

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

Volume 6, Number 50

PDF Version – www.HighlandsInfo.com

Thursday, Dec. 11, 2008

This Week in Highlands

On-going Events

• Collections for men and women overseas at Chestnut Hill Retirement community. Call Jeremy Duke at (828) 787-2114.

• Raffle of handcrafted Stiefel Botanical Book to benefit The Bascom. Call 526-4949, ext. 8#.

• At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes. Call 526-1FIT.

Mon. & Wed.

• Middle School students After School Program from 3-5 p.m. at the Rec Park.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

• Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers at the Rec Park, 8-9 a.m. \$10 per class or \$50 a month.

Wed., & Fri.

• Open AA meeting noon at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Mondays

• Open AA meeting, 8 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

• Recreational Bridge 1 p.m. at the Rec Park. \$3 per person.

Wednesdays

• Men's interdenominational Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church.

Thursdays

• Al-Anon meeting, noon at the Episcopal Church at Main and Fifth streets.

Thursdays & Fridays

• Live music at The Rib Shack from 7-10 p.m.

Thurs.-Sat., Dec 11-13

• The Highlands-Cashiers Players will present its annual free Christmas reading at 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street.

Saturday, Dec. 13

• Breakfast with Santa at the Methodist Church at 8:30 a.m. \$10 per family

• Wine Tastings at Old Edwards Inn & Spa, 2-4 p.m. Call 526-8008.

• Santa will be at the Highlands Visitor Center from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to hear wishes and for photos.

• The Highlands Community Christian Chorale presents its concert 4 p.m. at the Baptist Church. Reception to follow.

• The Highlands Plateau Greenway will have a trail construction work trip on Saturday. Call Hilarie Quin at 526-2385.

Salt prices culprit behind DOT budget cuts

Weather, a hike in salt prices and a decrease in revenue are the reasons behind services being curtailed by the NC DOT department this winter — a scenario being mimicked by departments of transportation across the country.

Simply put, state DOT budgets don't have contin-

gency funds to offset the skyrocketing cost of salt which is used to make winter roads safe after the decrease in revenues from car sales was factored in.

"The problem we are facing with snow and ice control is two-fold," said Wesley Grindstaff, NC DOT district engineer. "A combination of

NCDOT's revenues being significantly less than initial projections with the escalation in salt prices is requiring that we practice a closer adherence to our snow and ice policy than what has been practiced in the past. This is being done in an attempt to remain in budget and be fiscally responsible."

At Monday night's Macon County Commission meeting, board members agreed to contact DOT to see how Macon County will be affected, particularly since commissioners received complaints from citizens in Highlands and Nantahala af-

• See SALT page 2

Police Dept. earns grade

For the second year in a row Highlands has been named a AAA Safety Community for Traffic in North Carolina for populations less than 10,000.

At the Dec. 3 Town Board meeting, Police Chief Bill Harrell announced that the police department had attained the rating through its participation in the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program "No Need 2 Speed" campaign enforced between Nov. 17-30.

Chief Harrell said since 92% of North Carolina communities fall into the "under 10,000 population" category the rating is a pretty big deal. He said his officers issued 18 citations and made one DWI arrest during the campaign.

"Personally, departmentally, and in the spirit of community policing, I take great pride in that accomplishment," he said. "The fact that

we are leading in providing our community a safer, better quality of life by deploying measures in making motorist & pedestrians safer is a good thing."

All tolled, Macon County law enforcement agencies conducted 15 checkpoints during the period and issued 413 traffic and criminal violation citations.

The N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program kicked off the pilot project "No Need 2 Speed," in June 2006 to encourage drivers to slow down and follow the speed limit. In April 2007 the N.C. State Highway Department asked local law enforcement agencies statewide to participate and report findings.

Results suggest that with the combination of signage and enforcement there was a decrease in motorists speeding on rural roads. — KL

New county offerings

The first seating of the county's new board was Dec.

8 and commissioners wasted no time initiating changes.

• Beginning January 2009, the board will meet two times a month — the second Monday at 6 p.m. and the fourth Monday at 2 p.m.

Chairman Commissioner Ronnie Beale initiat-

• See COUNTY page 15

King & Queen for the night



Seniors Andrew Billingsley and Carolyn Hornsby were crowned king and queen at the annual Highlands School Homecoming Dance Saturday night. They competed with other seniors named to the Homecoming Court — Haley Chalker, Casey Jenkins, Marisol Ruiz, Michael Baty, Hunter Leffler and Luke McClellan. Also named to the court were freshmen Jenny Coram and Cody St. Germain, Sophomores Courtney Rogers and Josh DeLaCruz, and Juniors Jessica Gagne, Shelby Johnson, Harrison Hall and Will Mathiowdis. For Homecoming Dance photos see page 22.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

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Middle East expert presents 'Iraq 101'

This is the final part of a multi-part series which began Oct. 30.

After her presentation Middle East expert Sandra Mackey answered questions from the audience.

Question 5

Don't we risk another Iraq if we go into Afghanistan risking great cost and great loss of life?

Iraq and Afghanistan are very different countries. In Afghanistan you're dealing with the Taliban and group of people who are back in the 18-19th century. That tension has been there from the time the Russians invaded. They took advantage of the conflict between the urban elite and the tribes people who are a different ethnic group. The Krali government has failed. It has been put in and so the urban elite are back but they haven't addressed the needs of the rural people.

So we could be in Afghanistan a long time, but it's how we're there and what is the goal there that matters?

The front line on terror-

• See MACKEY page 20

* THE PLATEAU'S POSITION *

• FORUM •

Has God Blessed America?

By Nathan Forrester

“God bless America!” This is a phrase that I have thought a lot about over the last few months. Has God blessed America? Is it right to ask him to keep doing so given the sin in our country today? I started thinking about this question when I heard many Christian friends of mine talking about giving up on America. Some seem to go so far as to say, “Don’t vote because you are supporting a sinful government system,” or “The voting booth is an altar to democracy.” These Christians sound as though they want America to fall so they can set up a new government. I love my God and my country. I believe we can be Christians and patriots as well.

I am first a Christian and then an American. Does this violate being in the world and not of it? If we read 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, we get a better picture of being in the world but not of it. I read a blog by John Piper that really did a good job of explaining voting to a Christian. We can apply the same concept to being a patriot also.

“The appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away” (1 Corinthians 7:29-31).

This passage doesn’t tell us to stop loving our wives, but not to hold them dearer than Christ. We still need to support and provide for them. The same goes for our country. We cannot ignore our county! We must love her enough to be salt and light for her. We follow her laws as long as they don’t contradict God’s law. The only reason for not supporting your country would be if that county asked you to forget God.

In times past, Christians lived in countries ruled by a few men with all the power and went to churches that were ruled in the same way. In these countries and churches, the only thing a Christian could do was to obey the law and be salt and light with their lives. They had no way of changing that leadership other than with violence or by a change of the tyrant’s heart. In the reformation, the church moved to a representative form of government. These ideas about government in the church started

• See FORUM page 9

• THANK YOUS •

Historical Society says thanks

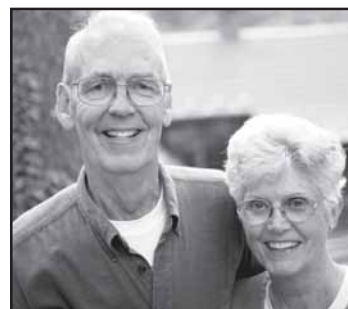
The weather outside was frightful, but dozens of Highlanders and their visitors came to the annual Christmas Showhouse sponsored by the Highlands Historical Society, and were delighted with what they saw. What they saw started with a wonderful Joe Webb log house on Satulah Road, built in 1930 and now owned by Jim Green. Inside they saw rooms beautifully decorated by gifted ladies who volunteered their services: Susan Jones for The Dry Sink, Nancy Ostema for Cosper Flowers, Sarah Sloan for Antiques and More, Barbara Smith, Connie Thompson for Basketworks and Liz View for Cut ‘n Patch Quilts.

Other volunteers too numerous to mention shuttled attendees to and from the Showhouse, stood in the cold outside Bryson’s Food Store to sell tickets, and served as docents at the house. All ticket proceeds as well as proceeds from the sale of calendars depicting scenes from Highlands’ past go to benefit the Highlands Historical Society which maintains three buildings at the Historic Village: the Prince House, the Highlands Historical Museum and Archives, and the Bug Hill Cottage. The board of directors is grateful to every volunteer and everyone who bought a ticket to this year’s Highlands Christmas Showhouse.

Poolles receive ‘Dupree’ award

Edwin and Kay Poole were the recipients of this year’s Robert Dupree Award, granted annually by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce to outstanding citizens whose public service matches or approaches that of Robert Dupree.

Robert Dupree served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 1936-41 and 1948-51. During that time and afterwards he recognized the need to provide recreational activities for young people and organized an



Edwin and Kay Poole

outstanding music program and a basketball team known as the Christian Endeavor All-Stars. He was also instrumental in the founding of the theatre group that has led to the Highlands Playhouse. He joined Steve Potts in various commercial ventures, including the very popular restaurant that came to be known as the Highlander. For a period of time he served as the Town’s Recreation Director.

Edwin and Kay Poole moved to Highlands full-time in 2001 and immediately began volunteering wherever their help was needed. They are particularly enthusiastic

about the environment and are active in the Highlands Plateau Audubon Society, the Highlands Biological Station, Mirror Lake Improvement Association, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, Upper Cullasaja Watershed Association, the Greenway Trail and the annual Gorge Road Litter Pick-up. Edwin helped with the construction of the recently opened Ranger Falls Trail in the Nantahala National Forest.

As former school teachers, they both devote one day each week to help teachers at Highlands School and have been exam proctors at the school. On three different occasions they have been named “Fans of the Year” because of their dedicated attendance at school athletic events.

During the summer, they serve as museum docents for the Highlands Historical Society. For the last five years Kay has been a volunteer in the box office for the Highlands Community Players, and this year manned the box office for the Performing Arts Center. The Poolles register participants in the SOAR race and man checkpoints to assure that participants stay on the race course.

... SALT continued from page 1

ter the Dec. 1 snow fall. Highlands Mayor Don Mullen said he would be contacting them as well.

Grindstaff said historically Division 14 of which Macon County is a part, gets more service than his department policy dictates

for snow and ice removal, but he realizes that’s what people have come to expect.

“We will strive to continue to provide the highest level of service at an expense that we can handle,” said Grindstaff. “Our forces will continue to plow and use abrasives – sand and chat – on our secondary roadways, but we will not be using salt throughout these routes as we may have done in the past.”

Dick Hanneman, president of the Salt Institute — a trade group representing U.S. and Canadian salt manufacturers — said reason for the price increase is multi-faceted.

Record snow in parts of the U.S. last winter depleted salt supplies and fearing a repeat of last year’s problems, many states increased their salt orders by 30%-40%.

Hanneman said the handful of salt suppliers in North America have been running full throttle to try to meet demand.

Louisiana and Kansas each have three mines, Texas, Ohio and Ontario, Canada, have two each and there is one in New York. These serve states in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River regions. Most of the salt for the East Coast comes from overseas.

Weather over the past year has added to the problem.

Summer flooding closed locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi River for weeks, disrupting barge shipments of road salt and soaring gas prices this past summer and fall increased the cost of transporting the salt.

To make matters worse, in September,

• See SALT page 19

LETTERS-TO-THE EDITOR-POLICY

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions. No anonymous letters will be accepted. Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands' Newspaper.

