

Highlands' Newspaper

FREE

Volume 6, Number 11

PDF Version – www.HighlandsInfo.com

Thursday, March 13, 2008

Ongoing:

- The Highlands Playhouse is taking reservations for "Always Patsy Cline," "On Golden Pond," "70th Anniversary Diamond Review," and "Inherit the Wind" Call 828-526-2695 or write or PO Box 896, Highlands, NC 28741.

- Highlands Playhouse is taking reservations for its annual Children's Theatre Mon-Fri., July 7-18. Call 828-526-2695 or write or PO Box 896, Highlands, NC 28741.

- Registrar for the 2008 summer nature day camps at the Highlands Nature Center. Five different camps are offered. Call 828-526-2623 or visit www.wcu.edu/hbs.

- Cardio Dance Class. \$5 per class, MWF at 8:30 am @ the Rec Park.

- Step Aerobics at the Rec Park, 4-5 p.m., Mon., Wed., Thurs.. \$5 per class.

- At Health Tracks at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, various exercise classes. Call Jeanette Fisher at 828-526-1FIT.

Every Monday

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

Every Wednesday

- Gospel of John Bible Study Pastor Todd Struble is leading a study this spring on the fourth Gospel (using the Efid Bible Study Series) 6:15 - 7:15 at HUMC.

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

Every Friday & Saturday

- Live music at The Rib Shack every Friday and Saturday night from 7-10 p.m.

Every Saturday

- Live music at Cyprus Restaurant in the Dillard Village Shopping Center at 9:30 p.m. \$10 cover.

Thursday, March 13

- Highlands School PTO and Junior Class Rib-eye Steak Dinner fundraiser at 4:30 to 6:30. Adults are \$10 and children under 12 are \$6. Call 526-2147.

Saturday, March 15

- St. Paddy's Day Dance at ITC at 8 p.m. \$10 for adults, \$5 for children.

- The Highlands Memorial Post 370 of the American Legion meeting at the Civic Center at 9 a.m. Following breakfast there will be a meeting. Call Ed Jones at 743-0886.

Sunday, March 16

- The First Baptist Church Choir presents the Easter musical "In Christ Alone" at 10:45 a.m.

Weekend Weather:

FRI	SAT	SUN
57-42°F	55-35°F	50-30°F

Ordinances bounced back for discussion

A lot of discussion is bound to take place at the special combination Town Board/Planning Board meeting set for March 24.

Up for discussion again — and happily so, say those who will be ultimately affected — is the Outdoor Display of Merchandise ordinance and the Zoning

Amendment for Restaurant Parking.

Outdoor Display of Merchandise

Outcry from merchants and members of the Planning Board whose recommendations were disregarded by the Town Board, caused commissioners to agree to re-consider the Outdoor Display

of Merchandise ordinance they recently amended.

Planning Board member and owner of Highlands Outdoor Tools Ricky Bryson said the board sent an ordinance to the Town Board which was disregarded.

"I'm here to ask you to rescind

• See ORDINANCES page 18

Town relaxes its park use policy

A request to use Pine Street Park for what's become an annual arts and crafts show spurred the board to rethink its policy concerning the use of town public properties.

Cynthia Strain, who has orchestrated the Village Square Arts & Crafts Show for about three years, wanted to make sure the town included such shows in its usage policy which was to be decided at Wednesday's Town Board meeting.

"This is a fun and colorful event that adds character to the town. I've talked to scores of people and they all say that's what public parks are for," she said. "Cities and towns all over the country open their parks for arts and crafts shows."

Commissioner Amy Patterson, who sits on the Recreation Committee with Dennis DeWolf, said a public park shouldn't be used for someone's tool sale.

But Jerry Moore of Kilwin's asked if the board really needed to be so worried.

"Arts and crafts shows are of a cultural nature and they attract people to the community. Maybe you don't want a flea market, but an arts and crafts show? Yes."

Mayor Don Mullen said people who come to Highlands for art shows do come for other things. "They support the entire community. We have to take the whole community into consideration

• See PARK POLICY page 18

Girls soccer team ready to win



Goalie Danielle Reese makes a save during the Towns County game March 6. Highlands lost 1-0 but it was a good game. The next home game is March 14 against Franklin at 5 p.m.
Photo by Noel Atherton

School system responds to negative allegations

Macon County School officials made a final attempt to debunk allegations of reckless spending and unnecessary expansion of facilities at Monday's county commission meeting.

Superintendent Dan Brigman and school architect Mike Watson used a PowerPoint presentation to explain and clarify statistics and expenses concerning the facilities expansion plan.

Brigman has long claimed and substantiated with statistical information offered at 10 public forums and in the media, the economic benefits of combining the

county's small elementary schools.

The newly formed Citizens for Community Schools and Quality Education organization contends smaller schools are better and questioned the need to build new schools, especially since students will be bussed out of their communities.

However, Brigman and the county commission say economics, safety and the right of each student to an education in a modern facility outweighs the negatives and used Cullasaja School as an

• See SCHOOLS page 5

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CPA firm helps county defend its fund balance

Turns out the amount of money in the county's fund balance account is just enough to shoulder three months of expenses should some catastrophe strike, but not enough to fund capital facilities projects as suggested by fiscal opponents.

During several public sessions over the past year, opponents of capital projects and the means to fund them — basically a tax increase — have suggested the county use the money in the fund balance to fund projects instead of "saving" it.

In a prepared statement at the Monday, March 10 Macon County Commission Chairman Charlie Leatherman said, "Last month at our regular board of commissioners meeting, it was stated that Macon County has a 41% fund balance. That simply put, is not the truth.

"There has been for some time a few who contend that the information coming from this board is infected with dishonesty and the information we release is only to cover up the truth.

"When someone or a group presents other than accurate information and represents it to be truthful data, then it becomes the responsibility of those who have the accountability to insure corrections are in place to counter claims that are not correct.

• See FUND BALANCE page 11

• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• FORUM •

Highlands should follow Franklin's lead



Kim Lewicki
Publisher

In what appeared to be a surprise move last week, the Franklin Town Council voted to levy a 3% room tax and set up a Travel and Tourism Authority (TTA) all its own – apart from the county commission's TTA.

What does this mean?

Aside from patrons of lodging establishments in the town of Franklin paying 3% more per room than elsewhere in the county, it means that Franklin aldermen figured out a way to raise the money they need to promote tourism in Franklin without having to compete with the chambers of commerce for the money.

