

Sky Valley Times

1ST QUARTER, 2025



Table of Contents

Content

- 02 Vision & Mission of Sky Valley
- 03 Mayoral Comments
- 04 Administration
- 07 Lead Alert Information
- 08 Police Comments
- 09 Announcements & Events
- 11 Reports

Features

- 14 Area Distilleries and Wineries
- 19 Sky Valley is a Special Place
- 26 Gratitude vs. Thankfulness
- 27 Surviving the Winter Blues
- 28 Why Should I Donate Blood?
- 29 Recipe: Crack Chicken Penne
- 30 Just for fun...



Sky Valley's Vision

Our Vision

- Responsive, Quality Service
- Protection of our Resources
- Integrity and Innovation in City Government
- Sky Valley, a world-class city



Sky Valley's Mission

Our Mission

- To enrich the quality of life for our citizens
- To protect and enhance our scenic beauty
- To ensure a safe and secure community
- To enhance our resources
- To develop and follow a vibrant plan for our city's future

Mayoral Comments

From the Desk of Mayor Hollie Steil

Happy New Year to you all.

Where in the world did 2024 go? It flew by quickly!

Your Councilmen and I continued to work to make our city a better and safer place for all our citizens and visitors.



In February we are scheduling our Annual Sky Valley Planning Workshop. This 2025 Planning Retreat will help us fulfill the mantra of “plan your work and work your plan”. Please look for and review the minutes from this planning retreat to know what your city is planning to accomplish for our citizens and visitors in 2025.

Our new Police Chief has jumped right into his leadership role of our Police Department. Chief Wallis has been riding around the city with our police officers becoming familiar with our roadways, our people, and his officers, reviewing and analyzing the department’s budget, routines, regulations and procedures, meeting with our city employees, and doing shift work. Welcome Chief Wallis!

We had our first 2025 snowfall. It was beautiful. As usual, our Public Works’ men sprang into action and diligently cleared our roadways. How wonderful it is to have such dedicated people working for Sky Valley. This is hard and dangerous work. These men never complain and work until the job is done, which usually means working for many long hours day and night. THANK YOU, SKY VALLEY PUBLIC WORKS!

As always I say and believe – THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES IN SKY VALLEY! ~ Hollie

HAPPY NEW YEAR! ³

Hello Sky Valley Residents and Visitors, Happy 2025!

As we begin the new year, we're excited to share plans for projects and activities to enhance our city and community. This year's highlights include the July Independence Day Celebration, the Hay Bale Trail, and Fall Fest in October. These events continue to grow in popularity each year, so stay tuned for updates on dates and times!

Road Improvements:

We're also focusing on paving several roads, including East Sugarbush, Driver, Eagle Circle, Mashie, and Lost Valley. Thanks to the TSPLOST (Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax), we can complete these projects without impacting the general fund. Sealed bids are being accepted now, with a contractor to be selected by the City Council in March. Paving is expected to begin in late spring or early summer, weather permitting.

Winter Weather Update:

This winter has already brought two snow events, and with February and March often bringing more snow, we encourage everyone to stay prepared. City staff works hard to treat roads with plowing and salt brining, but Mother Nature always wins! If travel isn't essential, please stay home and keep roadways clear of vehicles and debris so crews can work efficiently.

Stay Safe Tips:

- Stock at least 3 days' worth of food, water, and medicine.
- Remember the "4 P's": People, pets, plants, and pipes—keep them warm and safe.
- Follow city updates on Facebook and Twitter/X for road and weather notifications.

If you see our hardworking crews clearing roads late into the night, a warm drink or snack is always appreciated!

Stay Connected:

- Sign up for Mailchimp updates by emailing Sherron at SVGACOM@SkyValleyga.com.
- Follow "The City of Sky Valley, GA" on Facebook (look for the round city logo).
- Get real-time updates on road, water, and trash services by following [@valley_status](https://twitter.com/valley_status) on Twitter/X.

Thank you for being part of our vibrant community, and here's to a safe and successful 2025!

Code Enforcement

From the Desk of Jim Pyburn

And so another quarter has ended and we start a new year. Welcome 2025!

As we continue to move forward into the coldest months of the season, it bears reviewing some important reminders on how to maintain your pipes:

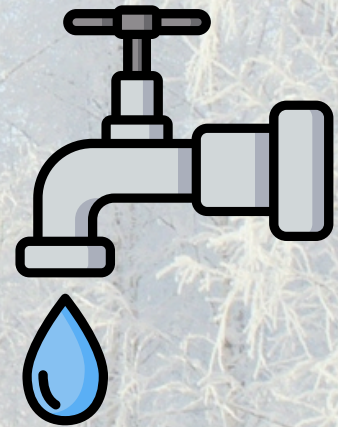
BEFORE COLD WEATHER SETS IN

- Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines
- Fix drafty windows
- Plug drafts around doors
- Identify your home's freezing points
- Know how to shut off your water
- Protect your pipes, wrap them in insulation