Please email letters by Monday at 5 p.m.

There is a 500-word limit without prior approval.

Highlands' Newspaper

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Highlands remembers Nick Moschouris



On Thursday, Dec. 4, 2008, the Highlands community turned out in force to remember and show its respect for Nick Moschouris and his family, owners of Nick's Fine Foods restaurant. Nick died on Friday, Nov. 28. Every seat was filled in the sanctuary of the Highlands United Methodist Church as well as most seats in the Fellowship Hall where mourners watched the proceedings on television. Pastor Paul Christy, who said he only knew Nick while he was battling cancer, and Pastor Eddie Ingram, who said he only knew Nick while he was well, each told endearing stories about Nick, his family and the love they shared. After the service, people crowded around wife Patti and daughter Dori offering comforting words and hugs. Patti said the show of love and support was almost overwhelming.

Photo by Kim Lewicki

• OBITUARIES •

Diann Barta

Diann, a resident of the Highlands area since the mid-90s, quietly died at her home over the Thanksgiving weekend. She shared with all who knew her, a fond love for the Highlands community and the surrounding mountains. Diann spent her working life in the hospitality business. She moved Highlands from a Sheraton property in Orlando, FL, to assist in the opening of a Highlands restaurant. Later she worked as assistant manager of the Kelsey & Hutchinson Lodge and later The Lodge at Old Edwards Inn.

Most recently diann served as assistant manager of The Lodge at Tallulah Falls, Tallulah Falls, GA, which opened this past summer. She was instrumental in the concept development and implementation of service standards for this 55-room lodge and conference center.

Diann was born October 11, 1952 in Trenton, NJ and grew up in nearby Burlington. She is survived by her father Joseph Barker of Mt. Laurel, NJ, and sister Toni Makowski and husband Jerry and nephews Matt and Justin, all of Kendall Park, NJ.

Diann had two feline children adopted from the Highlands-Cashiers Humane Society. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Highlands-Cashiers Humane Society, P.O. Box 638, Cashiers, NC 28717.

Leonard A. Ranch

Leonard A. Ranch, 85, died surrounded by friends and family, on December 3, 2008, after suffering a stroke last week. "Len," as he was affectionately known, was born July 30, 1923 in Council Bluffs, Iowa. He received a B.S. degree in Architectural Engineering and an M.S. degree in Architecture from Iowa State University. While in college, he enlisted in the Army



Leonard A. Ranch

Air Corps on December 7, 1942 and received his pilot's wings on March 12, 1943. He served a tour of duty in World War II as a fighter pilot in England, France and Germany.

After the war, he completed college and worked with his father in a design/building company known as Ranch Construction Company. He

•See OBITUARIES page 11

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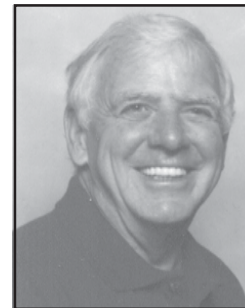


• LAUGHING AT LIFE •

It ain't easy being me

By the time you finish reading this, you're going to feel soooo sorry for me 'cause it's not easy being me.

I wasn't born a member of the Lucky Sperm Club. Instead, I was born at a very young age and had it rough early in life. I had only been breathing about two months when the stupid Ohio River overflowed and ran through my second story nursery. I'm not making this up! My parents had to climb through an upper window onto the roof in the middle of the night to save themselves...and me from a flash flood. Just as the river was about to cover the roof, a rowboat arrived but couldn't take more passengers. My Ma begged them to take me



Fred Wooldridge

Feedback is encouraged!
email:

askfredanything@aol.com

so they did. Another rowboat came later to save my parents as water lapped around their ankles.

When my Ma finally got to the Baptist Hospital in the Highlands' portion of Louisville, KY. she walked into a room full of rescued babies and stared at them. In those days all babies wore white dresses. (Don't make fun of me as I'm very sensitive about this.) None of the babies at the hospital were wearing identification. Mothers would simply walk in and

pick out the baby they thought belonged to them. Can you imagine? I could be Cassius Clay's kid...Nah!

By the time I was seven, my parents were sure they had made a bad pick. I had already flunked first grade and if Ritalin had been invented, I would've had a permanent IV stuck in my arm and a drug tank strapped to my back. The school I attended invited my parents to take me elsewhere. They punished me by sending me to a scary place called "Catholic School."

As time passed, I began to look more and more like my Pa and everyone began to relax about the baby pick at the hospital...except me. I wondered how two really nice, easy going, docile, level headed people like my parents could give birth to me.

My Ma was as docile as any human could be. She was content to sit, crochet, and listen to "The Romances of Helen Trent" on the radio her whole life. My Pa, also docile, burned most of his adrenaline in the restaurant business. Neither of them were risk takers.

In the interim, I was drag-racing my Oldsmobile, picking fights with kids I couldn't beat up and trashing my lungs by smoking skillions of cigarettes a day. Later, as a cop, I shot it out with bad guys, rappelled out of helicopters and worked undercover assignments while my Ma crocheted away. Hey, I'm going for a DNA check!

This is also not good. I'm always right on everything. When I was a teenager, my parents were never right on anything. Do you know how hard it is to go through life always being right? This is a big problem, not because I'm always right, which I am, but I married a woman who is also always right.

For the first 10 years of our marriage, the li'l missus and I fussed over who was right. Then for the next 10 years we decided to stop fussing and debate intelligently over who was right. In time it was hard to tell the fussing from the debating. We needed another



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• See WOOLDRIDGE page 8

• THE VIEW FROM HERE •

Woes of a homeowner

I guess there is nothing like fixing a stopped up toilet to make a new homeowner feel that a house is truly his own. Bull started ski racing last winter and we stayed in an assortment of dreary motels and run down condos every weekend from December until March. Why not, we thought, buy a place, use it for a few years, and then sell it. Given the depressed real estate market, we thought we might even make a nickel on the deal. We didn't think about toilets.

Even when the inspector reported that the toilet drained slowly, we didn't think much about it. We bought a tiny cottage in downtown Banner Elk, North Carolina. Lizzie calls it the flop house and I refer to it as a crash pad. Our dream pad has a single bathroom which raises the stakes when a toilet refuses to drain on Saturday evening. The house had been occupied by a single mother who left her small children unattended much of the time. Indelible paint on the hard wood floors and crayon drawings on the walls confirmed their artistic drive.

Given the evidence of juvenile mischief, I thought that there was probably a toy wedged in the drain. I imagined that woman's young daughter had sent SCUBA Barbie to explore and that poor Barbie had become disoriented, lost her way, panicked among shreds of toilet paper and unspeakable debris, and drowned in the drain pipe. Poor Barbie.

I was certain that a plumber's helper wouldn't be of much use, so I visited Lowe's early Sunday morning. The Lowe's in Banner Elk must be the best store in America. I had walked in the day before with a lengthy list of items to set up our new home. An employee had greeted me at the door and had escorted me throughout the store until I had everything on my list. Unfortunately, a snake was not on the list. When I returned on Sunday morning, I was not surprised to be greeted by a friendly clerk. I whispered that I needed a snake. He asked the problem. I wanted to tell



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

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him about Barbie, but instead told him that my toilet was plugged tighter than a bottle of French champagne and that I suspected that a previous resident's child might have flushed a toy. He nodded sympathetically and told me that it wasn't a snake, but a toilet augur, that I needed. I'm still not sure that I know the difference, but I think a snake is longer, an anaconda to my black snake. He offered me two choices, one for home use, the second a professional model. I asked the difference and he answered, "Twenty dollars." He added that if I planned to make a living in the toilet field, I should by the professional model, but if I planned a single rescue, the \$7 version would suffice. He seemed really disappointed when

I revealed that I had no desire to clear any one's toilet but my own, and that even that was not really a labor of love. The guys at the Exxon were cordial enough, but were getting tired of seeing us.

When I returned home I pushed up my sleeves, way up, and threaded the augur, artfully if I do say so, into the drain. I encountered resistance, but was able to push through. After a few passes, the augur glided freely up and down. Barbie wasn't on the end of my augur, but I wish she had been. I sterilized my hands and arms to the elbows. I couldn't bring myself to discard the augur, although that had been my plan. I tuned on the water supply to the tank, let it fill, and flushed. The bowl drained like a whirl pool. I'm reluctant to admit it, but I felt a genuine sense of accomplishment. I uttered a loud, "Yes!" pumped my fist and thought that home ownership was really fun. That was the moment when Lizzie reminded me that I had to go to the crawl space and put insulation on the pipes.

Last year, we stayed in dreary motels and run down condos, and skied. This year we are living in our own little cottage and doing dirty chores. I guess that's an improvement.

• FROM MY PERSPECTIVE •

By Mayor Don Mullen

At the Town Board meeting last week, we hired the first manager for the Town of Highlands. As everyone knows by now the town has shifted its form of government from a Mayor-Council to a Manager-Council method of governing and managing. This move was not taken lightly. The subcommittee of the Board of Hank Ross, Amy Patterson and me took almost a year looking at all aspects of this potential move, and after consultation with the NC League of Municipalities and others, made the decision and this decision was approved by the entire board unanimously.

Over the past five months the board, with the help of the Wilder consultant firm in Charlotte, has been through 75 applications for the job of town manager. We have taken into consideration comments from the public in our decision making process and required an extensive list of specific questions to be completed by the top 10 candidates who applied. Taking these questions and answers into consideration along with the resume of each of the candidates, we narrowed the list down to four people to bring to Highlands for an interview which was conducted

by all members of the board with the assistance of Mr. Wilder.

In all of this long process there was one candidate who stood out over the bunch and we began an extensive contract discussion with him and came to an agreement. His name is James Fatland. Jim has had a lifetime of experience in local government work and is clearly qualified to lead our town into the next phase of our development.

Currently Jim Fatland is the Financial and Administrative Director for the town of Monroe, NC, a town with a population of 30,000. Prior to that assignment he was the town manager for the town of Tryon, NC, for more than five years. His references from that experience were all highly positive. I discussed his employment there with the mayor, the mayor pro temp, and the town attorney. Each person said his work was outstanding and, if they could, they would invite him back in a minute. In fact, he brought Tryon from a very negative financial position to a very positive one. Tryon is a typical western North Carolina town which strong similarities to Highlands. Prior to his managerial position in Tryon, Jim Fatland had been Buncombe County metropolitan sewage district manager

for nine years.

Jim's early work was in California where he held major departmental leadership positions including the positions of Mayor and councilman. He will be joining us in January as we make this transition into a different way of doing things. The Manager acts more like a CEO of the town and his duties are actually determined by state law whereas the administrative position currently held by Richard Betz is determined by local ordinance.

The manager has the responsibility of hiring and firing which was the responsibility of the Town Board under the mayor-council form of government. The responsibilities of the mayor remain the same in both systems of government.

Let me just add that we have been very fortunate in this town to have as our administrator Richard Betz. He has been with the town for more than 25 years in various positions and for many years has been our administrator. He has performed his duties over and far beyond the call

• See MULLEN page 12

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• REFLECTIONS FROM TURTLE POND •

Deflation



Katie Brugger
k-brugger@hotmail.com

Swirling around this fall's economic maelstrom are dire warnings of something called "deflation." This, the economists warn us, is the evil that stifled Japan for a decade; this is the worst thing that could befall our nation. Prices would keep dropping, and people would be reluctant to buy things because they would just wait for lower and lower prices. This is what happened in the Great Depression.