Now Franklin can use all of the 3% room tax it collects from Microtel, the Hampton Inn, Comfort Inn, Days Inn and other lodging establishments within its town limits to promote tourism and attract people to Franklin. Plus, it could likely claim some proceeds from the county's 3% room tax.

Franklin Alderman Verlin Curtis said this wasn't a surprise move at all. "Two and a half years ago, Franklin applied to the state for the tax," he said. "We got permission, but the board just now decided to levy it."

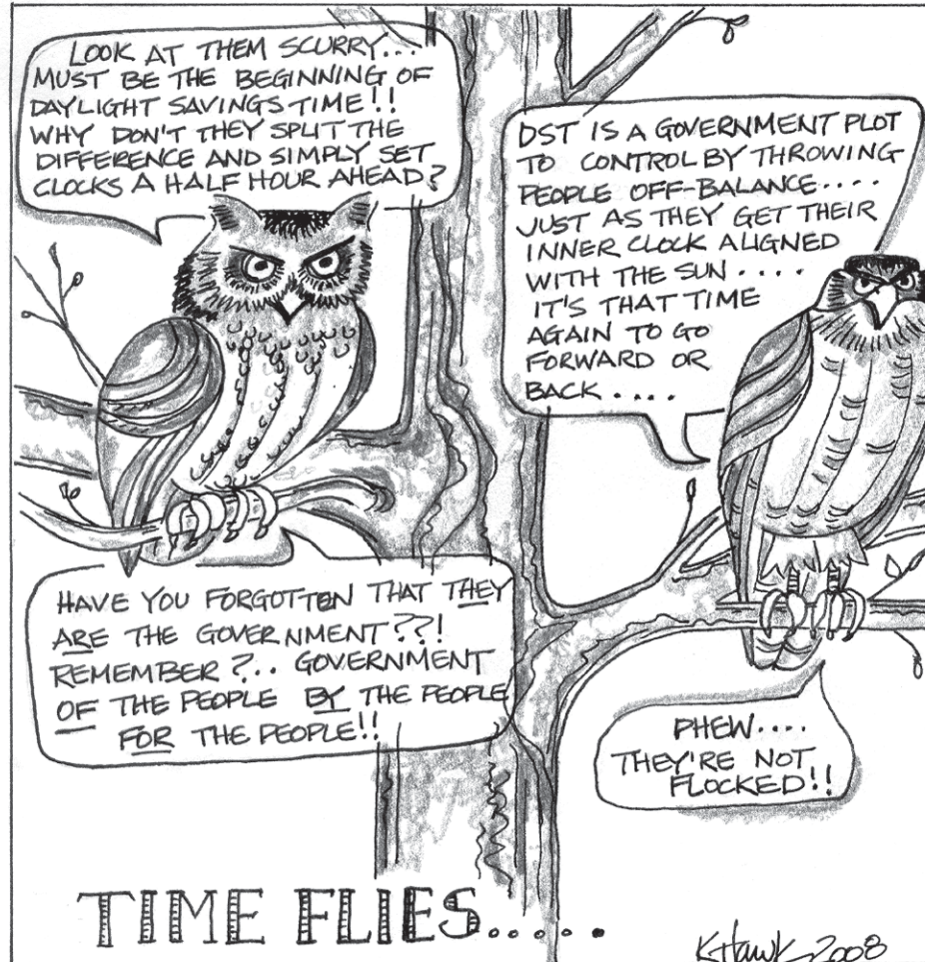
Following a mid-February public hearing, where no one spoke against the notion, the board voted unanimously to adopt the tax at the March 4 town meeting. Curtis said prior to Tuesday's meeting, he personally called around and still found no one in opposition. That being the case, he decided to vote for the tax.

He said research verified that patrons to cities and towns across the country are accustomed to paying upwards of 10% in room tax, so 6% won't be alarming.

Like the town of Highlands, over the years the town of Franklin has subsidized organizations and events promoting tourism in Franklin, "but now the money we use to do that won't have to come out of the general fund," said Curtis.

•See FORUM page 20

• HAWK'S EYE VIEW •



• LETTERS •

Will someone please clean up the mess?

Dear Editor,

In the Jan. 13 issue of Highlands' Newspaper there was a letter-to-the-editor entitled "Exactly who is responsible?" If there was a response, then I missed it. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? went to Franklin the other day and it is still there.

It seems to me that the company that owned the truck should be responsible for cleaning up and removing what is left of the truck. They should be given a time line to do so with a daily fine (of some substance) each day that goes by past the time line date.

Pat Griffin
Highlands

Destruction shouldn't be the end-product of trimming

Dear Editor,

I not only completely agree with Alice Nelson regarding the senseless slaughter of our scenic roadsides but am also amazed that more of our nature-loving, conscientious residents have yet to speak up!

It's easy for me to envision a lazy good-ole-boy riding along, playing macho man on the big bad machine, taking random (and I do mean random) swipes at any far-reaching target that challenges him. Other than how this continues to happen every year, what I fail to grasp is why the results of this major bungle (based on the carnage of flora left in its wake) remain - often indefinitely - leaving behind what appears to be (and is - depending on one's perspective) a war zone!

Horse Cove has also recently suffered this fate....not to mention the permanent destruction of part of Whiteside Cove - now wide enough for a four-lane highway.

Surely there are better alternatives?

Noel D. Atherton
Whiteside Cove

What's in a name?

Dear Editor,

American politics is an amazing process; the ideas of the left and the right freely expressed hopefully considered and debated, move this country forward. Especially at times like these, the right and

•See LETTERS page 26

LETTERS-TO-THE EDITOR-POLICY

We reserve the right to reject or edit submissions. 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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• OBITUARIES •

Revylon Talley Carver

Revylon Talley Carver, age 57, of Franklin, N.C. died March 4, 2008 at an Asheville Hospital. She was born in Rabun County, GA, the daughter of Minnie Leora Carver Talley of Highlands, N.C. and the late Lyman "Red" Talley. She owned and operated Carvers Cleaning Service. She loved going to Cades Cove to see the wildlife and do genealogy. She was a member of Central Baptist Church.



