv Welling, President of Vision Cashiers

For some of the plateau's nonprofits, best serving the community meant canceling beloved summer programming and postponing desperately needed charitable events and galas. During quarantine, The Blue Ridge Free Dental Clinic's small team of four front line professionals treated 82 patients in-clinic, performed 292 emergency procedures, and conducted 26 teledentistry conferences at no cost to the patient. That is 108 patients who might have otherwise sought treatment at one of our emergency departments. Doing their

part to reduce the burden on the medical community also meant postponing their annual spring fundraiser, delaying over \$50k in budgeted income during a time when patients are still in need.

In early April, the Highlands Playhouse announced its decision to cancel plans for the 2020 season. In mid-May, the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival announced that they would do the same. In public letters, both organizations emphasized a responsibility to protect patrons, staff and the community. Likewise, both seasoned organizations spoke with promise, creating new ways to inspire and entertain. "The good news is- THIS TOO SHALL PASS! We are already planning for a truly blockbuster 40th anniversary season in 2021...and it is going to be one nonstop party all summer long," said The Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival in their letter to the plateau.

Local nonprofits are not the only ones with an eye on the future. The plateau's small businesses are looking towards both the coming season and 2021. Advocates for small business, both chambers are working overtime with government, industry and health professionals to assist and lighten the load. Businesses are working tirelessly to implement new procedures and welcome back their clients with socially distanced arms. This means new logistics, new marketing, long days and late nights. "We understand this is a chaotic time for all and we will work through it together. The Chamber will serve as the Cashiers area's strongest business advocate to ensure a successful transition through this challenging time and into a prosperous economic recovery across the plateau," said Stephanie Edwards, Executive Director of the Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce.

As the plateau continues to navigate the unfamiliar waters that a global pandemic has delivered onto our doorstep, we rest assured in remembering that no man is an island. Going forward, we will find new ways to protect each other, utilizing best personal practices in COVID-19 related safety and doing our part to follow state and local health guidelines. We will find new ways to lift each other up, supporting local businesses and nonprofits. We will find new ways to nourish each other, physically, mentally, spiritually, civically and economically. We are a community with long spoons. Strong spoons. Good spoons. And we have proven time and again that we know how to use them. **■**