I must be living in an alternate universe or something, because I thought I already lived in a world of deflation.

First of all, isn't this the essence of Moore's Law regarding computers? Many years ago Intel co-founder Gordon Moore observed that the number of transistors that can be placed on a circuit board doubles in roughly two years. In other words, the performance of a computer per unit cost — the "bang per buck" — doubles every 24 months. This is something we have all gotten used to with all sorts of technological devices, from DVD players to digital cameras to cellphones.

Just recently I replaced a 20-year-old sewing machine; I remember I spent about \$125 for it. This fall I bought a comparable one for \$99. After inflation that must be less than half the price I paid 20 years ago.

Second, these economists must never shop at Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart's business model involves pushing down the price paid to suppliers and the wages paid to employees in order to deliver the absolute lowest prices possible. For 20 years the Wal-Mart slogan was "Always Lower Prices," but last year they changed it to "Save Money. Live Better."

According to a 2007 USA Today article on the slogan change, Wal-Mart said that "research it commissioned from Global Insight showed that as of 2006, the retailer saved U.S. families \$2,500 a year, up 7.3% from \$2,329 in 2004. Global Insight said in its study that the expansion of Wal-Mart from 1985 to 2006 led to a 3% decline in overall consumer prices for all items, as measured by the consumer price index, which includes prices for goods and services. The research firm said its updated study concluded that the reduction in price levels due to Wal-Mart's presence translated into savings for consumers of \$287 billion in 2006, which is \$957 per person or \$2,500 per household."

Most importantly though, it appears to me that deflation is evil only when it applies to the price of a finished product, or in other words, when it cuts into profits. Deflation is most definitely a good thing when it applies to the price of labor or natural resources.

Globalization is all about finding the cheapest labor on the planet, thereby putting

downward pressure on worker pay all across the globe.

It's the same with the Earth's natural resources. Unfettered capitalism burns them up with complete disregard to the health of the planet, with no concern for the future.

A few years ago I watched a man single-handedly build a bridge across Turtle Pond Creek. By this I

mean I watched the progress of bridge construction as I drove by on a regular basis. I never saw anyone else there working besides him, yet the bridge was finished with blinding speed. I felt like I was witnessing something that is rare in our time: excellence in physical labor. The reason it's rare I think is because our culture devalues physical labor.

One day coming home, seeing him swing a huge mallet, I thought: "labor is the working person's capital." Perhaps the flaw in capitalism is creating a separation between money — capital — and other forms of wealth. A working person's labor is their wealth. The worker's productive energy is his or her capital. It is the same for the natural resources of the earth. Water, minerals, fertile soil, all are a form of capital.

Money = capital in abstract form
Resources = capital in material form
Labor = capital in human form

I'm reading a history of the great economic thinkers of the last 250 years by Robert Heilbroner, *The Worldly Philosophers: The Lives, Times And Ideas Of The Great Economic Thinkers*. Heilbroner talks about three components in the economic equation: capital, labor, land. But he clearly differentiates between them. Capital is a category all to itself, while labor and land, or what I've been calling natural resources, are commodities to be had as cheaply as possible.

Our current taxation policies clearly show our preference for capital over labor. Income from investments is taxed at lower rates than income from labor. You may remember in 2003 President Bush tried to reduce the taxes on dividends to ZERO, and had to "settle" for 15 percent.

What would an economic system look like that treated these three forms of wealth equally? That saw the wealth in labor, thus treated workers with respect and care; made sure they were healthy in body and mind, well-educated and trained according to their talents, and given stimulating work; that understood the wealth inherent in our natural resources, thus used them carefully, sustainably, and respectfully?

• All of Katie Brugger's columns are available on her website: www.kathleenbrugger.com

• HIS & HERS •

Hunkering down

It's early December, one of my favorite times of the year. Sandwiched between Thanksgiving and Christmas, I'm still on a pumpkin high while dreaming of upcoming sugarplums. What's not to like?

I watched the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the lighting of the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree with a certain amount of nostalgia. My years in New

York City were some of the happiest and most exciting of my life. There is nothing like a big city during the holidays. Just walking down the streets is a treat – the animated windows of the big department stores, the sight of people bustling along with their arms full of brightly decorated packages, the supermarkets and specialty food stores displaying mouth-watering delicacies, the restaurants tempting passersby with their sumptuous holiday menus (my favorite French restaurant recently featured a fabulous prix fixe Thanksgiving meal for \$37!) – all these are part of what the holidays were for me. After my father died, Maman used to come up to stay for the holidays, and that was a marvelous treat for both of us. Not much of a shopper myself, it was impossible not to get swept up with the excitement of Maman's shopping expeditions. It was also a nice chance to show off my insider knowledge of New York. Aside from the shopping, three things were a must-see at holiday time.

In spite of the crushing crowds, a visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral at Christmastime is a must. The entire church is ablaze with hundreds of red poinsettias. Combined with all of the votive candles, they lend an air of enchantment to this lovely place. It's touching to see people from every walk of life, heads bent, sending prayers heavenward. It's less touching to see noisy tourists, pushing and shoving, as if they were in line for a big Mac, not in a place of worship. And while it's easy to be lost in contemplation, it's never a good idea to forget that crushing crowds are a favorite hunting ground for pickpockets, who come to St. Patrick's to prey, not to pray.

I've never been insane enough to try to attend the lighting of the big Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center, but it certainly hasn't kept me from checking out the tree after it's already up and lit. Maman and I would go every year – most of the time with a small camera. There would always be some helpful soul, ready to help out by taking a few photos of my mother and me. Watch out who you hand your favorite camera to,



**Michelle Mead-Armor &
John Armor**
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though. Every year, hapless tourists have their cameras snatched by clever thieves who are just waiting for the suckers who are born every minute. Better to entrust your camera to parents with their families than a single man, for example, for that special snapshot. I don't mean to scare people about visiting New York, but they don't call it "street smarts" for nothing.

Never forget that there are people out there whose job it is to rip off the unwary. It always amazes me to see tourists with bulging wallets in their back pockets, flashing their cash and credit cards, or women with obvious expensive jewelry and handbags with flimsy clasps.

My last holiday favorite is the New Year's Eve Concert at St. Bartholomew's Church, that marvelous New York City landmark, and a prime example of Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture. Somehow the talented musicians at St. Bart's always manage to make the Brandenburg Concerti thrilling. If you manage to get concert tickets to this marvelous concert, just a word to the wise – bring a cushion with you. I realize that the mortification of the flesh still has its place in some people's religious experience, but if you want to enjoy a long concert in a church pew, there's a limit to how mortified you may want your flesh to be.

But Christmas isn't all big cities, with lots of glitz and glamour. Christmas in Highlands has its own special charm. First of all, the downtown area is delightfully

• See HIS & HERS page 10

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... WOOLDRIDGE continued from page 4

solution.

During our third decade together, we debated over a system that would work for two people who are always right. After a zillion words back and forth, we finally came up with a working formula. Here's how it works.

I make a statement of truth on a topic. The li'l missus informs me I'm wrong, which, of course, I'm not. She makes a statement of what she thinks is the truth on the topic, which of course, is wrong. I cross my fingers behind my back and say, "You're right, I'm wrong, I'm sorry for being wrong all the time.

Please forgive me." She says OK and life is good.

Remember everyone, happy wife, happy life! It's so wonderful knowing I'm still always right and she isn't. Peace reigns.

Finally, if you're reading this newspaper and you're very, very rich and very, very old and enjoy taking very, very big risks and were near the Ohio River back when it flooded and you handed your baby to strangers and were never sure you picked the right kid, then call me. On the other hand, if you're not rich, don't bother.

• CONSERVATIVE POV •

Inquiring minds want to know

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men, couldn't put Humpty together again.

When whoever wrote the nursery rhyme wrote it, the fact that the Humpster was an egg was not mentioned, but he is usually thought of as an egg. Well, that makes sense since everyone knows that you can't unscramble an egg.

When our financial condition started unraveling for real, and the "king's" men started trying to fix it, it soon became apparent that puttin' this thing back together wasn't going to be a walk in the park. I've really tried to keep up with it, but things are moving so fast, I decided I needed to try and start at the beginning and walk my way to the present. I figure if I'm going to do it, I might as well bore you to tears as well. I do not attest to the absolute accuracy of everything that follows, but I'll do the best I can. I've referred to some of this stuff in previous columns so forgive a little repetition.

Several administrations ago, during the Carter years, the government decided that homeownership had been the province of the middle-class and above long enough. Legislation was passed that prevented mortgage lenders to be selective in whom they offered financing, and they couldn't blacklist (or red-line) areas to which loans were made available. This was the start of the slide down the slippery slope.

I guess the subject cooled off for several years until the Clinton administration decided some additional emphasis needed to be added. Legislation that encouraged a relaxation in underwriting standards was pushed and passed. Loans were made to marginal borrowers and, while homeownership broadened, impending doom crept closer.

I remember the time when the bank with which I did business advised those who obtained loans from the bank that their mortgage was no longer going to be serviced locally but had been sold to someone up the line, who, in turn bundled up a bunch of mortgages and sold them as a security. Where you used to go to the bank and discuss your mortgage, its identity had been lost in the intervening transactions.

The Bush administration came on the scene declaring the "ownership society" had arrived and the pressure to make more and more risky loans was felt throughout the market place. Let's face it, when you saw loans being offered at 125% of equity, or with no proof of income required, unless you were brain dead, you knew that disaster was not far behind.

Your mortgage may well have ended up in a collateralized debt obligation (CDO), which may have been bought by one of Bear



Don Swanson
Feedback is encouraged. Email
swansonson@dnnet.net

Stream's hedge funds. Unfortunately, some of those "sub-prime" mortgages were included in the bundle that made the value of the securities owned by the hedge funds worth less than the stated value. They were forced to "mark them to the market," which was impossible to determine, which then cast concern over the real value of the trillions of dollars of these "toxic" securities owned around the world.

Banks lending to one another is an integral part of our financial process. Now, when bank B requests an overnight loan from bank A, A has no idea of the ability of B to repay the loan because B has no idea what their portfolio of asset (mortgage) backed securities is really worth, therefore, no deal. The ability to borrow is essential to business, large and small. When things get tight, and lending institutions start scrutinizing potential borrowers, things get very tight.

When the economic bubble bursts, the cycle starts. Massive firings and layoffs, such as have occurred in the construction and financial industries, start to diminish the public's buying power. Lack of credit prevents many from buying new cars, and that, in turn, puts pressure on the car companies to close plants, which puts many local dealerships out of business, all of which adds to unemployment. Soon, all areas of retail, except for groceries, are affected; stores close, more people are out of work.

What beaks this vicious cycle? Here is where political philosophies are at odds.

Conservatives will say that reducing taxes is what's needed. Small businessmen will have incentives to expand their businesses, hire more employees, and create more tax revenue for the government. Every government in the industrialized world, except for Japan, which has been stuck in neutral for years, has a lower business tax rate than ours, and have prospered as a result (up until the current disaster).

Liberals say that raising taxes to pay for huge public works projects is the answer (Isn't government always the answer?). This was the route taken in the 1930s (WPA) to no avail. It was a New Deal all right, but it was a bad deal. It took World War II to put an end to that debacle.

How will the new administration deal with the severe economic conditions they will inherit? The financial team Obama has assembled is accepted as competent by most observers. If the Pres-elect doesn't revert to the Wilson-Roosevelt solution to the problem in his quest for "change, we may be able to work our way out of the serious recession we're in, in time. If he caves to the radical left, we're toast.