Hershel and Revylon Carver

She is survived by her husband of 35 years, James Hershel Carver; five sisters, Reba Webb and her husband, Bill of Walhalla, S.C., Rena Carver of Seneca, S.C., Rodean Wilson and her husband, David of Norcross, GA, Roberta Barnes of Millsville, WI and Romonia Pickleseimer and her husband, Andrew of Highlands, N.C.; one step-son, Kenneth Carver and wife, Debbie of White Sulphur Springs, MT; five broth-

ers, Ronald Talley and his wife, Hilda of Franklin, N.C., Russell Talley and his wife, Edith of Republic of Panama, Relton Talley and his wife, Alice of Walhalla, S.C., Randolph Talley and his wife, Hazel of Mountain City, GA and Rabun Talley and his wife, Terry of Gastonia, N.C.; one granddaughter, Rosie Bradley and two great-grandchildren, Madison and Asa Bradley. Several nieces and nephews also survive.

Funeral services were held Friday, March 7 at 11 a.m. at Clear Creek Baptist Church with Rev. Oliver Rice and Rev. Neil Ammons officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery. Chris Bradley, Andrew Pickleseimer, Darryl Talley, Brad Hambrick, Bobby Parker, Richard Todd, John Webb and Bob Lambert were pallbearers. Bryant-Grant Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

• MILESTONES •

Longtime seasonal residents subjects of portrait

Oglethorpe University alumni and friends in the Tampa area joined Jane and William Emerson for a reception and portrait unveiling on Thursday, February 21 at the Tampa Yacht Club. The portrait painted by famed artist Rossin will be hung in Oglethorpe University's Emerson Student Center. Mr. Emerson has served on the university's board of trustees since 1974 and is a director of the Merrill Lynch Trust Company.



Betz named to Dean's List

Katy Betz of Highlands has been named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2007 semester at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Dean's List is made up of full-time students who have achieved between 3.5 and 3.99 grade point average. Katy is the daughter of Richard and Martha Betz of Highlands.

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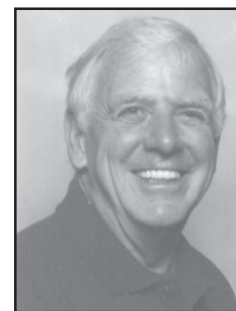
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• LOOKING AT LIFE •

The Demon (Part 1)



Fred Wooldridge

**Feedback
is encouraged!
email:**

askfredanything@aol.com

This incredible true story will be told in three parts. Past issues can be read on line or picked up at the Highlands' Newspaper 265 Oak St. The names, places and some circumstances are changed to protect everyone's identity but mine.

I arrived at my office a little after 4 p.m. and found Detective Mike Benson sitting in a hallway chair outside my door. I was surprised to see his usual scruffy, disheveled look was gone. He had washed and combed his coal black hair back into a ponytail and groomed his full beard and mustache. The typical musty smell of his Salvation Army clothing had been replaced with a clean silk Nik Nik shirt and dress slacks. His after-shave lotion permeated the hallway.

Mike was one of my best undercover narcotics officers. He was such a great actor and could fake delirious tremors better than anyone in my unit, convincing street dealers to sell heroin to a complete stranger, something that is practically never done. He just had this look about him that made dealers want to sell him heroin. Month after month, he purchased more drugs and put more dealers behind bars than any of the other officers.

Undercover police officers live by their wits and their ability to act out their role. A bad performance could cost an officer his life. Mike was the best of the best. We had worked many undercover assignments together before my promotion and when that occurred, Mike took the transition from being my partner to my being his boss with the professionalism expected of a career officer. He was also a good friend.

This whole scenario was weird, with Mike all shined up and waiting to see me, I knew something was up. Without saying anything, I walked past him and stuck my key into the office door. I pushed open the door, then looked at him. "Wanna see me?" He didn't speak but followed me to my desk. "I am guessing you have been kicked out of the house again. Why else would you clean up like this? Do you need some time off?"

Mike pulled his service weapon from

under his shirt and held it out so I could see it, then he set it on my desk followed by his shield. "I quit." He slid both gun and shield toward me. I was shocked. "Sit down; let's talk." "Nope, if I do that, you'll talk me out of doing this and I can't let that happen." He turned to leave.

"You owe me, damn it," I blurted out. "You don't walk in here and announce you're giving up a magnificent 10-year career and just leave without an explanation. I am not just your boss; we are friends. You owe me an explanation."

He stopped at the doorway and turned. We stared at each other for a few seconds while he pondered my remarks. It seemed like an eternity. "OK, we'll talk, but I'm going to stand. I need your word this does not leave this office." Without showing expression I responded, "You have my word. Close the door."

Mike folded his arms in a defensive gesture and looked at the floor. "This has been occurring for a while. I know you're going to think I have gone mad and maybe I have. I am having very realistic nightmares and they are always the same. A Puerto Rican man walks up to me and smiles. He has a bullet in his hand which he holds up with two fingers so I can plainly see it. Then he says 'I'm going to kill you with this bullet.' I run from him but no matter how fast I run or where I hide, he is there, showing me the bullet. The smile; damn his smile; I am haunted by it. Then I wake up in a sweat. It's every night, always the same guy who says the same thing. The dreams are so realistic, I am never able to convince myself during the dream that it's not really happening. It happens so often, I'm afraid to go to sleep. I am convinced if I don't quit, I'm going to die. I have a demon in me. This is some kind of omen or something. These dreams have convinced me I am about to be killed. I gotta get outta here."

Part two of "The Demon" will be published next Thursday.

• Read Fred online at
www.highlandsinfo.com, scroll down,
click on News.

• ANOTHER VIEW •

Blessings in our midst

I'm feeling grateful today. Last week I saw a coyote standing just off the side of N.C. 106. A week earlier, I had seen a bobcat crossing N.C 28. We are so darned lucky to be living here.

We've had a brief reprieve from our drought and, for the moment at least, the falls are flowing full. We are able to live close to nature while residing in an area that boasts, within easy driving distance, all the services we might reasonably require.

I guess we owe a debt to Teddy Roosevelt for recognizing the importance of our natural treasures, before they were at risk, and to the Forest Service for buying up huge chunks of what was once worthless land.

We are, for the most part, insulated from the crime, congestion, and pollution that plagues our urban neighbors. I remember that on September 11, 2001, I was driving north to Tsali Recreation Area for a day of mountain biking. I heard reports of the terrorist attacks on the radio. So confident was I that my family was safe, that I continued with my plan.