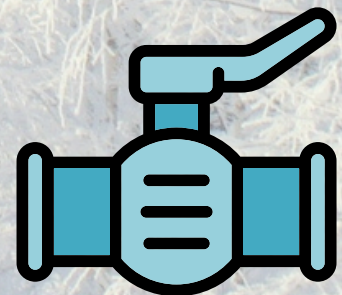
WHEN TEMPERATURES STAY BELOW FREEZING

- If pipes run through cabinets or vanities, open the doors
- Keep water moving through the pipes allowing a small trickle to run



BUT IF YOUR PIPES DO FREEZE

- Shut off the water immediately
- Thaw pipes with warm air, hair dryer or space heater
- Do not leave space heaters or open flames unattended



TURN OFF AT VALVE

Public Works

From the Desk of Jerry Shope

Over the past few months, Public Works has focused on projects such as redefining ditches, leaf removal, and canopy trimming. We've also decorated our beautiful city for fall and Christmas, adding a festive touch for residents and visitors alike.

Winter brings its own challenges, including road treatment and snow removal. Our team has worked diligently to ensure roads are safe and accessible for emergency vehicles during snowy conditions.

2024 was a success, with accomplishments such as paving high-traffic roads, acquiring new equipment, & maintaining rights of way. Looking ahead, we are currently preparing bids for additional paving & patching projects throughout the city.

As weather permits, leaf removal and erosion control efforts will continue. Future projects include strategic canopy clearing, culvert replacements, and preventive maintenance to keep Sky Valley safe and beautiful year-round.

Thank you for your support as we work to maintain and improve our community!

From the Desk of Cody English

Our crew has been hard at work addressing several small leaks and a few main-line leaks throughout the city. To ensure the longevity of our aging water system, we've focused on maintaining pressure-reducing valves to protect both the city's infrastructure and our customers' water systems. Sky Valley's steep mountain terrain adds to the challenge, but we're reinforcing the system with upgraded pipes, fittings, and gaskets as issues arise.

Looking ahead to early spring, the crew will replace faulty fire hydrants and perform well house maintenance to further strengthen the system.

Cold Weather Reminder:

Freezing temperatures can pose a risk to water pipes.

Here are some tips to protect your home:

- Leave your heat on if you're away for more than a few days unless you've turned off your water at the street.
- Open vanity doors under sinks located on exterior walls to allow warmer air to circulate.
- Let faucets drip overnight or during the day to reduce the risk of freezing pipes.



Thank you for your understanding and support as we work to maintain and improve Sky Valley's water system. Stay safe and warm!

Sky Valley Water Update: Lead Alert Information

Many of you may have noticed the "LEAD ALERT" notice and brochure included with recent water bills. This alert stems from a mandatory state lead and copper sample panel conducted every three years. Of the 10 residential water samples collected, 3 showed elevated lead levels.

Per EPD (Environmental Protection Division) guidelines, the city issued a public statement about the potential health risks of high lead levels and shared tips on preventing lead consumption. All residents whose homes were part of the sampling have been notified of their results.

After these findings, GRWA (Georgia Rural Water Association) and our Water System Coordinator conducted additional tests throughout the city's water system. These results were reassuring, showing no lead present in the city's system. The elevated lead levels were traced to the homes sampled, not the city's water supply. Homes built before 1986, when lead was banned in plumbing, are more likely to have lead pipes or fittings.

Please note that the city is unable to collect lead and copper samples upon individual request. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Water System Coordinator, Cody English, at 706-490-8069.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we work to ensure the safety and quality of Sky Valley's water system.



Police Department

From the Desk of Chief Tim Wallis

As we say goodbye to the year 2024 and welcome in year 2025, I would like to express my gratitude to the community of Sky Valley for the opportunity to serve as your Chief of Police.



Our focus is to improve the quality of life for our residents as well as building lifelong relationships with our residents and those who visit our great community. We are here to respond to calls for service as well as to special requests from residents, visitors, and businesses. The Sky Valley Police Department is dedicated to serving this city. We will work with all city departments to provide the best possible service to our residents and visitors. We are in the community 24/7. You may not always see us, but we are always patrolling and always available. You can contact us anytime to speak to an officer or request a visit from one of our officers to your location. For non-emergencies, call 706-782-7777. Please remember to use 911 after hours and on weekends. This allows Rabun County Dispatch to create a call with all the pertinent information needed for the officer's response that might not be available by calling the officer on duty directly.

With the winter weather we have received so far, it is very important to please drive carefully on affected roads. Also, obey the posted speed limits during normal road conditions. I would personally like to thank the Public Works Department for their excellence and efficiency during the winter weather storms for keeping our roads passable. Also, thanks to our police staff who have also worked without interruption during these winter storms.

In closing, I look forward to meeting more of you. Our community policing is a philosophy and an organizational strategy that promotes a new partnership between citizens and their police. It is based on the premise that both the police and the community must work together to identify, prioritize, and solve community concerns. Everyone wants to live in a great community. Great communities have low crime, orderly neighborhoods and an engaged police department that addresses their needs in a professional manner. These are the cornerstones of community policing.