... FORUM from page 2

to infiltrate into the state. America is the first country to be founded in a Christian based representative government.

Has God blessed our government? I think back on what this country has done, and I can see no other way to look at it. We have gone from riding horses from town to town to walking on the moon all in about 200 years. The poor in this country are better off than people that are considered wealthy in other countries. Our lives are easier than at any point in history. All this came from God's blessing and continues to come from that blessing. Technology in and of itself is not evil! It is a blessing from God including movies, television and video games.

Satan does not create. He destroys. Nothing that can improve our way of life came from Satan. Satan and evil men have used many of these blessings for evil. Just because a sword is used for evil does not mean it cannot be used by another hand for good. Any good thing can be perverted — from toys to governments.

The question is when do we give up on something that is being used for evil? Take the baseball bat for instance. It could be used to hurt people, or it could be used to play a game. When do we stop using the bat? Is it when more people are using it for evil than for good? When polls say that 51 percent of people use the bat for evil, should we just burn all the bats? The government is still fulfilling what God called it to do — to provide stability so the Word of God can be spread through his church. It is true our government has grown larger and is doing more than it was ever supposed to do. It has even allowed sinful practices, such as abortion, to continue. When does the one outweigh the other?

In our country there is more to it than that. Our government is representative of the people. If the people have morals, so will the government. Christians are meant to be salt and light in the world. This light is not only a guide to Christians but also a guide in the lives of non-Christians. Have you ever been in a huge crowd when it starts moving? You have to move with the crowd. As long as the people leading the crowd keep moving in that direction, anyone in the crowd will have a hard time taking any other path. That is what the church did for this country. It guided the lives of the people in the church and they lived out their lives around all the other people of the country. Those that had no direction either followed or were afraid to be immoral. As the churches stopped teaching and started entertaining, people lost direction and found other paths to take.

This loss of direction in the church is the reason that the country is in the place it is today. We should be working to change the church so that it can be a light on a hill again. Some churches are only worried about numbers and making people feel better about themselves. Other churches are well-founded in the Word of God, but they've boarded up the windows so to speak. They have made themselves as much of a closed community as they can so they don't have to deal with the world. These churches are not helping this country. The church and her people have to be salt and light to the people around them. It is good to vote and run for office and for her people to be a part of this government.

Again, when do we abandon this government? Has God abandoned this government? When I see the blessings that surround me, I cannot believe that God has given up on America. At some point, we will have to pay for the sins that we commit as a nation. When that time is, only God knows.

In the meantime, we need to be salt and light and pray that God will bring our country back to himself. I pray that when that time comes, he will use it to save America, not destroy it.

• Nathan is the son of Pastor Sam Forrester of Whiteside Presbyterian Church in Cashiers who contributes to Highlands' Newspaper's Spiritually Speaking column.

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4:30 P.M. Education for Ministry

Wednesday: 6:30 P.M. Choir Practice

Thursday: 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist (Chapel)

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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

... HIS & HERS continued from page 7

decorated. Every year, it's a treat to see just how nicely the town puts on its holiday face. The annual Christmas parade is a pure delight, and made even better by the fact that we actually know many of the people marching in it! It's a small thing, perhaps,

but one of the things I love is seeing cars with Christmas trees strapped to the roofs. I get a kick out of the multiple trees, too, and wonder which tree folks put their presents under when they have more than one tree. I have never seen more beautiful Christmas trees than the ones grown locally.

Some people are fans of lots of presents. I'm one of those "less is more" girls. I like to get one special present from my husband and family, rather than a whole bunch of loot. And what pleases me more than anything else is getting a present that says "I listened to you and got you something that you really want/need" rather than "I spent a lot of money and got you something that I think you should want." Perhaps it's getting older, or maybe seeing first hand the chaos of combining two households into one. There just isn't a whole bunch of stuff that I need, or have

room for. If anything else, I'm unloading things, not accumulating new stuff.

Which brings me to my latest project – I'm seriously getting rid of clothing and household goods that we don't need anymore. Not only do we not have room for many of these things, hard economic times mean that these unused or unwanted items could make a huge difference in the lives of other people. I'm going through my cupboards, and donating food to the local food bank. And since we sometimes have outdated food in our kitchen, I've put out sesame seeds and pine nuts for the birds, who are enjoying this unexpected treat.

Clothing in very good condition is going to a consignment store. You'd be surprised what beautiful things they have! What I can't sell is going to local charities, who are delighted to receive clean clothing in good condition. Other personal items

are getting a serious looking over, too, especially my huge library. There's something very liberating about decluttering your living space, which helps to declutter your mind.

I'm not a Pollyanna, but the holidays are a great time to see what you can give, not just what you can get. Still, I'm keeping my eyes out for the Cheesecake Fairy. I hear she delivers.

• About the Author: Michelle A. Mead-Armor is a writer and translator who grew up in Waynesboro, Virginia, before wasting her youth and good looks in Baltimore, Sydney, Paris, and New York. She and her husband live on top of a mountain on the Continental divide near Highlands. They are members of the Highlands Writers Group. Michelle suggests the cheesecake from Juniors. They have a website and deliver.

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Pictured as some of the cast members of the Rabun Gap Nacoochee School's play that won first place in the recent statewide high school play contest. Front row from left are Jessica Bryant, Courtney Richmond, Ann Karlyn Babb. From left second row are Sarabeth Loomis, Katie Green, Matthew Banther. Third row: Devin Bolton, Craig Anderson Joe Lieu, and director Larry Smith peeking out from behind.

Area teens perform in winning play

Three local teenagers, Jessica Bryant, Katie Ann Green, and Chloe Blanchon, students at Rabun Gap Nacoochee School, recently participated in play which won first place in the State of Georgia's annual one-act play contest. To compete at the state level, a play had to win first in its own area, then win at the regional level, which encompassed all schools of North Georgia south to the Atlanta and then compete in the statewide contest.

In spite of stiff competition at the regional contest in Gainesville GA, Rabun Gap's play "Lebensraum," won first place, with Cashiers' Jessica Bryant winning the Best Actress award. Local audiences will remember Jessica's performances for the Highlands-Cashiers Players as the young mother in "Raindrop Waltz" and as Philia in A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum this past August. Cheering her on in Gaines-

ville were HCP board members: president Ronnie Spilton, Dean Zuch, and Virginia Talbot with Mindy Green also on hand to support the cast and her own daughter Katie Ann.

Each one-act play or excerpt from a longer play had to be no more than 55 minutes in length from the time the actors moved their scenery and props onto a bare stage and afterwards removed them from that stage. The play chosen for the RGNS students was an excerpt from the full length play, "Lebensraum," a futuristic drama in which the president of Germany, to atone for the Holocaust, invites six million Jews to return to Germany where they will be welcomed and given well-paying jobs. With the student cast members playing multiple roles, the reaction of both Jews and Germans to this extraordinary situation is explored in this engaging and powerful drama.



... OBITUARIES continued from page 3

also owned a lumberyard in Council Bluffs known as "Lumber Village." In 1950, he married Marjorie Wallace Ranch, mother of both his children.

In 1952, he volunteered in the U.S. Air Force to serve in Korea. Captain Ranch was the flight leader and operations officer of the 12th Squadron. He flew missions until he was shot down while flying a mission in his P-51 "Mustang." After being rescued near enemy lines, he was returned to the United States.

After retiring from the contracting business, Len taught construction engineering at Iowa State University, and then worked in Minneapolis for M.A. Mortenson Company. He retired to Anderson, S.C., and taught construction management at Clemson University. His latest career was that of Construction Consulting Services where he provided owner's representative services for both residential and commercial work.

Len will be remembered by all as an energetic and happy man who loved life and loved people. He will be missed by all.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Timothy W. and Cathey Ranch of Navarre, FL, and his daughter and son-in-law, Kimberly R. and William H. Coward of Cashiers, NC, plus two grandchildren, Austin Milas Coward and Claire Marie Coward.

In recognition of the loving care he received at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, the family would like to donate all poinsettias received to that hospital or to the church as appropriate.

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Varsity Cheerleading strike playful pose



Highlands School Varsity Cheerleaders from left are Katie Durham, Kaitlin Lewis, Carolyn Hornsby, Bevan Schiffli (in back), Shelby Johnson, Stephanie Puchacz, Marisol Ruiz, LaDonna Rodriguez

... MULLEN continued from page 5

of duty. There is no one who has served the town of Highlands any better or with more proficiency than Richard, and it has been my great honor and pleasure to have worked closely with him for the past three years. The board has great respect for Richard Betz and wishes him the best in his change of activities. He will be around for two months working with Jim Fatland to ensure a smooth transition. Both Richard and his wife Martha will be working in the real estate business, and we all wish him the very best.

One last comment. I am very concerned about the reported reduction of the efforts of the NC Department of Transportation to clear the state roads of snow and ice inside and outside the town limits of Highlands. I will be talking with them about that. In our areas of steep hills, deep valleys and black ice it is particularly necessary that the clearing of the roads be done with proficiency, more so than in any other part of the state. The duty of the state is to clear in this matter, and we expect them to respond to that duty. Lives depend on it in our type terrain. If we do not take care of the roads in inclement weather, lives can be lost.

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Highlands turns out
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Photos by Jim Lewicki



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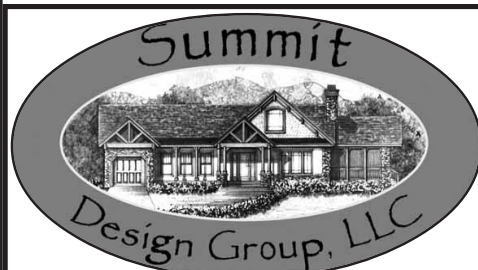
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• TO YOUR HEALTH •

Holiday Stress

By Betty Holt

The holidays are upon us again. For some people it's "Ho, ho, ho," while for others, it's "How low can I go?" The truth is, the holidays are a mixed bag of delightful pleasures and unrelenting stress. According to the Holmes-Rahe scale of Social Readjustment, a measure of how life events create the kinds of stresses leading to illness, Christmas weighs in at a whopping 12 points.

Why would such a supposed happy time create so much tension and strain? A lot of it centers around expectations. People somehow imagine that theirs may be the only dysfunctional family in America which doesn't get along perfectly while everyone else is having a fantastic time. Lofty images of tension-free Christmases portrayed on television and in ads only add to the pressure. The truth is those idealized holiday scenes are few and far between. The holidays only serve to magnify already existing problems between people.

For those recently bereaved, divorced, or in some other way separated from those they love, the holidays can be especially challenging as they find themselves alone to confront a world focused on glitter and gaiety they don't feel like participating in.

The holidays create stress by all the extra time and work they require. Shopping, wrapping, sending cards, mailing presents, baking goodies, preparing holiday dinners, hosting the family, decorating, attending Christmas events, being involved in church functions, travel — can all bring joy, but add hours and hours and busyness to already overloaded schedules.

This year, in particular, with a down economy, the financial stresses of Christmas are huge. Many parents won't be able to meet their children's expectations of toys and gifts they request. Families across the nation will be tightening their belts on spending this holiday season, making the outlook bleak for retailers and bleaker still for the job market.

But perhaps this cloud does have a silver lining. Few would argue that we've gone overboard with the commercialism of Christmas and gotten away from its true spirit. We've learned to express our giving through buying only, when there are many other avenues to say we care. Perhaps we will have to become more creative in the ways we honor others this holiday season. Here are some ideas:

(1) **The coupon book.** Giving a gift of your time that can't be bought, such as an hour's massage or cleaning someone's house, raking their yard, or babysitting so they can have a night off, can be very much appreciated.