There may be those who consider my decision sacrilegious, enjoying a day of cycling during one of the most tragic events in American history. I'm



Dr. Henry Salzarulo

**Feedback is encouraged.
email:**

hsalzarulo@aol.com

glad that I didn't witness images of airliners slamming again and again into New York skyscrapers. I never saw the pictures of victims doomed to a fiery end, choosing instead to leap to their deaths. My country was under attack, but my family was safe in Western North Carolina.

I'm grateful for the beauty of our green mountains. Daffodils are blooming in the upstate, so spring cannot be far behind in the mountains. Pure water bub-

bles from our wells, free of the residue of prescription drugs that plagues those in the cities, remnants of drugs that are excreted by their users, enter the sewage system and through the water treatment plants, only to emerge undetected and be recycled through millions who drink the water.

We enjoy the freedom and prosperity of America, the convenience of proximity to a major metropolitan area and to several smaller cities. I guess there isn't much we lack other than a movie theater and a McDonald's.

I'm grateful for Lizzie and Bull, for friends, colleagues, partners, and readers. I'm very grateful for my profession. At this moment, I'm especially grateful for my health and my life. But that's a story for another time.

... SCHOOLS continued from page 1

example.

"Cullasaja School is at the end of its lifespan," said architect Mike Watson. "Its plumbing and electrical capacity is maxed out."

He said once renovations begin in a school the law says the schools have to be brought up to code. In the case of Cullasaja, Watson said that just isn't possible, citing the lack of additional land, and water-sewer capacity.

Furthermore, codes and ADA requirements have changed over the years. "What was OK 20 years ago isn't OK now," he said. "There are required amenities that just weren't required in the 1940s."

For example, Watson said ADA requirements eat up square footage when it comes to restrooms. "You have to assume a 20% increase in size just to accommodate ADA requirements and mechanical space," he said.

He also said whether a building is worthy of renovation depends on the building itself as well as its infrastructure. "In the case of Cullasaja, it will cost as much to reno-

vate it as to build a new school with no added benefit or means to expand. Currently, Cullasaja School is 17,334 sq. feet and houses 174 students which costs the county \$7,856.69 per student — that's more than it costs to operate the 85,000 sq. ft. Cartoogechaye Elementary School which was occupied in 2002 and houses twice as many students.

It's a similar scenario for Cowee and Iolita. The larger the school the better the profit margin all the way around from food service on down, said Brigman. "When you bring old schools off-line, there's a savings and improvement of operational costs," he said.

Watson calculated it would cost \$3.2 million to renovate Cullasaja to current requirements but water and sewer problems would still exist.

"Renovation would mean addressing the water and sewer problem with one component being the sprinkling of the gym. These days you have to sprinkle the gym, that's all there is to it," he said.

• See SCHOOLS page 27

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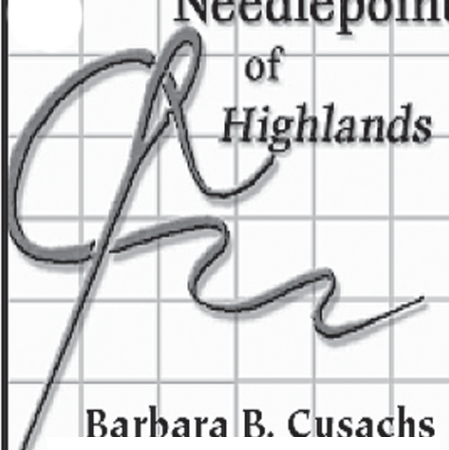
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• REFLECTIONS FROM TURTLE POND •

Our country's future

I have a lot of trouble understanding why the current state of the U.S. economy comes as such a shock to so many people, most of all to economists. Let me get this straight: our economy has been dependent upon people taking out home-equity loans on the rising value of their homes (since wages are stagnating that was the only way many people could patriotically continue to increase their spending), and when the housing bubble burst — oh you mean home values wouldn't keep going up forever? What a shock! — people had to cut back on their spending and so we have a recession. If this is considered rational, sensible economics it is obvious to me that there is something terribly wrong with that "science."

According to a recent study by the Federal Reserve, homeowners took out more than \$600 billion in home-equity loans in 2004 and 2005 alone — 10 times as much as a decade ago — and are spending much of it on personal consumption.

Let's do a little math to find out how that statistic relates to total consumer spending. We'll first divide that home-equity number in half: \$300 billion per year and subtract a little since the Fed says that not all of it is spent on personal consumption. Let's say \$250 billion. The U.S. Gross Domestic Product is \$13 trillion. Seventy percent of our country's GDP is consumer spending, which comes to \$9 trillion. The home equity portion of the GDP (\$250 billion divided by \$9 trillion): about 2.7 percent. Think about it: *2.7 percent of all consumer spending was from home-equity loans.* And that doesn't take into account people going into debt on their credit cards!

In last Sunday's *New York Times* I found these statistics: "Most American households are still not earning as much annually as they did in 1999, once inflation is taken into account...The median household earned \$48,201 in 2006, down from \$49,244 in 1999, according to the Census Bureau. It now looks as if a full decade may pass before most Americans receive a raise." ("Seeing an End to the Good Times (Such as They Were)," *New York Times*, 3/08/08 David Leonhardt)

I have felt uneasy whenever I heard the statistic that 70% of the U.S. GDP is consumer spending, but had no basis for explaining why. Just last week I finally



Katie Brugger
k-brugger@hotmail.com

saw some statistics for other countries: "Britain ranked second among nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, at 61% [of GDP based on consumer spending], then came Italy at 59%, with Japan, Germany, France, and Canada all hovering around 55%." ("The Mall of America," by Harold Meyerson, *Washington Post*) Elsewhere I saw that in China

consumer spending is about a third of the country's GDP.

These people are producing wealth the old-fashioned way: by producing something; by making more than they spend. For a couple of years now Americans, collectively, have had a negative savings rate; that is, we spend more than we earn. We are mortgaging our futures to pay for our current expenses. How could anyone think that this situation could lead to anything but huge problems?

This same week I read about hearings before Congress's Joint Economic Committee, chaired by Senator Chuck Schumer which addressed the costs of the Iraq war (in a column by *New York Times* Columnist Bob Herbert; "The \$2 Trillion Nightmare," March 4). The witnesses included Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and Robert Hormats, vice chairman of Goldman Sachs International. They testified that the war will ultimately cost U.S. taxpayers not hundreds of billions of dollars, but an "astonishing" \$2 trillion, and perhaps more. They put this sum in perspective by imagining how it could have been used for other purposes.

