



Highland Happenings

August 2026

www.thehighlandcenter.org

540-468-1922

61 Highland Center Drive, Monterey, VA 24465

Thank you, Bob!

The Highland Center extends its sincere gratitude to Robert "Bob" Ellis as he retires after providing exceptional leadership and service to our organization.

After 30 years as a public accountant and 31 years as Chief Financial Officer for two growing companies in Central Virginia, Bob retired to Highland County in 2021. In 2024, he came out of retirement to serve as The Highland Center's Finance Manager and later stepped into the role of Interim Executive Director during a critical period of transition.



Bob's steady leadership, financial expertise, and unwavering commitment helped strengthen the organization and position it for the future. His thoughtful guidance and willingness to serve wherever needed have left a lasting impact on The Highland Center.

We are deeply grateful for Bob's dedication and wish him all the best in his retirement. Thank you, Bob, for your remarkable service and for helping ensure a strong future for The Highland Center.

COMING UP AT THE HIGHLAND CENTER:

Tuesday Talks

Galapagos Islands Experience
Tuesday, August 11
2pm

**Community Dinner & Appalachian
School Conversation**
Saturday, August 15
5:30pm

Summer Dance Wednesdays

Waltz Workshop & Dance
Wednesday, August 12
6pm

Highland Farmers' Market
Fridays from 3:30-6pm

Welcome New Board Member Megan Driver

The Highland Center is pleased to welcome Megan Ellington Driver to its Board of Directors. Her three-year term begins August 1.

A native of Highland County, Megan has deep roots in both the community and The Highland Center. Her mother, Debora Ellington, was the organization's founding president, and Megan attended kindergarten through sixth grade in the historic school building that is now home to The Highland Center.

Megan is the shopkeeper at Ginseng Mountain Store and holds a degree in Hospitality & Tourism Management from James Madison University. She also serves as president of the Buffalo Gap Middle School Council, an organization she founded to strengthen engagement between families and the school community.

Megan lives in Churchville with her husband, Brent, an electrician, and their two sons, Ryker (14) and Jase (13).

Reflecting on her new role, Megan shared, "People are at the heart of everything I do. I enjoy creating welcoming communities, solving problems, and helping others succeed. The Highland Center has so much potential, and I feel strongly that we can reignite our community's passion to see it thrive!"

The Highland Center is excited to welcome Megan to the Board and looks forward to the passion, experience, and community spirit she brings to the organization.

Volunteer Accomplishments

We are so grateful for the volunteers who help care for The Highland Center. Our four regular volunteers share their time, talents, and know-how in ways that make a big difference behind the scenes.

A special shout-out goes to John Vrugtman for patching a hole in the wall and to Fred Armstrong for tackling the mechanical closet—cleaning, organizing, and making the space safer and more functional.

Thank you to John, Fred, and all of our volunteers for pitching in and helping The Highland Center shine!

Those interested in sharing their skills and time with The Highland Center should reach out to director@thehighlandcenter.org.



Bart Chucker Concert Success

The Highland Center extends its heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us for the Bart Chucker Band Concert and Fundraiser on July 18. It was a wonderful evening of great music, community, and generosity.

Thanks to the incredible support of our community, the event raised \$18,000. Inspired by this overwhelming response, the Charles Pinckney Jones Trust increased the original \$50,000 cap on its generous 5-to-1 matching challenge and will match the full amount raised. Together, your donations and the Trust's contribution generated an extraordinary \$108,000 to support The Highland Center's programs and preserve our historic building.

"The Highland Center is an invaluable resource for Highland County, and we are pleased to help strengthen its future," said Skip Jones, Chairman of the Charles Pinckney Jones Trust. "It was inspiring to see the community come together in support of an organization that enriches the lives of so many."

Thank you to Bart Chucker and the band for an outstanding performance, and to everyone who attended, volunteered, and donated. Your support helps ensure The Highland Center can continue preserving our historic building and providing programs that bring our community together.



The Bart Chucker Band in Concert (left).

*Skip Jones on the dance floor with daughter and The Highland Center Board member, Windsor Betts, (center).
Skip Jones joined Bart Chucker on stage to make remarks (right).*



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Donate