(2) **Making gifts.** Whether it is a colorful card, some delicious jam or jelly, a

wonderful letter of appreciation telling them how much they mean to you, or a carefully picked handful of Galax leaves, it goes without saying that these gifts are meaningful to people because they require effort and come from the heart.

(3) **Donating to a special cause.** If you're beyond the gift-giving stage and want to help out one of the many organizations suffering from lack of funds right now, make a donation in someone's honor.

(4) **Share what you do have.** While we may all be feeling the pinch, everyone knows of someone less fortunate than they are. Share what you have with someone who has less. Donate clothing or household items to your local emergency council. Volunteer to work at a soup kitchen. Drop a dollar into the Salvation Army bucket.

(5) **Get the holidays right for you.** Choose to do what's important, what really feeds your soul, and let the rest go. You may disappoint some people, but they'll survive. If you start to feel overwhelmed, stop, sit down and take a few deep breaths. Try to keep things in perspective. It's only the holidays. They will pass. Be grateful for the good in your life.

• A Realtor as well as a licensed professional counselor in part-time private practice, Betty enjoys writing about mental health topics.

Highlands Annual Christmas Day Dinner at Fressers in Helen's Barn

Christmas is fast approaching, so that means Highlands Christmas Dinner is on its way, too. The dinner that started in 2001 will feature a traditional Christmas meal complete with all the trimmings.

The meal is at Fressers Eatery in Helen's Barn 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and cooking will be done by some of Highlands' best chefs, including Marty Rosenfield of Lakeside Restaurant and Debbie Grossman of Fressers Eatery. Desserts will be provided by Jan Zehr of Blackberry Hill Bakery/Deli.

For the last several years, the dinner has been held to offer Highlanders and visitors a great meal on Christmas day, while raising money for local nonprofit organizations. This year, all proceeds raised will go to The International Friendship Center and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Highlands.

Adult meals are \$35 and children are \$25. Reservations must be made in advance. Please call 526-8867 and leave a message.

... COUNTY continued from page 1

ed the change. He said county employees are often needed at meetings and it will be easier for them to attend during the day rather than at night. In addition, he said the county's elderly population may find attending afternoon meetings easier than attending night meetings.

Commissioners Bob Simpson, Brian McClellan and Jim Davis, weren't too happy with the 2 p.m. scenario, as that time cuts into their work days, but in the end they agreed to try it for the first quarter of 2009 with the understanding that the time may change.

McClellan suggested moving it to 4 p.m. at Daylight Savings Time. Beale said they would see how it went.

• The nation's economic downturn rippling through Macon County coupled with an early winter spurred county officials to offer citizens a telephone hotline for help.

"There are people in Macon County who can't pay their light bills who have never been in this economic situation before and they don't know where to turn for help," said Beale. County Manager Jack Horton said people don't have to be in the social services system to get services. "It's simply a one-stop phone for directions as to available resources," he said. "This is going to be a rough winter and people will be depending on these resources."

Anyone can call regardless of economic

standing to learn how to navigate through the system and get help. Beale stressed that a "live" person would be on the other end of the phone not an automated service.

The Macon County Citizen Help Line number is 828-349-2128.

• Horton announced that the transfer station on Rich Gap Road in Highlands is almost ready and in the near future a ribbon cutting ceremony would take place.

Chris Stahl, solid waste manager, said there are a few odds and ends left to do but it should be open sometime next week. At that time, construction and debris (C&D) will again be accepted at the site only instead of driving out to the dump area people will drive into the new building and dump their cargo on to a concrete pad.

"They will weigh in and out and never get off the pavement," said Stahl.

Though residents depositing C&D and municipal solid waste (MSW) will only be charged the normal tipping fee based on weight, commercial entities will be charged the tipping fee and a \$8.25 per ton hauling fee to transport the waste to the Franklin landfill.

"That's the flat cost to us to have it hauled down the mountain," said Stahl.

Cash or a local check are accepted at the transfer station if people don't have a landfill account.

— Kim Lewicki





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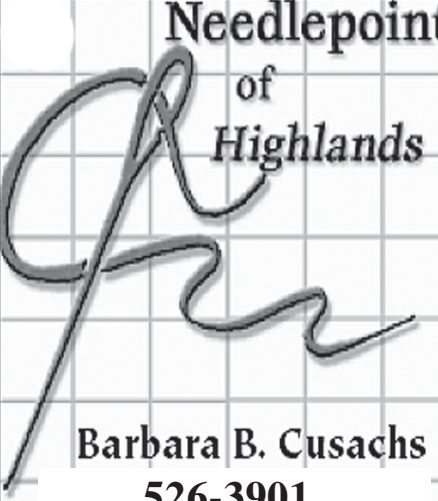
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• UPCOMING EVENTS •

On-going Events

- The Bascom is offering a host of art classes for preschoolers to pre-teens from now through the end of the school year. For more information, call (828) 526-4949, ext. 0#, or visit www.thebascom.org.
- Friends of Panthertown work days, last Thursday of every month (time and location varies). Volunteers needed to maintain trails. For more information, contact Nina Elliott at 828-526-9938 (ext 258).
- Four churches prepare to "Walk to Bethlehem." The Macon County Public Health Center is continuing a successful faith-based wellness program. Four local churches, with assistance from the Health Promotions Program at the public health center, are embarking on a virtual journey from Franklin to Bethlehem as a part of the "Walk to Bethlehem" program. The four participating churches include First United Methodist Church, Holly Springs Baptist Church, Prentiss Church of God, and Watauga Baptist Church. The Walk to Bethlehem program encourages church members to be more physically active and make healthier food choices. According to the Centers for Disease

- Control, everyone needs at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days to stay healthy. As a part of the Walk to Bethlehem program, the public health center provided a pre-event health screening to the churches.
- Collections for men and women overseas at Chestnut Hill Retirement community. A wide variety of items currently are needed, including books and magazines, CDs and DVDs, and small pocket books, which fit neatly in the BDUs (Battle Dress Uniforms). The drop point for all items will be under the flagpole at the Chestnut Hill Clubhouse on Clubhouse Trail. For any questions, or to schedule a drop-off, contact Jeremy Duke in our community office at (828) 787-2114.
 - Refuge Youth meets every Sun. night at 6:30 p.m. downstairs at Cullasaja Assembly of God. If you are in grades 6th-12th then this is the place to be! The church is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. For more info call youth ministers Matt and Candace Woodroof at 828-369-7540 ext 203.
 - Raffle of handcrafted Stiefel Botanical Book to Benefit The Bascom. To purchase a raffle ticket, call 526-4949, ext. 8#.
 - Yoga at the Rec Park, 7:30 a.m Monday and Wednesdays. Call 526-4340 for information.
 - Yoga in the bottom floor of Jane Woodruff Building. 10:30 a.m. Thursdays. Call 526-4340.
 - NA open meeting every Saturday at 7:30 p.m. of the ACC Satellite Group at the Graves Community Church, 242 Hwy 107 N. in Cashiers. Call 888-764-0365 or go to the website: www.ncmana.org.
 - At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes. Call Jeanette Fisher at 828-526-1FIT.
 - "The Circle of Life" support group continues at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital at the Jane Woodruff room 201, 10 a.m. until noon. Call Barbara Buchanan

at 526-1402 or Florence Flanagan at 743-2567.

Mon. & Wed.

- Pilates Classes Level 1 of Jane Woodruff at the hospital at 4 p.m. \$10 per class. Call 526-5852.
- Middle School students After School Program from 3-5 p.m. at the Rec Park. For more information please call 828.526.3556.

Mon., Wed., Fri.

- Step Aerobics with Tina Rogers at the Rec Park, 8-9 a.m. \$10 per class or \$50 a month.

Wed., & Fri.

- Open AA meeting noon at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.

Tuesdays beginning Jan. 6

- Beginner Yoga Therapeutics Course 9 to 10:15 am. To register call Ashby, 526-8880.

Tues. & Thurs.

- Dance Aerobics with Susan, 8:30 a.m. at the Rec Park.

First Mondays

- Participate in your hospital by joining the Auxiliary of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Auxiliary meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 10 a.m. at the hospital.

Mondays

- Open AA meeting, 8 p.m. at the Episcopal Church at Fifth and Main streets.
- Recreational Bridge 1 p.m. at the Rec Park. \$3 per person.

Tuesdays

- Highlands Rotary Club meets at noon at the Highlands Conference Center.
- Weight Watchers meets at the Highlands Civic Center. Weigh-in is at 5:30. The meeting starts at 6 p.m.

Wednesdays

HCP presents FREE holiday reading, Dec. 11



The Highlands Cashiers Players present their annual Holiday Reading on Thursday, December 11th at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands beginning at 7pm. Poems, stories and songs of the holidays will be presented to get all into the Christmas and Holiday spirit. Performing with some regular HCP performers will be Vangie & Curtis Rich, Ursula & Tony Long, Elaine Whitehurst, Jill Montana, Ellie Hogan, and Betty Chesna; in addition, students Dawson Bryant, Avee Graham, Jessica Bryant and Matt McClellan. A special musical treat will be provided by nationally known harpist, Valerie Whitcup. After the performance all are invited to down stairs for homemade desserts and cider. From left are: Mary Adair Leslie, Ronnie Spilton, Jim Schulte and Jody Read at the Christmas Tree on the Hill, who will provide the designer Christmas tree for the Holiday Reading. The Holiday Reading is HCP's gift to the community...no charge, just come and feel the Holiday Spirit!!

• UPCOMING EVENTS •

• Highlands MountainTop Rotary Club meets at the Highlands Conference Center at 7:30 a.m.
• Men's interdenominational Bible Study at 8:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church.

Every Third Wednesday

• Study sessions at the Universal Unitarian Fellowship Hall in Franklin. A \$5 soup-supper will be served at 5:30 p.m. Study sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information call 828-524-6777 or 706-746-9964.

1st & 3rd Thursdays

• The local affiliate of NAMI NC (National Alliance on Mental Illness), NAMI Appalachian South, meets from 7-9 p.m. at the Family Restoration Center, 1095 Wiley Brown Road, Franklin. NAMI offers peer support, education, and advocacy for individuals suffering from serious mental illness and their families and loved ones. Contact Ann Nandrea 369-7385, Carole Light 524-9769 or Mary Ann Widenhouse 524-1355 for more information.

Thursdays

• Al-Anon meeting, noon at the Episcopal Church on Main and Fifth streets.

Thursdays & Fridays

• Live music at The Rib Shack from 7-10 p.m.

Through Dec. 23

• "Winter Landscapes" exhibition at The Bascom, featuring paintings by John Mac Kah and Deborah Squier. Regular gallery hours are Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. The Bascom is located inside the Hudson Library on Main Street in Highlands. For information, call (828) 526-4949 or visit www.thebascom.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 10

• At the Methodist Church, the MountainTop Ringers present their annual Christmas concert at 6:15 p.m. with handbells.

Thurs.-Sat., Dec 11-13

• The Highlands-Cashiers Players will present its annual free Christmas reading at 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street.

Thursday, Dec. 11

• The movie "De-Lovely" (2004) is an original musical portrait of Cole Porter. It is filled with his unforgettable songs. Kevin Kline and Ashley Judd star as Cole Porter and his wife Linda. The movie series is held in the Library Meeting Room, hosted by the Friends of the Albert Carlton - Cashiers Community Library at 7 p.m.