"Mr. Hormats cited the committee's own calculations from last fall that showed that the money spent on the war *each day* [my emphasis] is enough to enroll an additional 58,000 children in Head Start for a year, or make a year of college affordable for 160,000 low-income students through Pell Grants, or pay the annual salaries of nearly 11,000 additional border patrol agents or 14,000 more police officers."

Mr. Hormats also mentioned Social Security and Medicare, saying that both could have been put "on a more sustainable basis." The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities did a study assessing the needs of Social Security, which found that the projected long-term deficit in Social Security over the next 75 years — the period used for measuring long-term

• See BRUGGER page 11

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• HIS & HERS •

America's native criminal class

Mark Twain once remarked that "America has no native criminal class, except perhaps the Congress." He was exaggerating, but not by too much.

I've spend long years in Washington, and worked with many people in the government, both elected and appointed. I've observed two central problems: it is so easy, once you're in a position of power, to casually reach out and line your pockets with the flood of cash that is always flowing by your door,

The other problem is that Washington is inhabited by a large number of people who pulled out all the stops, and skated close to the wind to get there. Many, but not all, of those ethically-challenged powers in Washington, are lawyers. It is sad but true that we lawyers are trained to justify the unjustifiable, to defend our clients. When we are our own client, the temptation is at its maximum.

Lastly, of course, is the point that when money is extracted from individuals and corporations and placed in a large pile, it becomes "everybody's" money. And the simple truth is that nobody is doing a good job of watching everybody's money. So, you can see the net effect of these related problems. A system that makes it as easy as possible for people to steal money, and attracts the precise people who are least likely to have compunctions about stealing money, you raise up a crop of crooks.

This ain't rocket science, folks. And that brings us to the (currently) Honorable William Jefferson, D-La., who is facing multiple counts of public corruption. According to numerous and reliable press accounts, Rep. Jefferson was caught on tape accepting a bribe, and most of the bribe money, which was marked, was recovered in a tin-foil package in his home freezer. Gives a whole new meaning to the term "cold cash."

Well, what has been the fate of the (somewhat) Hon. William Jefferson? The House Ethics Committee has punted the ball, and postponed any action until his criminal trial is completed. Meantime, the (quasi) Hon. Jefferson is doing all he can to postpone his criminal trial, and is running for reelection in New Orleans, where he will almost certainly win.

The Rules of Conduct for the House do not say that a member has engaged in "conduct unbecoming" only when his



Michelle Mead & John Armor
michiemead@aol.com
John_Armor@yale.edu

last appeal fails in the Supreme Court. For example, U.S. Judge Alcee Hastings of Florida managed to win acquittal of bribery charges while the man who bribed him went to jail. Still, the (formerly) Hon. Alcee Hastings was impeached, convicted, and removed from the bench. Sad to say, he wound up as a member of Congress.

The example I share with you today is the legislature of North Carolina. It does not often serve as a good example. For instance, the former Speaker of the House is now in the Big House, doing time for bribery. And before his conviction, no one could lay a finger on him. But this week, there is honorable news from that legislature.

This week a special legislative committee recommended that state Rep. Thomas Wright be "removed from office for mishandling about \$340,000 in campaign contributions, loans and charitable donations." That will go to the General Assembly, which can then expel Rep. Wright.

Where the U.S. House failed, the N.C. House has succeeded. Rep. Wright is charged with various crimes, but the special committee did not wait for the criminal case to play out. If the General Assembly accepts the recommendation, the (disgraced) Rep. Wright will be out on his ear, before he can be reelected to the N.C. House.

Since Wright is a Democrat, and Democrats control both the N.C. House and the special committee, the outcome seems clear. Rep. Wright will be gone with the wind because the Democrats in N.C. are at least partially more concerned about integrity in elected office, than are the Democrats who control the U.S. House.

One, final, personal note. If I am elected to Congress this fall, in my first day in office I will write a personal letter to each member of the House Ethics Committee, demanding that they either act promptly on the charges against the (dubiously) Hon. William Jefferson, or resign from their positions so that others who take bribery in the House more seriously, can take their places.

About the Author: John Armor practiced in the U.S. Supreme Court for 33 years. John_Armor@aya.yale.edu. He is running for the 11th Congressional District of North Carolina.



First Presbyterian Church of Highlands

Holy Week 2008

Sunday, March 16, 2008

11:00 a.m.

"Passion Palm Sunday Communion Service"

Sermon by Dr. Don Mullen

Friday, March 21, 2008

12:00 noon

"Stations of the Cross"

sponsored by the
churches of Highlands.

Meet at Our Lady of the Mountain.

Thursday, March 20, 2008

7:00 p.m.

"Maundy Thursday Service"

A worship service of Remembrance of the
final hours of Christ's life.

The service will conclude in
Holy Communion.

Sunday, March 23, 2008

6:30 a.m.

"Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service"

sponsored by the churches of Highlands.

Service held at the Highlands' Biological
Center Amphitheater. Sermon by
Rev. Hunter Coleman

11:00 a.m.

"Easter Sunday Service"

Sermon by

Rev. Mark Kayser

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Servings: 4

Cooking Time: 20 Minutes

6 tablespoons butter, melted

2 cloves garlic, minced

3 sheets phyllo dough, thawed

4 eggs

Salt and pepper

2 tablespoons water or sour cream

1 tablespoon butter

1 cup diced Smithfield Spiral Sliced

Ham

1 cup grated cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter 4 muffin cups. In small bowl, combine melted butter and garlic. On cutting board, stack 3 phyllo sheets and cut into fourths, forming 12 squares. Cover phyllo with damp paper towel when not in use because it dries out quickly. Press 1 phyllo square (1 sheet thick) into bottom of each muffin cup. (Don't worry if phyllo tears.) Brush with butter. Add another layer of phyllo and brush with butter. Repeat a third time. Bake 10 minutes. Carefully remove phyllo baskets from muffin cups and cool on wire rack.

In medium bowl beat eggs; add salt and pepper to taste with water or sour cream. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in medium skillet and add eggs. Sprinkle ham over eggs. Scramble eggs to desired doneness. Sprinkle in cheese and stir until melted. Spoon into phyllo baskets. Sprinkle tops with a little more cheese.

Serving Suggestions: Serve with Tater Tots.