A Partnership between citizens and police working together to create a great community with low crime, orderly neighborhoods, and an engaged police department.

Announcements



Stay Informed - Get the latest Sky Valley information

- At the **City Website** at www.skyvalleyga.com
- On our **Facebook** page at <https://www.facebook.com/Inc.1978>
- Get **email alerts**. Subscribe at the bottom of our homepage or call 706-746-2204 ext 4. Sherron will sign you up
- Receive **major alerts** from OneCall. Call 706-746-2204 ext 4. Sherron will sign you up

Sky Valley Property Owners Association (POA)

Welcome Back Party

June 14 6 PM- 9 PM \$30 per member, \$45 per guest.
Blue Jazz will perform.

Membership

Dues are to be paid by **March 31** to be included in the 2025 directory.
Get form and information from the POA website www.skyvalleypoa.net

Going Away Party

October 11 6 PM - 9 PM
\$30 per member, \$45 per guest.
Blue Jazz will perform.

Meeting Dates and Details

- **June 18** Computer Use & Security by Gerald Scarbrough, Computer Helper
- **July 16** State of the City by Mayor Hollie Steil
- **August 6** Purple Heart Day by Linda Edwards, Viet Nam Veteran
- **September 17** Mountain Lakes Medical Center Services by Kristy Hall, CEO
- **October 15** Board elections and charitable donation

Pancake Breakfast Dates--TBA

- Excellent food
- Fellowship with neighbors
- Meet new friends
- Volunteer to help
- 8 - 10 AM



Announcements

If you are in need of police services:

- Emergency - Dial 911
- Non-emergency - Dial 706-782-7777 & an officer be dispatched



Sky Valley Celebrates!

Independence Day Celebration:
Saturday, July 5, 2025

Sky Valley Fall Festival:

Saturday, October 18, 2025
10 AM - 4 PM



2025

Regular Council Meetings

- Tuesday, January 14th – Organizational & Regular
- Tuesday, February 18th
- Tuesday, March 18th
- Tuesday, April 15th
- Tuesday, May 20th
- Tuesday, June 17th
- Tuesday, July 15th
- Tuesday, August 19th
- Tuesday, September 16th
- Tuesday, October 21st
- Tuesday, November 18th
- Tuesday, December 16th

All meetings are at 10:00 AM

City of Sky Valley Unpaid Property Tax 2014-23/2025

RECEIPT	TAXES	FEES	PENALTY	INTEREST	COSTS	TOTAL
2014	97.86	0	9.79	75.89	22	205.54
2015	178.83	0	17.88	122.69	324	643.4
2016	283.06	0	9.98	113.84	507.89	914.77
2017	275.48	0	41.34	94.77	1,652.00	2,063.59
2018	288.16	0	14.41	96.35	2,590.52	2,989.44
2019	279.39	0	13.96	67.34	50.68	411.37
2020	279.39	0	0	33.35	48	360.74
2021	566.58	0	28.31	38.35	308	941.24
2022	1789.32	0	89.48	135.8	2209	4223.6
2023	2894.47	0	0	221.76	996	6742.05
TOTAL	\$6,932.54	\$0.00	\$225.15	\$1,000.14	\$8,708.09	\$19,495.74

Housing & Development Departmental Data Report	For month ending December 31, 2024		
	Dec. 2024	YTD	2023 YTD
New Residential & Commercial permits issued	0	3	5
All other addition, remodel and repair permits	7	157	118
Certificates of Occupancy issued	2	6	9
Total New Construction not yet finalized	3		0
Total Other Construction not yet finalized	23		0
Notices to Comply issued	0	6	3
Stop Work Orders issued	0	0	1
Tree Cutting permits issued	3	99	95
Code & Ordinance Violations cited	0	4	8
Fees Collected			
	Dec. 2024	YTD	2023 YTD
New Residential or Commercial Permits	\$0.00	\$12,774.00	\$12,512.50
Other Addition, Remodel, Repair Permits	\$1,002.00	\$14,914.00	\$10,330.00
Tree Cutting Permits	\$225.00	\$8,100.00	\$4,345.00
Land Disturbing Permits	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fines Collected for Ordinance Violations	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$0.00



Police Department

Monthly Count Sheet, Oct. Nov. Dec. 2024

	10-2024	11-2024	12-2024	YTD
Fire	1	1	1	4
Med Call	2	3	1	26
Accident	0	0	1	39
Family Viol.	2	0	0	4
Fight/Assault	0	0	0	1
Death/Suicide	1	0	0	3
Missing Person	1	0	0	1
Burglary/Break in	0	0	0	0
Theft	0	0	0	3
Susp. Activity	2	0	0	2
Susp. Person	4	3	7	35
Susp. Vehicle	2	1	0	10
Alarm	2	3	2	24
Investigation	0	0	4	21
DUI/PUI	0	0	1	5
Drug Related	0	0	0	0
Juvenile	0	0	1	2
Traffic Control	8	6	3	47
Traffic Stop	44	12	19	705
Warning	31	11	8	364
Citation	13	1	11	341
Mutual Aid	5	2	7	44
Animal	2	0	2	48
Lost and Found	0	0	0	0
Complaint	0	0	0	6
City Ord.	1	3	0	19
Public Assist	14	10	20	161
Resident Check	2,780	2,901	3,020	30,746
Business Check	1,861	1,638	1,783	20,946
Welfare Check	6	6	10	59
Visitor Escort	4	4	9	38
Arrest	0	0	0	3
911 Calls	23	22	28	263
Mileage	5,694	5,647	5,475	66,378