• The League of Women Voters of Macon County will present a program on new development following old patterns in Franklin with Ben Brown who works with Placemakers, a leading national design group that "helps developers and municipalities create places deeply satisfying to both the soul and the balance sheet. Tim Ryan is developing Sanctuary Village near downtown, and will talk about the vision and design for that community. The meeting will take place at Tartan Hall of the First Presbyterian Church in Franklin. Lunch is available at noon by reservation—call 524-5192. Program begins at 12:15.

Friday-Sunday, Dec. 12-14

• Sanders' Family Christmas" (sequel to "Smoke on the Mountain") a wholesome musical at 7 p.m. on Saturday and 3 p.m. on Sunday at the Dillard Playhouse, in Dillard, Ga. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 11. Call 706- 212-2500.

Saturday, Dec. 13

• Breakfast with Santa at the Methodist Church at 8:30 a.m. \$10 per family

• Wine Tastings at Old Edwards Inn & Spa. Sumptuous hors d'oeuvres amid festive fireside ambiance of Hummingbird Piano Bar in the inn. 2-4 p.m. \$20 ap-

plies to purchase if you choose to buy and not just taste! Call 526-8008.

• The Highlands Community Christian Chorale presents its concert 4 p.m. at the Baptist Church. Reception to follow.

• Santa will be at the Highlands Visitor Center from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to hear wishes and for photos.

• NANAHALA HIKING CLUB will take a moderate to strenuous 9.5 mile hike with elevation change of 300 feet, from Deep Gap to Raven Rock on the Appalachian Trail. Meet in Franklin at Westgate Plaza (opposite Burger King); drive 40 miles round trip. Call leader Don O'Neal, (828) 586-5723, for meeting time and reservations. Bring water, lunch; wear sturdy shoe. No pets please.

• The Highlands Plateau Greenway will have a trail construction work trip on Saturday. If you are interested in participating please register with Hillrie Quin at 526-2385.

• The Macon County Soccer Club will host a soccer referee re-certification clinic on Saturday from 9 am to 3:30 pm. All currently certified referees that wish to renew their certification are invited to attend. George Gately with the NC Soccer Referees Association will be conducting the clinic. A certification clinic for new referees is also planned for January 2009. Call Tony Esterwood at 524-1928.

• At Coweeta Baptist Church, the Christmas Cantata, "Hope Has Hands" at 7 p.m. Call 524-5242.

Sunday, Dec. 14

• The Highlands Community Christian Chorale presents its concert 7 p.m. at the Baptist Church. Reception to follow.

• Refuge Christmas Party at Cullasaja Assembly of God Sunday at 6:30 pm downstairs. Cullasaja Assembly of God is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. Food! Gift Exchange! and Awesome Christmas Games! For more information all Call Matt Woo-

droof -828-369-7540-ext.203 www.cullasajaag.org
Thursday, Dec. 18

• The Friends of the Library will present their Christmas gift to Cashiers families on Thursday night at 5 pm. Ann Betty and Sandra Bash will lead the Sing-A-Long. They will include everyone's favorite Christmas carols and other songs of the season. The movie "The Polar Express" will be shown. Cookies, punch and, of course, popcorn will be served. There is no charge for the event.

Fri. Dec. 19 & Sun. Dec. 21

• Cullasaja Assembly of God invites you and your family to its Christmas Play, "A Word of Wisdom." The play will be on Friday at 7pm and Sunday at 6:30pm. The play is free. Cullasaja Assembly is located at 6201 Highlands Rd. next to Exxon. Call 828-369-7540. www.cullasajaag.org

Saturday, Dec. 20

• Wine Tastings at Old Edwards Inn & Spa. Sumptuous hors d'oeuvres amid festive fireside ambiance of Hummingbird Piano Bar in the inn. 2-4 p.m. \$20 applies to purchase if you choose to buy and not just taste! Call 526-8008.

• Santa will be at the Highlands Visitor Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to hear wishes and for photo.

• Santa will be at the Scaly Mountain Community Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring your list to share with Santa, coins for reindeer food and a sweet tooth!

• The Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival's Christmas concert "Father Christmas' Favorite Chamber Music" at 5 p.m. at PAC to benefit the Highlands Emergency Council. For tickets call 526-9060.

Sunday, Dec. 21

• The First Baptist Church would like to invite you to the musical drama, "Bows of Holly," Sunday, at 6:30 pm. The cast is children from the community and several churches, under the direction of Emily Porter and Sherri Gibson. Wendy Latta is designing the sets.

Chamber Music Festival Christmas Concert to Benefit the Highlands Emergency Council

On Saturday, Dec. 20 the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival will present its first ever Christmas Concert, a benefit concert for the whole family entitled "Father Christmas' Favorite Chamber Music."

England's Santa Claus will be on hand to introduce some of his favorite works for violin, cello and piano. The concert will include music by Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, and more, by violinist Karen Bentley of Birmingham Alabama, cellist David Hancock from Atlanta, and pianist and Festival Artistic Director William Ransom. Richard Prior from Atlanta will narrate.

Good listeners will receive a treat from Father Christmas on the way out!

David Hancock moved to Atlanta in 1991 to be cellist with the Atlanta Chamber Players. Since 1993, Mr. Hancock is the Principal Cellist of the Nashville Chamber Orchestra (recently renamed Orchestra Nashville), a group committed to programming



new "cross-over" works in concert with traditional masterpieces. In 2005 he founded the Elysium Chamber Orchestra and Chorus and serves as its artistic co-director. Mr. Hancock and his wife, Carolyn, are the founders of Chamber Music Atlanta.

Karen Bentley is currently the violinist in Paul Dresher's Electro-Acoustic Band, which performed at Carnegie's Zankel Hall as part of the In Your Ear festival, hosted by John Adams. She is a founding member of the Alys Stephens Center Chamber Players which debuted in Birmingham in August 2006 at the Magic City Chamber Music Festival.

The Christmas concert will be a benefit for the Highlands Emergency Council, and will be at the Performing Arts Center in Highlands at 5 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, free for children. For more information and tickets, call 828-526-9060.



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Sat & Sun: (2:10), (4:10), 7:10, 9:10

Mon – Thurs: (4:10), 7:10

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Friday:(4:30), 7, 9:30

Sat & Sun: (2), (4:30), 7, 9:30

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MLT or MT needed in the laboratory at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Second and third shifts available with an occasional weekend and holiday rotation. Registry of ASCP or equivalent is required. Must be able to work alone. 3-5 years experience as a generalist with blood banking is preferred. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

PHYSICIAN BILLING MANAGER: needed at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Full time position available. Responsible for managing all billing procedures for the physician's offices. At least 3 years of office and insurance billing experience. CMA, EMT, or similar training and certification. Current training in coding is required. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 60 days of full-time employment. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1376 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

RNs at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital and Fidelia Eckerd Living Center. Full, Part-time and PRN positions available for 12 hour day and night shifts. Excellent wage scale, with shift and weekend differentials. Full benefits, or the option to opt out of benefits for an increase in pay, available after 30 days of full-time employment. We are now offering part-time employees, working at least 24 hours a week, medical insurance. Pre-employment screening required. Call Human Resources at 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

CNA OR CNA II at Fidelia Eckerd Living Center. PRN positions are available. Our wage scale is \$11.00 to \$14.40 per hour, and you also receive shift and weekend differentials. Pre-employment substance

screening. Call Human Resources, 828-526-1301 or apply online at www.hchospital.org.

WORK WANTED

3BR, 2BA COTTAGE NEAR MIRROR LAKE - In town. \$1250 per month. Very clean. 770-977-5692.

ON MIRROR LAKE - Charming 3 bed, 2 bath. Huge sunroom, stone fireplace, 3 decks, canoe, furnished. Available Nov-May. \$1,500 a month plus utilities. Call 770-435-0678.

RESIDENTIAL FOR RENT

HOUSE FOR RENT, YEAR-ROUND, walk to town. 3/3, oil heat, hardwood floors, small pets ok. \$1,275 includes electric. 526-5558.

TURTLE POND 3bd/2 1/2b, hot tub, furnished, no smoking/pets Lease/lease purchase 828 526 2759 marbago@hughes.net (st. 11/27)

APARTMENT FOR RENT - 1 bed, 1 bath, living area, kitchen and utility room. \$650/month. \$300 security deposit. Rent includes utilities (electric, water, heat, local phone.) one-year lease. Prefer non-smoker. No pets. Unfurnished. Good for 1-2 people. Call 526-9494. (1/1)

LOOKING FOR CLEAN, QUIET NON-SMOKER WITH NO PETS - to rent furnished 1 bed, 1 bath apartment. \$600 includes all basic utilities. Cheaper with one year lease. Call 526-0079.

HOUSE FOR RENT AND SALE - 3/2 w/ office, great roommate plan 1600 sq. ft., gated community, Scaly Mt. half way between Highlands and Clayton, access to 17 acre lake and hiking from 424 sq ft porch or watch sun rise from 424 sq. ft. deck. \$1,200/mo plus utilities. Internet and satellite available. No children, pets, or ATVs; house actively being shown for sale during rental. Call Pat 828-243-9646 re rent or Becky 828-526-2475 re sale. psherrer@mindspring.com

DOWNTOWN APARTMENT RENTAL - One bedroom (Queen), one bath, vaulted ceiling in great room, heat and air with gas fireplace. Fully furnished with W/D, cozy and comfortable. \$750 a month plus utilities. Call 526-2598 or 421-3614.

1 BED, 1 BATH and small room with bunk beds on Lake Sequoyah. Furnished, two boats. \$1,000 a month including utilities except phone. Call Tony at 828-332-7830.

SAPPHIRE NC - 2 Story 3Bed/3 Bath, Yr round views, 2 decks, remodeled, Furnished, 2 car garage. Available yearly or seasonal. 561-626-9556
2 BED, 2 BA HOUSE - Carport, Storage, Garage. \$800 a month. In Scaly. Call 423-715-7757.

2 BED, 2 BA, COTTAGE - W/D, 2 miles from town off Cashiers Road. Garage/basement, covered deck. \$925 a month. Call 864-944-1175.

FURNISHED 3BD/2BATH HOUSE IN MIRROR LAKE area available for 6-12 month lease \$1200+ utilities. Call 770-977-5692.

3BR, 2BA COTTAGE NEAR MIRROR LAKE - In town. \$1250 per month. Very clean. 770-977-5692.

ON MIRROR LAKE - Charming 3 bed, 2 bath. Huge sunroom, stone fireplace, 3 decks, canoe, furnished. Available Nov-May. \$1,500 a month plus utilities. Call 770-435-0678.

COTTAGE FOR RENT - 1BR, 1BA in town @ Chestnut Cottages. Private, screen porch, Heat/AC, FP, extra sleeping loft, furnished or unfurnished. 6 month lease - \$750. monthly plus utilities. Call 526-1684.

VACATION RENTAL

HIGHLANDS COUNTRY CLUB - Sorry, golf and club privileges not available. \$2,495 a week. Call 912-230-7202.

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MOVING SALE - 1) Kennedy Tool Cabinets - 7 drawer base, 8 drawer machinist, with riser shelf: \$100; 2) Golf club travel case (holds two sets), extremely durable: \$75; 3) Leather golf bag, grey color in very good condition: \$50. Bruce (828) 787-1035.

ANTIQUES - Blacksmith bench post vice (\$90) and hand-crank wall-mount drill (\$150). Antique oak wall-hung phone (\$110). Fairbanks wood floor grain scale, with all weights and brass pendulum (\$400). Bruce (828) 787-1035.