Eggs in a Nest

Banana & Bacon Stuffed French Toast

France comes to Savannah in this French toast stuffed with crispy bacon, ripe banana and creamy mascarpone.

Servings: 6

Cooking Time: 15 Minutes

1 (500 grams) loaf brioche (substitute egg bread)

1 package mascarpone (substitute cream cheese)

3 to 4 bananas, sliced lengthwise (each banana should yield 4 slices)

1 pound Smithfield Bacon, cooked until crisp

6 eggs

1/2 cup milk

1/2 cup heavy cream

1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 teaspoon orange zest

Pinch salt

Pinch pepper

6 tablespoons butter

Pure maple syrup, warmed

1 pint fresh berries for garnish

Powdered sugar for dusting

Slice brioche into 6 slices approximately 1 inch wide. Cut each slice almost all the way in half leaving a "hinged" edge. Spread thin layer of mascarpone on inside of one side of each slice. Lay two banana slices and cooked bacon on mascarpone. Press brioche together. In large bowl add eggs, milk, cream, cinnamon, vanilla, orange zest, salt and pepper. Whisk to combine. Melt butter in large skillet or on griddle. Working in batches, dip each stuffed brioche into egg mixture, being careful not to allow bacon and bananas to fall out. Grill on each side until golden brown.

Pool maple syrup on large plate and place 1 piece stuffed brioche on syrup. Sprinkle fresh berries on top of brioche and dust entire plate with powdered sugar.



Banana and Bacon Stuffed French Toast

• Recipes courtesy of Family Features

• FROM MY PERSPECTIVE •

New commissioners and mayor attend 'school of government'

Continuing education is a vital part of any profession and elected government work is no exception. Last week our two new town commissioners, Buz Dotson, Larry Rogers, our administrator, Richard Betz, and I attended the Essentials of Municipal Government three day course at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville. North Carolina is fortunate to have two outstanding organizations which put this fine event on six times a year in different locations in the State.

The School of Government, part of the University of NC in Chapel Hill, and the NC League of Municipalities, located in Raleigh, together put this outstanding program on. The SOG is always active not only teaching the details of properly run government but the professors there are always available by telephone or e-mail to answer questions for local elected officials on matters of procedure and the law.

The NC League of Municipalities this year is celebrating 100 years of service to the city and county governments of the state. It was formed in 1908 by a group of mayors to work not only with local governments but to protect their interest in the legislature of the state of North Carolina. The Town of Highlands joins over 500 municipalities and counties in the state as members of this organization. They also handle insurance issues for the town.

At the meeting in Asheville last week such topics as the roles and responsibilities of elected officials in a democratic society, what cities and towns do and how they do it, financial management and legal aspects of efficiency and openness were all



Mayor Don Mullen

presented and discussed in an expert fashion. We also heard presentations on the differences in the types of local government such as Mayor-Council and Council-Manager type organizations. The Town of Highlands commissioners currently are studying possible changes in our form of government in the future, so this meeting was quite timely.

The meeting also is important in that your local officials can network with other local officials discussing the ways they conduct their business. Thus, we attempt to make local government even more efficient in the way we do things. There is always discussion regarding press relationships and the problems public officials have in "living in a fish bowl." Methods of conducting the council's

business in more effective ways and yet being fair to everyone always come up at this important meeting. This is the third one I have been to, and I always come away having learned a great deal and tried to utilize this in my leadership of our own town government.

Let me once again congratulate the cast and supportive staff of the Highlands Community Players in their production of the hilarious play "Lend Me a Tenor," over the past two week-ends at the Performing Arts Center. I do not know when I have enjoyed a performance any more than this one. The talent of these actors was phenomenal from the most experienced to the newcomers. This was Bob Tietze's first go at performing (on stage!) in 30 years and he pulled it off like a real pro. Watch out Hollywood — another John Wayne is in the making. Others on stage also did a marvelous job.

• See MULLEN page 18

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• CONSERVATIVE POV •

Spring is springing – Huzzah

March has always been an enjoyable time for me. The crocuses (croci if you prefer) stick their heads up, my pear tree goes into budding mode and my cat patrols the property, sensing mole activity. Soon my rickety old body will defrost and the prospect of steaming hot weather is on the horizon. Hurrah! But enough about me.

The bimbo front has been eerily quiet lately. Our favorite wacko chicks, Britney,

Lindsay and Paris have provided nothing newsworthy (as if anything they do is newsworthy). Seems like March madness is operating in reverse in their case. But then, the month is still young.

The Democrats can be depended on to provide madness when all else fails. With Hillary's recent victories in Texas and Ohio, the Obama Express seems to have slowed. What appears to be brewing is a train wreck of 1968 proportions.

For those of you who can't remember anything that took place in the 60s, or you weren't born yet, the Democrat Convention, held in August in Chicago, created riots in the streets over the split in the party over the Vietnam war. The radicals' "pull out immediately" choice, Eugene McCarthy, lost to Hubert Humphrey, who won the nomination without participating in any primaries (can we say smoke-filled back rooms?). He eventually lost to Richard Nixon.

Many weeks ago, I told you about the parties fiddling around with their primaries in certain states, namely Florida and Michigan, moving their dates up to make their states more relevant to the process. The Democrat National Committee told them don't do it or we'll strip you of your delegation to the National Convention.

At the time, Clinton was thought to be a shoo-in and little significance was placed on their primaries. The candidates were told not to campaign in those states so Obama went so far as to pull his name off the ballot. The primaries were held anyway.

Now that the primary season is in the home stretch, and only about 100 delegates separate Obama and Clinton, those delegations have taken on added importance. The Dem's biggies are trying to change the rules in the middle of the game and are contemplating "do-overs." If the rules are allowed to be changed, there will be extreme angst in the ranks. If they are not, the "disenfranchised"



Don Swanson
Feedback is encouraged. Email
swandonson@dnet.net

Democrat voters will be steamed. Now they are battling over who should pay for a redo if one occurs (the cost of which is estimated to be \$17-25 million in Florida alone). This is so much fun.

Since it is statistically unlikely that either candidate will garner enough "pledged delegates" to reach the number needed for victory, the "super delegates" come into play. Unless the magic

number is reached by June 5th, the 800 or so supers (party officials, elected officials, etc.) will determine the Nominee. About half of them have already declared for one or the other, which makes the remaining available super delegate votes very valuable. They are fair game and their votes can be bought. The problem the National Party faces in this process, should it come to pass, is that if the supers in total vote against the "people," that is the pledged delegates, all heck will break loose.