Area Distilleries & Wineries

Savor the Spirit of Georgia: Wineries & Distilleries in the North Georgia Mountains

Georgia is more than craft beer and moonshine—it's a paradise for wine and spirit lovers. In the scenic North Georgia mountains, boutique wineries and artisanal distilleries offer a perfect blend of flavor and Southern charm.

From fruit-forward wines to classic varietals, Georgia's wineries delight every palate, with each glass showcasing local tradition and stunning mountain views.



Distilleries with Distinction

Georgia's distilleries are a must-visit for spirit lovers, offering smooth whiskeys, botanical gins, and modern takes on moonshine. Many provide tours and tastings, giving a glimpse into the craft behind every bottle.

With stunning views, cozy tasting rooms, and Southern hospitality, these spots are perfect for a day trip or weekend escape. Discover hidden gems and raise a glass to the vibrant craft scene of North Georgia!



R.M. Rose Distillery

While many liquor companies focus solely on their ingredients to craft the flavor of their products, R.M. Rose takes a more hands-on approach to achieve a flawless flavor profile that satisfies even the most refined palates.

What sets R.M. Rose apart from most domestic whiskey distillers is their commitment to in-house manufacturing using their own stills. From the traditional cypress fermenting tanks to the meticulously hand-crafted copper pots, every component is designed and overseen with precision. This dedication ensures their whiskeys consistently meet the highest standards of quality and taste.



890 Franklin Street
Dillard, Georgia
706-982-8115

Open 10:00am –
6:00pm Daily

Moonrise Distillery

At Moonrise Distillery, we honor the traditions of distilling that date back to the early 1850s. While our methods might seem old-fashioned and time-intensive, our commitment to double-distillation ensures impurities are removed, resulting in a more refined and complex craft spirit. Unlike most distillers, we let our spirits decide when they're ready, relying on taste rather than time to perfect the aging process.



31 Webb Road
Clayton, Georgia 30525
(844) 994.4759



Distillery Plant & Tasting Room
Sunday - Monday
12:00 pm - 05:30 pm
Closed on Wednesdays

Old Know Beverage Company

For a sophisticated nightcap, head to the swanky lounge at Oldknow Bev Co., a micro-distillery located at the north end of Main Street. Their botanically-inspired cocktails, like "The Bouquet"—a delightful blend of gin, jasmine tea, Oldknow amaro, honey, and lemon—are sure to impress.



301 N Main Street
Clayton, GA, 30525
Wednesday/Thursday 4 - 9
Friday 4 - 10
Saturday 1 - 10
Sunday 1 - 5



12 Spies Vineyards

Named after the biblical story of Moses sending 12 spies to explore the Promised Land, 12 Spies Vineyards draws inspiration from the abundance symbolized by the giant grapes the spies returned with.

In 2012, Mike Brown transitioned from corporate success to farming, driven by his passion for cultivating grapes. This journey led to the creation of 12 Spies Winery and Tasting Room, offering a variety of wines ranging from dry reds and whites to semi-sweet and sweet, all vinted and bottled on-site.

With a mission to provide a peaceful atmosphere, 12 Spies invites guests to relax, savor their wines, and enjoy the breathtaking views of God's creation.



Wednesday -Friday: 12-5
Saturday: 11-5
Sunday: 12:30-5

550 Black Branch Road
Rabun Gap, Georgia 30568
706-746-2097



The Vineyard at High Holly

Nestled on the Highlands Plateau between Dillard, GA, and Highlands, NC, our vineyard offers a warm welcome and unforgettable experiences.

Spanning nearly 30 acres, the property features a working vineyard, award-winning dahlia garden, tennis courts, a serene pond with waterfalls, an event pavilion, and walking trails.



37 High Holly Rd,
Scaly Mountain, NC
28775

Wednesday-
Sunday
12-6 PM



We're proud to be family and pet-friendly, inviting everyone to relax, sip on amazing wines, soak in the breathtaking views, and enjoy a little shopping. Come create lasting memories with us in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains!

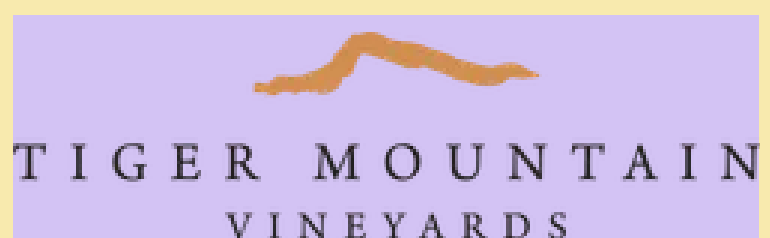
Tiger Mountain Vineyards

Tiger Mountain Vineyards, a boutique winery in North Georgia, proudly grows its grapes and crafts its wines in the scenic mountains of Rabun County. The winery and its historic Red Barn Café have been a local treasure for years.