WOMAN'S DIAMOND RING -14K White gold, three rows of diamonds. Total weight 1.58 ct. Appraisal \$2,300. Asking \$1,500. 526-8191. 1/1

CHRISTMAS CARDS OF HIGHLANDS SCENES available at Dry Sink and Mill Creek Gallery. Coming soon "A Highlands Autumn, photography by Cynthia Strain. More info at 787-2021.

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ANTIQUE WALNUT DINING TABLE with two 10 1/2 inch leaves, \$250; six oak pressed back chairs. Very good condition. \$300. Whirlpool upright freezer, \$100; 80,000 BTU propane central heat unit, \$100 and 60-gallon propane hot water heater, \$75. Call 526-0036 or 421-1159.

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4 BOARD PINE DINING TABLE - \$300. Early American New England spinning wheel - \$225. 526-2671

GOLF CLUBS CLASSIC - SET OF MacGregor Tourney 9 irons (2-9 P.W.) 1980. Persimmon Drivers, new. \$50. Used \$25. Also miscellaneous items cheap. Call 706-746-3046. (Sky Valley).

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• CLASSIFIEDS •

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HIGHLANDS SHUTTLE SERVICE - Atlanta Airport Shuttle. Drive - Away • Auto Delivery. All Out-of-Town Trips Driving Services. Call 526-8078.

... SALT continued from page 2

Hurricane Ike hit the Bahamas, affecting a Morton Salt site for a week and shutting down production for days at the Louisiana mines.

So states now have to pay higher prices or try to stretch stock piled supplies.

Primary state roads in Macon County like U.S. 64 and N.C. 106 are considered "bare pavement" roads meaning they are cleared and maintained until "bare pavement" is exposed, because they are critical to interstate travel - which means salt, sand and chat are used. Now only sand and chat will be used by DOT on secondary roads like Buck Creek, Bowery and Horsecove.

Highlands Public Services Administrator Lamar Nix said DOT's policies won't affect the Town of Highlands or his department, though the price of salt will impact how he uses the town's salt.

Last year he paid \$70.50 per ton for salt delivered to Highlands, but on Dec. 4 he got a quote of \$193.23 a ton delivered. "And one supplier said we could have it for \$83.95 a ton but we'd have to go to Wilmington, NC to get it," said Nix. "That's just not reasonable."

Highlands street crews maintain both primary and secondary roads within the town limits because "we're here," said Nix. "For safety reasons, we clear roads - city streets and primary roads like portions of U.S. 64 which is Main Street - until DOT can get up here and then they pick up where we left off," said Nix. "We always depend on DOT to come in and clean up, too."

With the price of salt so high and fall weather being like most winters, Nix said he's going to have to rethink salt allocations. He normally orders 120-200 tons a year; this year he's going to try to make do with what's in storage.

"Right now our salt shed is full so we don't have a problem, but I'll have to slow down its use or rather adjust the mixture to make sure it lasts through the winter," he

said.

The salt shed is split in half with one half housing 80 tons of bulk salt and the other half housing a mixture of salt, sand and chat which is what town crews use to keep winter streets safe.

Nix said 80 tons of bulk salt translates into 250-300 tons of mix - plenty for Highlands' needs.

He said DOT's budgetary problems won't affect Highlands, at least not within the town limits. "But life in the Highlands Township might be affected by weather more this year than in the recent past," he said.

Grindstaff said DOT's goal is to clear county roadways as quickly as possible for safe travel and commerce. As always, caution should be used when traveling in icy conditions and if at all possible motorists should allow additional time for their commutes in these conditions.

- Kim Lewicki

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Centerline

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... MACKEY continued from page 1

ism was never Iraq; it was always Afghanistan. After we invaded Afghanistan in 2002 we took our eye off the ball and put it on Iraq and everything in Afghanistan was left to boil.

If we're really talking about the war on terrorism, you have to think of it as a cold war because you don't just go out and have a military confrontation to get rid of terrorism. The war on terror is a war of ideas — a war with people who have genuine grievances against their own government.

Sometimes the U.S. backs these governments and sometimes we don't. Regardless, there is always a conflict about identity — whether they are going to maintain their traditional identity or be westernized. All these things are going on.

The closest front on terrorism is Europe because Europe hasn't dealt with its Muslim population at all. It has dumped them in these ghettos and haven't made them a part of the country and so forth. So we need to get away from the idea that Iraq is the front on the war on terrorism. It isn't and never was. Afghanistan probably isn't either, but it is more likely to become a failed state and really will become the front of the war on terror, particularly because we have to worry about Pakistan. Pakistan is where the terrorists are coming from.

The optimum way to go into Afghanistan is if the Europeans step up and do their

part. That's one thing. The other thing is the counter insurgency strategy is the best way to go. We will have to put troops in there for the short-term at least and maybe the long-term — right now we really don't have that many troops in there. But the area you really want to work on militarily is that area up there on the border of Pakistan. Next, we need to try to get a government in that is really going to address the economic needs of the very poorest of its society.

Question 6

What is the most dangerous country and how should the U.S. deal with it?

Pakistan. We have to really think about we're going to do with it. It is just about to absolutely fall apart. Zardari Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto's husband, is a sleaze. I just don't know why we thought early on he was going to do any better than Musharraf. I don't really know enough about Pakistan politics to really talk about the various players, but we have to find someone who maybe we might not like 100%, someone maybe we think has too many Islamic ties, but we need to get to somebody who can make contact with the poorer classes in Pakistan because that's where the problem is coming from because I'm talking about people who are horribly poor.

Question 7

In WWII there were very black days, when everyone wondered if the war was going to end. Do you see sometime in the future when it will be peaceful in the Middle East and we can get out of there?

People say the people over there have been fighting since Biblical times and there will never be peace over there.

Well, in biblical times everyone was fighting to claim the coastal plain. If you go to Israel, don't go to Tel Aviv, go in at Akaba and travel across the absolute desolate desert and then outside Aman is Mount Nebo where tradition says the Israelites saw the Promised Land. When you stand up there you suddenly understand what all that fighting has been about because the Jordan River runs down there and on one side of the land it's brown and desolate and on the other it's green. So what they were fighting for was the coastal plain.

Then over centuries, one area was the invasion route between Greece and Rome and another area was the invasion route of Persia so you always had someone tromping across here going one way or another.

Then the Ottomans came in and they held it for 400 years. Then you had the Europeans come in after the WW1 and they changed it back into colonies again. One reason governments in this area haven't been successful is because they haven't had any longevity and they always had to cooperate with whoever the dominate power was in that region. Consequently, they never addressed the needs of the people.

So right now what you have going on the Middle East is a lot of conflict between the non-elites and the elites and if you ever

got governments that really addressed the needs of its people — which at this point will take a couple of generations — that would help. So that's the basic problem. The people of the Middle East have been victims as well as the cause of their own problems so it's been a two-way street.

Question 8

Can the U.S. afford to go into Pakistan?

We aren't going to invade and occupy Pakistan. It's just whether we would actually go across the borders of Pakistan in this very mountainous area if in hot pursuit — which is what it's called under international law. That's the issue. It's never been whether we would occupy Pakistan. If occupying Iraq wasn't a good idea, occupying Pakistan is 10 times worse.

Question 9

There have been theories that the whole Islamic world will rise up against us? How large it is and is that a possibility?

The Islamic world is as diverse as the Christian World. There are as many sects, theologies, interest groups, etc., in the Islamic world as there is in the Christian world.

The big split in the Islamic world we're seeing and which is playing a big role in the politics of the area is the division between the Sunis, who are the orthodox, and the Shites, who are the dissenters. Those are the two big groups.

The Sunis are about 90% of the population of the Muslim world. Remember the Muslim world goes all over the world.

The Arab world would be the countries of the Middle East plus Iran which is not Arab. In that region, it's about 50-50 between the Sunis and Shites and that's what's having a huge impact on how the dynamics of this whole region works.

In fact, in my most recent book, "Mirror of the Arab World — Lebanon in conflict" I address this. The book isn't really about Lebanon; it's a primer about how you think about this region and the new dynamic in the area. For years and years it was the Arab-Israeli dispute. Not anymore. I mean it's still important but now it's the Suni-Shite split. I have used Lebanon as a case study because Lebanon has a very large Shite population and the two countries in the Arab Middle East that are the most similar are Lebanon and Iraq. By and looking at Lebanon you get some idea of what might happen in Iraq.

Question 10

Is it safe to travel in Israel?

Relatively, but as I say, you have to worry about the bombs and the settlers. Every settler packs an Uzi and you can get caught in some very uncomfortable places.

• This ends the "Middle East Expert presents Iraq 101" series. To read parts you may have missed, go to www.highlandsinfo.com scroll down, click on news and archives. The series began on Oct. 30 on the front page with a subsequent part featured each week also on the front page.

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New director of nursing joins hospital

A new director of nursing with more than 25 years experience has joined the administrative team at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital.

Linda R. Suther, RN, 48, will oversee all acute-care nursing services as well as the surgery center and emergency department at the hospital. A 1983 honors graduate of Clemson University where she received a B.S. in nursing, she spent her career at four hospitals throughout the Southeast, including Crawford Long Hospital in Atlanta, and more recently Trinity Medical Center in Birmingham, AL.



Linda Suther

been in running cardiovascular surgical units and surgical intensive care units, Suther says she is looking forward to having a broader scope to her supervisory duties.

"My passion for patients goes everywhere I go," she said during her first week at her new post. She started at the hospital Dec. 1. "I've always been adventurous and interested in taking on new challenges professionally, and I think my strength is for helping the people I work with grow and develop their skills and their own talents."

Most recently, Suther was the nurse manager of the cardiovascular surgical and intensive care units at Trinity Medical

Center, a 560-bed, Baptist-affiliated hospital in Birmingham, AL, that has been named one of the top 10 percent hospitals in the nation for open heart surgery. The program received outstanding patient satisfaction scores during her tenure there.

Prior to that, she held a similar position at Brookwood Medical Center, a 586-bed hospital also located in Birmingham. There she mentored and supervised more than 140 full-time employees in various aspects of the cardiovascular surgical program. Suther also spent two years in the early 1990s with New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington.

She began her nursing career at Atlanta's Crawford Long Hospital, rising over nine

years to become the nursing unit leader and quality improvement coordinator for that hospital's cardiovascular intensive care unit.

A major factor in her decision to take the post in Highlands, was its geographic location. She has a son in college in Maryville, TN, near Knoxville, and parents in Lake Keowee, SC.

"I'm getting to that point in my career where I want more opportunity to focus on strategic preparation, and identifying and developing the talent of those I work with," she adds. "I'm excited about what you have here at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. You have a lot of passionate, very committed people, and I'm very pleased to be a part of this team."