As entertaining as the next several weeks will be, watching the two camps burning campaign funds and clawing each other's eyes out, let us not lose sight of the fact that there isn't a nickel's worth of difference in their political philosophy.

If eventually elected, God forbid, either would take the Country down their socialist road and effectively end the American Dream.

At a time when inflation is rearing its ugly head and the economy is dragging anchor, raising taxes and increasing regulations, promised by both, is not the answer. They'll say that the wealthiest among us should bear the burden of the middle-class. Two things will emerge. You thought you were part of the middle class. You will soon learn that somehow you have become one of the wealthy they are talking about.

Congratulations. The truly wealthy, that is, those who produce value and provide jobs, will continue their exodus to offshore locations,

leaving the People's Republic of America to feed on itself.

An even scarier scenario, call it a nightmare, continues to cross my mind. The Convention is locked. Chairman Howard Dean freezes and screams pandemonium breaks out and in rides Al Gore on his white horse to break the tie.

It's me, he shouts; it's me, me, mine. Pop Quiz! A. Hillary; B. Obama; C. Gore; D. None of the above. It had better be D!

... FUND BALANCE continued from page 1



Bryan Starnes, of Martin & Starnes CPA, explained fund balances in accounting procedures at Monday's Macon County Commission meeting.

"To clear up any misunderstandings, Bryan Starnes with Martin, Starnes & Associates, will hopefully put an end to the matter of Macon County's fund balance."

Using a PowerPoint presentation, Starnes, who represents the CPA firm that has audited the county for several years, explained the ins and outs of fund balance – the budget category under attack, lately.

Foremost he explained that a fund balance is a moving target and the amount at the beginning of the fiscal year is different than the amount at the end — something Finance Director Evelyn Southard has explained several times.

Macon County's available fund balance on June 30, 2007 was \$15,407,847 after budgeted expenses of \$43,929,774 and appropriations and commitments not yet appropriated equaled \$4,697,839. This left \$10,710,008 as the available fund balance or 24%.

Starnes said a fund balance is a percentage of prior year expenditures plus transfers out.

He stressed that the 41% fund balance reported at the beginning of the fiscal year, didn't take into account transfers out of the fund.

"The 'T' for transfers should really be an 'E' for expenditures because that's what a transfer is," he said. "If you take into account the transfers out of the fund balance your available fund balance is 24% not 41%."

Starnes explained that though it's a policy and not a law, the Local Government Commission (LGC) suggests a minimum fund balance of 8%. "Now that's the minimum level, not the recommended level," he said. "It represents one month's expenses of ready cash. If you collected all taxes and paid all the bills in a 12-month period, not including long-term debt, it's how much you would have left over."

But he said it's still not cash in the bank because a fund balance is made up of three components called a reserve, a designated

and an unreserved undesignated.

The reserved fund balance is anything outside Macon County that places restrictions on the county's money — mainly the state. "For instance, there is a three-month lag in sales tax from the state and there are uncollected property taxes. Those don't represent ready cash, but it will be coming in but it is in reserve."

The designated fund balance represents internal restrictions. "It's available, but it's already spoken for," he said.

Then there's the unreserved, undesignated fund balance which is totally available within a 12-month period.

He reiterated what Southard and previous County Manager Sam Greenwood have said many times — one reason Macon County qualifies for low interest debt issues is because of its healthy fund balance.

Starnes said if a fund balance dips below 8%, everything begins to shut down — not only pricing for debt issues but the entity becomes the target of the LGC. "Then you come to realize that their 'policy' of 8% has actually become a law because you can't function," he said. "The LGC keeps governments from getting into trouble." Some years ago, the Macon County Commission set a policy of a 25% fund balance and Starnes said that was a good move.

"At the very least you have to have a policy," he said. "Boards and opinions change and that can cause problems." He said a fund balance policy represents some sort of financial stability.

Money in a fund balance should be used for non-recurring expenditures, "up-front" money for capital projects, when opportunity knocks — like when a county gets a chance to secure a piece of property for a school. "A county can't borrow money unless it is putting a structure on it," said Starnes. "Having a healthy fund balance allows you to take advantage of an opportunity."

Fund balance money can also be used after a natural disaster like Peek's Creek



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Les Scott, Minister of Music

where FEMA money was slow in coming, and following economic disasters when state commitments are slow in coming or dry up completely, he said.

Starnes said fund balance money should not be used to pay for recurring operating expenses, reducing a low interest rate debt, for instance, because you can't borrow it back, nor should it be used to make up for ineffective budgeting.

"Basically, it's taken Macon County 200 years to accumulate a \$15,407,847 fund balance," he said. "Some years it will dip and some years it will grow."

The county's lowest fund balance was in 2003 when it hit \$6,012,139. Since then it has been growing at a healthy, steady rate which has enabled the county to build schools and other facilities needed by the growing county as well as expand services like EMS and law enforcement.

Starnes said of the 27 counties his firm audits, only one county is better off than Macon County. "This is a testament to your county's finance office," he said. "Once your fund balance is depleted, counties have a hard time growing in it back."

"So basically, if the bottom falls out, Macon County could go on for three months," said Leatherman. "We've prepared for the future, good or bad. In a nutshell, this board and prior boards have prepared a three-month cushion."

Commissioner Brian McClellan said he thought a 25% fund balance was reasonable and gave the county the level of flexibility it needs.

Leatherman also reminded the citizenry that the county still has the lowest tax rate in the state at 24.5 cents and invited anyone taking issue with the findings of Martin and Starnes to release their data findings, information and methodology of calculations to them and take the relative matters up with them.

... BRUGGER from pg 6

solvency — equals approximately \$3.7 trillion in present value. (Present value is the amount today that, with interest, would cover these future costs.)

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Nicholas Kristof, another Times columnist, wrote about the costs of the war a year and a half ago and his comparisons were: "it is four times the additional cost needed to provide health insurance for all uninsured Americans for the next decade. It is 1,600 times Mr. Bush's financing for his vaunted hydrogen energy project." (October 24, 2006 "Iraq and Your Wallet")

We have mortgaged the future of this nation to pay for a war that should never have been fought in the first place, that was justified by lies and scare tactics.

Once again I find myself thankful I don't have any children. I am not very optimistic about the future of this country.