In 2021, Tiger Mountain Vineyards welcomed new ownership under Lenny Vitello, a successful entrepreneur with a passion for wine, hospitality & the great outdoors. The vineyard continues to thrive with its stunning views, exceptional wines, and the same breathtaking Tiger Mountain backdrop.

Monday:
12:00pm - 5:00pm
Thursday:
12:00pm - 5:00pm
Friday - Saturday:
12:00pm - 6:00 pm
Sunday:
12:00pm - 5:00pm

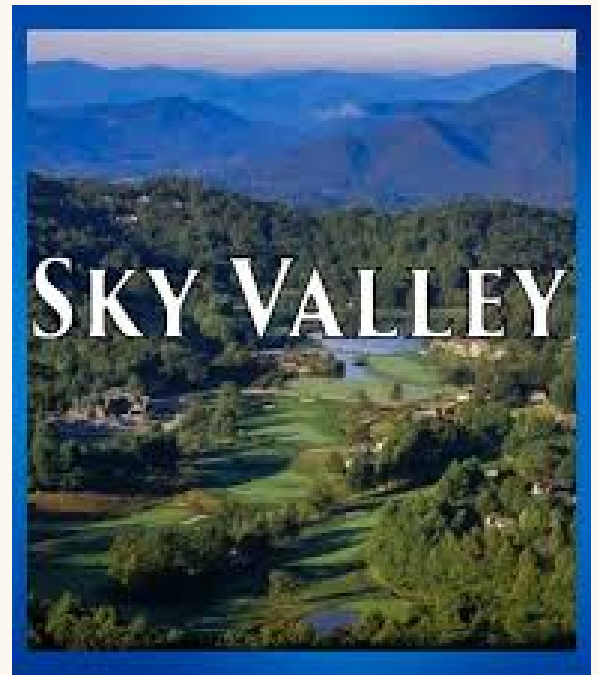
2592 Old GA-441
Tiger, GA,



Sky Valley is a Special Place

A random sample of Sky Valley homeowners shared their favorite aspects and cherished memories of our beautiful town. Here's what they had to say.

These heartfelt reflections highlight what makes Sky Valley such a special place to call home!



David Carter

Largest Slumber Party

A few years ago we had about fifty people over for dinner when a violent storm came through and knocked a huge tree across Mockingbird Lane preventing anyone from leaving. I called police and got the answering service which replied it might be next day before road could be cleared. Our house sleeps 30+, so I told guests to stake out a sleeping spot which many did, but others discovered liquor closet.

Around 3:00 am. Road was cleared but I couldn't allow my inebriated guests to leave!

Sky Valley is a Special Place

Debbie Martoccio

I love the escape to the mountains and the peaceful tranquility I feel whenever I am here.

I love the seasons.

I love the surrounding area and the people, especially the wineries and downtown Clayton.

I love the friends that I've met here and how friendly everyone is.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.



Mark Meidlein

I've been coming up here since the mid 70's and it's been interesting how Sky Valley has evolved from a private community to the city it is today. My wife and I were married in the church and had our reception in the bar of the old ski lodge after it was shut down. We had to go in and clean the place for the reception and provide our own catering, drinks and music on a mixed tape!



Our favorite memory was a new years week in the mid 90's, we had a 20 lb. Turkey and had invited a bunch of people up to celebrate. We wound up getting about 10" of snow and nobody came up, it was just ourselves, my dad and his dog. It took Sky Valley 5 days to plow back to our house, so needless to say we did a lot of walking on the golf course.

Before I met my wife I loved coming up on weekends to ski and hang out at the bar in the old clubhouse!

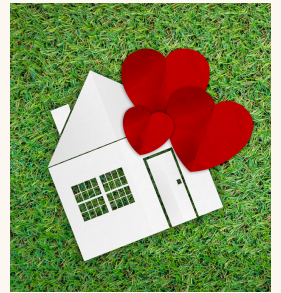
We have been full time residents for 2 years now and don't plan on moving again because we love this place so much. We try to walk every day and enjoy the peacefulness of Sky Valley.

Sky Valley is a Special Place

Cathy Adams

I've known about Sky Valley forever—even skied here back in the day! My husband, Richard, and I have owned a second home in Highlands for 26 years, but we've enjoyed golfing in Sky Valley. We love the course here, and hope to play more.

Recently, a client of mine, initially searching for a home in Highlands, found a place in Sky Valley and purchased it last spring. During this process, I started to consider Sky Valley for us, as we'd been priced out of the Highlands market after two years of searching.



When a home with potential came on the market in Sky Valley, we fell in love and saw the opportunity to make it our own. With my husband being a builder and me a designer, we're excited for this new renovation project! If all goes as planned with the sale of our Highlands home, we'll start renovations this winter. We can't wait to join the community and the club—Sky Valley already feels like home!