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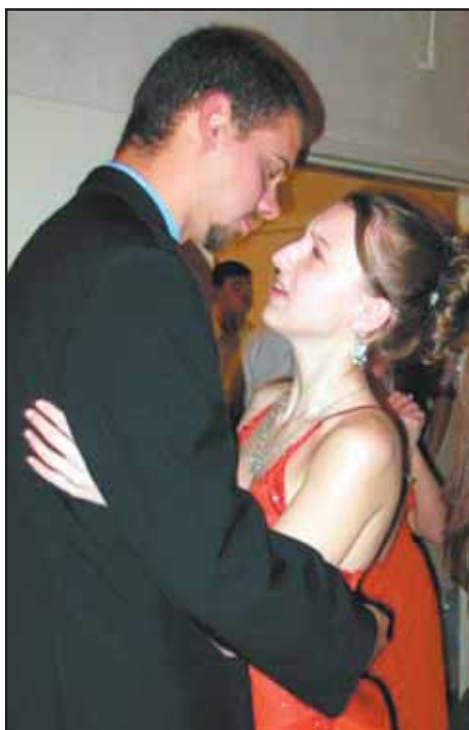
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The Highlands School Homecoming Dance, Saturday, at PAC was a Winter Wonderland



Photos by Kim Lewicki and Karen Hasbrouck

• HS VARSITY BASKETBALL •

Teams have successful week

By Ryan Potts

The Highlanders and Lady Highlanders of Highlands High School started the basketball season strong, and both seem now determined to prove that they will leave a lasting impression on the Smoky Mountain Conference.

Highlands began last week with a home rematch against the Andrews Wildcats, and both teams came away with dominating victories.

The Lady Highlanders came out hitting on all cylinders and built a 14-3 first quarter lead on the way to a decisive 55-33 victory. The Lady Highlanders were led by Brie Schmitt with 15, Sarah Power with 10 and Marlee McCall with 8. Taylor Buras added 9 points as well as 5 steals for the Lady Highlanders.

Lady Highlanders coach Brett Lamb was happy with the effort, noting that "we played well, and everyone got a chance to play so it is a good win for us."

The Highlanders followed the girls' effort by grinding out a 56-40 win against an Andrews team that had improved significantly since their 50 point loss to Highlands in their home opener.

The Highlanders were lethargic early and struggled with poor shooting against Andrews' packed in 2-3 zone. However, Highlands was able to force some turnovers with pressure defense and build a lead that they would not relinquish. Highlands had three scorers in double figures, and every member of the team scored in the victory. Stephen Simmons led Andrews with 13 points.

Friday night saw the Lady Highlanders win their conference opener against Nantahala before a noisy crowd at Highlands Gym. The Lady Highlanders scored early and often, building a 27-9 halftime lead and giving the home crowd a nice Homecoming gift. Highlands was paced by Emily Munger with 10 points, followed by 5 ladies who scored 7 or more points in a game where every player saw action and contributed to a victory.

The nightcap saw one of the most anticipated boys games of the early season in which the undefeated Nantahala Hawks escaped with a narrow 70-65 victory over Highlands. This game was a back and forth affair that saw the Highlanders start the game with an 8-0 lead, only to give up a 16-2 Hawk run and trail by 7 at the end of the first quarter. Highlands cut the lead to 2 with a minute to play in the first half, but Nantahala closed the first half with a 7-0 spurt to lead by 9 at halftime.

The second half saw the Highland-

ers stage a furious rally to cut a 13 point Nantahala lead to 3 in the closing seconds. Unfortunately for the home crowd, Highlands was unable to come away with the equalizer and Nantahala's closing free throws provided the final margin. Michael Shearl and Ezra Herz provided 48 of the Highlanders 65 points, while Gavin Baldwin scored 21 for Nantahala.

On Tuesday, the Lady Highlanders traveled to the Cherokee Reservation to face the Lady Braves, who are a perennial SMC powerhouse.

The Lady Highlanders attacked Cherokee's pressure early, and only trailed by 4 at the end of the first quarter thanks to some precise passing and some careless play from the Lady Braves. Unfortunately, the good news for Highlands ended there, as Cherokee used their size and depth to wear down the Lady Highlanders on the way to a 72-50 victory.

Kate-Marie Parks played well despite some early foul trouble, scoring 12 points and grabbing 8 rebounds. Sarah Power also added 12 points and 9 rebounds.

Coach Lamb was proud of the effort that his ladies showed in the second half in particular, saying that "we played with heart for the entire game, and that kind of effort with better execution will take us a long way."

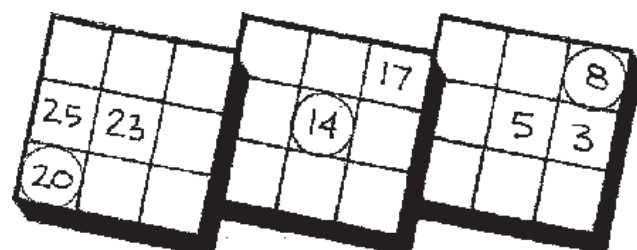
The Highlander men looked to be in much of the same predicament against the Braves, as they trailed most of the first half and went down by 14 points at the start of the third quarter. It was then that the Highlanders dug deep and erased that 14 point deficit within a matter of minutes to take a 2 point lead at the end of the third quarter.

The final session saw a lot of sloppy play from both sides as the game came down to the closing seconds. With Highlands leading by one, senior guard Mikey Lica sank two pressure-packed free throws after an intentional foul, and the Highlanders held on for a 71-69 victory. Ezra Herz led the scoring with 27 points, followed by Michael Shearl with 19 and Michael Baty with 11.

The next home game for the Highlanders is tonight in this year's chapter of the annual game with county rival Franklin. Highlands will also play at Hayesville this Saturday in a rematch of two thrilling games from a week ago. Come out and support the Highlanders and Lady Highlanders – it's always more fun to play in front of a big crowd!

• FUN & GAMES •

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#BN3F Level of Difficulty – Easy

THE SETUP:

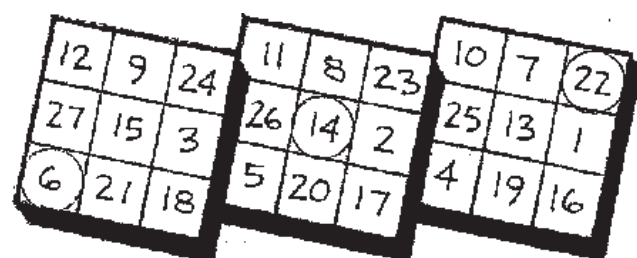
The cube has 27 consecutive numbers in it, arranged in three layers with 9 numbers each. These numbers are arranged in a special pattern: For each layer, the sum of the three numbers in each row, column or diagonal, is 3 times its center number. Eight diagonals connect all 3 layers by running through the center number of the middle layer. Each diagonal contains 3 numbers equalling the total of the three center numbers. One of the diagonals is shown with circles.

THE CHALLENGE:

Start with the three center numbers for each layer and the other numbers given. Now pour a cup of coffee, pick up a pencil and eraser and try to figure out where the other numbers belong. Good Luck!

Email: pseudocube8@aol.com.

Solution to #AZ3F in Dec. 4 issue



Sudo-Grams®

2008

by Pete Sarjeant and Don Cook

OBJECT:

A mystery word or phrase using all different letters is designated by circled squares (other short words will appear when solving, for which a list of meanings is provided). Every puzzle has a different mystery word or phrase (no spaces). Assign different letters to each square of each column and row. In addition, various cells (six, eight or nine) in the puzzle layout have the same different letters (this is like Sudoku but uses letters instead of numbers).

How to Solve:

Determine the different letters among those given. Write in the mystery word using the clue and these letters. Other small words will appear in the puzzle. As in conventional crossword puzzles, a list of meanings for these Across/Down words is given and number positions shown. Doing them will speed up your solution to the puzzle. Using your powers of induction, inference and insight, place missing letters in blank squares according to the rules noted above. Focus your attention where the least number of letters are needed to complete a line, column or cell.

Mystery Word

#H608

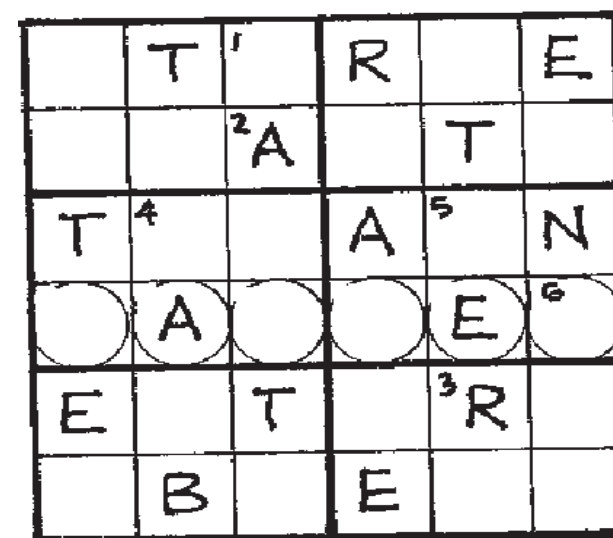
Teasing Conversation (6)

Across

1. Hillside (Scot.) (4)
2. Minute insect (3)
3. Brassiere (Abbr.) (3)

Down

4. Moved quickly (3)
5. Swiss capital (4)
6. Noxious rodent (3)



Solution to Dec. 4 Sudo-Grams



POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE DEPT. LOG ENTRIES

The following are the Highlands Police Dept. log entries for Nov. 26-Dec 9. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor, or public officials have been used.

Nov. 26

- At 6:45 a.m., a motorist at N.C. 28 and Shelby Lane was cited for speeding 58 mph in a 35 zone.
- At 8:45 a.m., a motorist at N.C. 28 and Cherokee was cited for failing to yield the right-of-way at the site of an accident.
- At 10 a.m., officers responded to the call of an open door at a residence on Lower Lake Road. All was OK.
- At 4 p.m., residents called about children playing on a frozen pond on Log Cabin Lane without adult supervision.
- At 8:45 p.m., a resident on Chestnut Street called to complain about reckless driving on the street.

Nov. 30

- The dept. was asked to assist Rabun County on the lookout for a suspect who had shot someone.

Dec. 1

- At 7:30 a.m., a motorist at U.S. 64 west and Hickory was cited for driving without a license.
- At noon, officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Big Bear Pen Road. There were no injuries.
- At 10:47 p.m., officers responded to a one-vehicle accident on Cobb Road.

There were no injuries.

Dec. 2

- At 2:54 p.m., a guest at a hotel on Main Street reported someone trying to enter his room.
- At 4:40 p.m., officers were called to a residence on Satulah Road to handle a domestic dispute.
- At 8:54 p.m., officers were called to a residence on Wahoo Drive to handle a domestic dispute.

Dec. 4

- At 7:45 a.m. officers responded to a two-vehicle accident at N.C. 28 and Church Street.

Dec. 6

- At 9:21 a.m., a motorist at Fifth and Main streets was cited for speeding 37 mph in a 20 zone.
- At 9:21 p.m., Karen Andrews Sherrill, 49, of Highlands was arrested for DWI when stopped for speeding 35 mph in a 20 zone on Main Street. She was released on a \$1,000 unsecured bond.

Dec. 7

- At 4:16 p.m. officers responded to a call of an open door at a residence on Cullasaja Drive. All was OK.
- During the week, officers issued 6 warning tickets and responded to 7 alarm activations.

The following are the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for

the week of Dec. 3-9

Dec. 3

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call on Main Street where a woman fell and hit her head. There was no transport.

Dec. 6

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Mountain Shadows Road. The victim was transported to the hospital.
- The dept. responded to a call of a gas leak at a water heater. The gas company was called.

Dec. 7

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Clubhouse Trail where a person was choking. She was transported to the hospital.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Split Rail Road. The victim was transported to the hospital.
- The dept. responded to an alarm at the Cullasaja Clubhouse. There was no problem.

Dec. 8

- The dept. responded to an alarm on S. Old Walhalla Road. There was no problem.
- The dept. responded to an alarm on Hickory Lane. There was no problem.

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