Sally Shearon

George and I gathered four of our 5 children for Christmas in 1976, and headed for the mountains of north Georgia. Although we rented a cabin on Screamer Mountain for this occasion, we soon traveled for our first siting of Sky Valley. We entered this haven by driving through the guarded check point gate, rounded the curve and entered the world of Currier and Ives...snowing for real, making snow on the ski slope and introduced our family to a magical Alpine Lodge.

Three of our older children skied for the first time as George and I watched and chased our 17 month-old son, Mason, wander around, eating and then taking naps on the dining room floor of the lodge. We spent the entire day enjoying the total beauty that Sky Valley offered us. We had no idea we were starting to build 48+ years of memories and still counting as of now, 2024.



Sky Valley is a Special Place

Sally Shearon continued

Our extended family has had two reunions here with 40 relatives gathering to soak up the valley's fun and beauty. We have memories of Easters, 4th of July events, duck races with grandchildren, Christmases in the Chapel, hiking the mountains, cocktail/hors d'oeuvres at the waterfall, parties in the lodge, New Year Eves in the lodge and then the new Club House, seeing the new Country Club blossom, golfing, playing croquet & bocce' ball, picnics by the dozens, dining with friends, helping Joyce with her hay bales, watching the clouds roll into the valley, hearing taps at 9 at night from our deck, fireworks, cocktails with the S.V. Gator Club at our hay bale, dancing, Garden Club, Sid Weber, Literati Bookworms and so much more if you can believe it!!!

The most important part of Sky Valley to us is the kind, loving, caring people who have blessed our lives for all these magnificent years. We have seen people move in, move out, come for long or short periods of time, visit and then buying a home here, full time and part time people, and now we have had too many friends die here in the valley, leaving their incredible footprints on our hearts and blessing our lives for all these years.



We have lived in Sky Valley longer than any other place and still get extremely excited when we get off the by-pass at Toccoa and see "our" special mountains as we drive up from Florida. Although we are in the category of "part timers", we always feel we are home here and can't wait to see all our friends who are here, either permanently or for the summer. Yes, we love this little city that is the highest and coolest place in Georgia. We consider ourselves most blessed that God showed us the way here back in 1976.

Sky Valley is Home

Sky Valley is a Special Place

James Long

My initial introduction to Sky Valley took place in fall 2017, when a fellow Auburn, AL resident who had a second home in Highlands invited me to spend a weekend and play golf in the area. He wasn't a member of any Highlands or Cashiers clubs but instead usually played his "mountain" golf at Sky Valley, and thus a beautiful relationship began!

Over the next few summers, Cathy and I rented several different VRBO houses and hosted our children and various golfing friends. On each stay we grew more convinced that we needed our own place, and so in August 2020 we purchased one of the Forest Hills condos. Ultimately, we decided that more space would enhance our summer stays in Sky Valley, so we purchased a lot on Alpine Drive and started construction of a house, which we have occupied since May 2024.



The fact that we eventually chose to own rather than rent, and then decided to build a house even though it meant moving away from our wonderful Forest Hills "family", speaks volumes about our love for Sky Valley and the friendships we've developed here. The cooler temperatures (certainly compared to Auburn) and presence of a top-notch golf course would suffice to make me choose Sky Valley as a summer "getaway" site, and considering the quality of the club's facilities and dedication of the golf-related staff, this truly is a "no brainer" decision in my mind.

But golf isn't a 24/7 activity for me and Cathy doesn't play at all, so Sky Valley has to offer something more to keep us returning here for most of the summer, and to make shorter visits in times when snow/icy conditions don't exist. The natural beauty of the area, it's friendly and helpful residents, the professional and dedicated city/county government officials and personnel, the Rabun County library and Mountain Lakes Medical facilities, and the accessible grocery shopping and diverse dining options in Clayton, Franklin, and other communities fit the bill for us. As long as our health allows, we look forward to many more stays in Georgia's "highest and coolest" community.

Sky Valley is a Special Place

Angela Buzzett Shiflet

“Crazy” for Sky Valley

Have they lost their minds?!? This was my reaction when my parents, Isabell and Carroll Buzzett, called in 1971 to tell me that they had bought a lot at a ski resort in Georgia. Theirs was the third house to be built in Sky Valley, and I still remember Mama sliding down the snowy driveway on an oven pan, while Daddy looked on, grinning, cup of coffee in hand.

Following in her footsteps (or, rather, snowy tracks), anytime a big snow is predicted, my husband, George, and I jump in the car and head for Sky Valley, where I have upgraded to a sled for riding down the hill. Even more than the winter, I think we enjoy other seasons, visiting with friends on the screened porch in the treetops with pleasant breezes blowing and birds singing. If my parents had lost their minds, thank goodness they had!



Isabell Buzzett



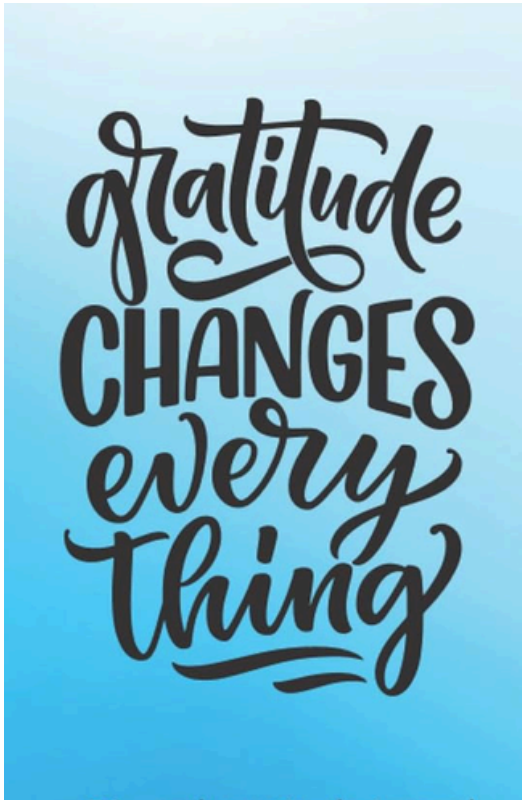
Angela Buzzett Shiflet

Gratitude vs Thankfulness: The Big Difference

You've likely heard the phrase "have an attitude of gratitude." In positive psychology, gratitude is just that—a mindset of appreciating life's gifts. As we enter a new year, it's a meaningful time to reflect on the difference between gratitude and thankfulness.



What is the Difference Between Gratitude and Thankfulness?



- **Thankfulness Fades, Gratitude Remains:** Gratitude starts as thankfulness but lasts by focusing on what endures beyond the moment.
- **Gratitude is Internal, Thankfulness is External:** Thankfulness arises from external events, while gratitude relies on an inner mindset to stay positive and appreciative in all circumstances.
- **Thankfulness is Immediate, Gratitude is Lasting:** Thankfulness responds to the present, while gratitude builds deeper, long-term connections in relationships.

Though closely related, gratitude provides lasting satisfaction and improved well-being, offering profound benefits when practiced regularly.

How to Practice Gratitude with Easy Practices

Building gratitude is easy with regular practice. By focusing on what you appreciate, you'll naturally notice more to be grateful for.

Try these feel-good methods to cultivate gratitude:



- **Start Each Day as a Gift:** View each morning as a chance to be kind, grow, or make a positive impact.
- **Keep a Gratitude Journal:** Write down small joys daily to connect with and recognize gratitude.
- **Take a Gratitude Walk:** Enjoy nature, leave your phone behind, and notice the little things around you.
- **Write a Gratitude Letter or Email:** Thank someone who has made a positive impact in your life.
- **See the Beauty in Others:** Smile, start conversations, or offer kind words to brighten someone's day.
- **Use Words of Gratitude Often:** Say "thank you," "please," or "you're welcome" with genuine intention.
- **End Your Day with Gratitude:** Finish your day by appreciating what went right.

gratitude
changes everything

Surviving the Winter Blues



The "winter blues" are common during the colder months, manifesting as occasional feelings of sadness or a desire to stay home. However, they don't typically interfere with your ability to function. For example, you might cancel social plans to stay in but still enjoy activities like watching TV or crafting. You may prefer to spend more time indoors and away from others, yet feel ready to reconnect with friends or coworkers the next day.

While you still find joy in life, you might pull back a little. Sometimes, the "winter blues" can also be tied to external stressors, such as the loss of a loved one during the holiday season.

Boost your mood this winter with these simple strategies and stay healthy all season long:

- **Get Outside:** Spend time outdoors daily, even on cloudy days, to boost your mood with natural light. Take a walk for fresh air and a change of scenery.
- **Exercise:** Aim for 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise, three times a week. Join a class or group to combine physical activity with social interaction.
- **Eat Well:** Maintain a balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals.
- **Stay Social:** Stay connected with friends and family.
- **Practice Self-Care:** Keep a consistent schedule to improve sleep, and journal to release negative thoughts and emotions.

Why Should I Donate Blood?

Donating blood is important because it helps save lives and can also have health benefits for donors.

Benefits to recipients

- Blood donations **help patients** who are undergoing surgery, cancer treatment, chronic illnesses, and traumatic injuries.
- One donation can **save up to three lives**.
- **Blood is essential** and can't be manufactured.

Benefits to donors

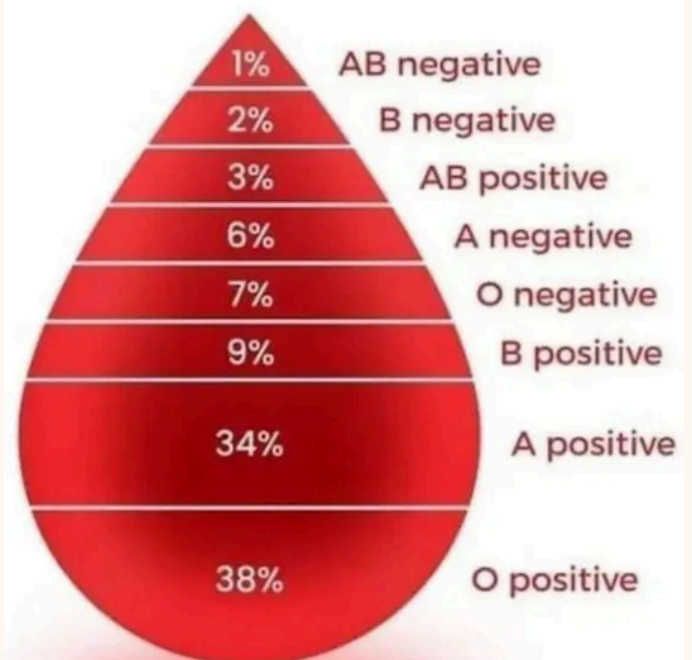
- Donating blood can improve your **blood flow** and **reduce arterial blockages**.
- It can help **balance your iron levels**.
- It can **reveal potential health issues**.
- It can **lower your risk of cancer**.
- It can help you **feel good** about helping others.
- It can be linked to positive health outcomes, including a **lower risk for depression** and **greater longevity**.

Which blood types are compatible?

BLOOD TYPES YOU CAN RECEIVE

	O-	O+	B-	B+	A-	A+	AB-	AB+
AB+	🩸	🩸	🩸	🩸	🩸	🩸	🩸	🩸
AB-	🩸		🩸		🩸		🩸	
A+	🩸	🩸			🩸	🩸		
A-	🩸				🩸			
B+	🩸	🩸	🩸	🩸				
B-	🩸		🩸					
O+	🩸	🩸						
O-	🩸							

Most Common Blood Types in the U.S.



Crack Chicken Penne



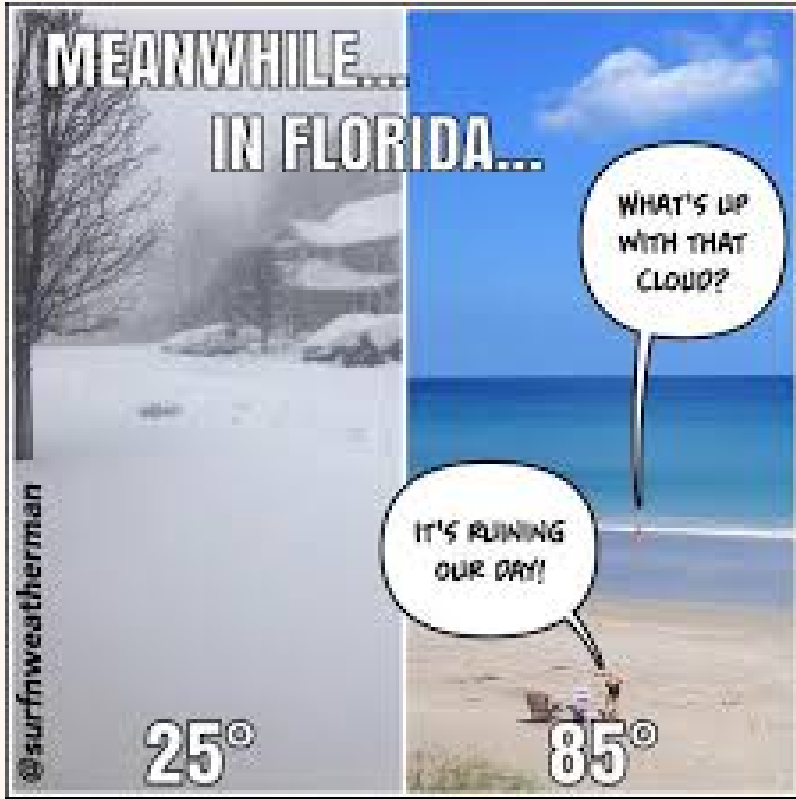
Ingredients

- 10 oz penne pasta
- 8 slices bacon chopped
- 1 ½ lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ yellow onion minced
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup sour cream
- 4 oz cream cheese
- 1 packet dry ranch dressing mix
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp dried parsley
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- Chopped green onions for garnish

Instructions

- Cook penne pasta until al dente, drain, rinse with cold water, and set aside.
- In a large pot, cook chopped bacon over medium-high heat until crispy. Remove and drain on a paper towel, leaving 1 tablespoon of bacon grease in the pot.
- Chop chicken into 1-inch cubes, season with salt and pepper, and sauté in the pot until lightly seared.
- Add minced onion and sauté until the chicken is cooked through and the onion is translucent. Stir in minced garlic and cook for 1 minute.
- Pour in chicken broth, sour cream, cream cheese, ranch packet, salt, pepper, dried parsley, and cooked bacon. Stir, bring to a boil, and reduce to low heat.
- Add shredded cheddar cheese and cooked pasta, stirring to combine. Simmer for 5 minutes.
- Remove from heat and serve, garnished with chopped green onions.

Just for Fun



Today's 3 year olds can switch on laptops and open their favorite apps



At my funeral, take the bouquet off my coffin and throw it into the crowd to see who's next!