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

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Cashiers Rotary supports hospital



Pm Wednesday March 5, Russell Harris, Executive Director of the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital Foundation received a check from Vic Galef, president of the Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley to help fund the free health clinics. This is the Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley's second healthcare partnership in as many months. Rotary will be aiding in the funding and staffing of future bi-annual health screenings, offered free of charge by Highlands-Cashiers Hospital to residents of Cashiers, Glenville, and Sapphire. The screenings are scheduled for May 17 and October 4 at Blue Ridge School.

H-C Hospital's ER director takes job at Park Ridge Hospital

The part-time director of emergency medicine at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital for the past year is leaving the position later this month to take a full-time position at another area hospital.

Dr. Anthony L. "Tony" Fisher, who has been director of emergency services at the hospital here since last February and also worked as an emergency room physician one day per week, has already taken a full-time position with Park Ridge Urgent Care, a part of Park Ridge Hospital in Fletcher, NC. Fisher has worked part-time at Park Ridge Urgent Care since it opened four years ago. While he actually began his new duties at Park Ridge on March 1, his last day at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital will be March 19.

"We are disappointed to be losing Tony, but we certainly wish him well in his new position," said hospital Presi-

dent and CEO Ken Shull. "During his time with us, he has helped to strengthen our emergency services program, and we are already searching for another physician who is board-certified in emergency medicine to take on that role for us."

Shull said ER physicians on the hospital's staff are available to fill in on the day Fisher covered the ER. The hospital's ER is staffed 24/7 by an on-site provider.

A native of Rosman, NC, Fisher was a long-time resident of Lake Toxaway before moving to Brevard last year. Prior to joining Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, he had been a full-time emergency physician and the medical director of the Emergency Department at Transylvania Community Hospital in Brevard.



Dr. Tony Fisher

"I've enjoyed being a part of emergency medicine at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, and working with the board and administration here," said Fisher on Monday. "However, the position at Park Ridge is full-time and closer to home."

Fisher earned his medical degree from the University of North Carolina Medical School in Chapel Hill in 1994 and did his residency in emergency medicine at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, MA.

... LETTERS continued
from page 20

To the angry white man

Dear Editor,
So you're angry, you vocal man who is also white.
Although men of that profile have held the power long tight.
You're of the group that's (still) in charge,
With numbers in boardrooms and offices large.
It's up to 43 in the White House ...
ain't that right?

When to such generalities you even self assign,
Thinking narrow, the whole of the person you much malign.
We're the sum of ALL parts;
Some parts beauty, some parts warts.
More than race, gender and emotion is everyon's intricacy of design.
Karen Hawk
Highlands

• HIGHLANDS EATERIES •

SportsPage



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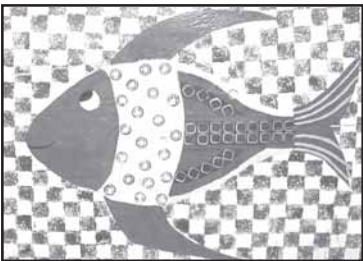
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• SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

Keep it personal



Pastor Todd Struble
Highlands United Methodist Church

They say that death comes in three's. It's just a mythic legend of sorts – not verifiable by any scientific data. I found it to be the case last month, though. It started when a friend and colleague of mine in the ministry, Paul Thompson, lost his wife, Susan. He now is left to rear his three daughters – 11, 14, and 17 – by himself.

Two days later I received word that a friend of mine who used to serve as the priest of Trinity Episcopal Church in Spruce Pine, David Rose, lost his wife, Cam, in a car accident in Vermont. David is also left to rear three daughters by himself.

Three days after that my wife's aunt, Peggy, died unexpectedly of a heart-related problem. Peggy's only child is old enough to be on his own, but the saddest part of this death is that Peggy's mother, Charlie Mae, is still living. At the fragile age of 93, she had to try and comprehend the death of her child.

Since I've been to a number of funerals recently, I've noticed that they are becoming, increasingly, sterile and impersonal rituals of passage. There always seem to be a rush to get the whole thing over with as soon as possible. I can't tell you the number of times I've heard about the death of someone I considered a close friend well after the funeral has taken place. Sometimes it's a family member prodding the procession, sometimes a minister, most always a funeral home.

If there is a graveside service, the harsh realities of "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" are covered by a piece of green carpet. Somewhere along the way, funeral directors decided that it's just not polite or sympathetic to leave the bare earth showing. And these cemetery services are becoming increasingly brief: a Scripture verse or two, a prayer, committing the body to ground and the soul to God, maybe a song, and a benediction and there you have it! Completed, usually, in seven minutes or less.

The funeral service is losing precedence to the memorial service. The difference between the two is basically whether or not the body of the deceased is present. Cremation and organ donation necessitates more memorial services than in days gone by. Not to mention that it's expensive to embalm and preserve a body for a funeral.

There's a lot of discussion about whether a eulogy is appropriate. Some theologians and liturgical scholars believe that to eulogize a person is to distract from the main purpose of a funeral/memorial service: to proclaim the Christian belief in the resurrection. I've been to enough funerals in which the homily, meditation, sermon (whatever that thing is that pastors

•See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 15

• PLACES OF WORSHIP •

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School – 10 a.m., Worship – 11
Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting – 7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
First Saturday: Singing at 7:30 p.m.

CHAPEL OF SKY VALLEY

Sky Valley, Georgia
The Right Rev. Dr. John S. Erbelding, Pastor
Church: 706-746-2999
Pastor's residence: 706-746-5770
Sundays: 10 a.m. – Worship

Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer with Holy Communion each service

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

NC 28 N. and Pine Ridge Rd., (828) 369-8329
Rai Cammack, Branch President, (828) 369-1627

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

Rev. Cass Daly • Office – 526-2320
Sunday: Holy Communion – 11 a.m.
(Highlands Community Center on U.S. 64 next to the ballfield in Highlands)

Monday: Evening Bible Study at 6 p.m.
Wednesday: Men's Bible study at 8 a.m.
at First Baptist Church

Pot Luck Lunch last Sunday of each month.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Everett Brewer
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Prayer – 6:30 p.m.
Evening Service – 1st & 3rd Sunday – 7 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685
3645 U.S. 64 east, Highlands
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Sunday School; 10:45 Worship;
6:30 p.m. High School Group
Wednesdays: 5:30 p.m. Supper (free for kids 8th grade and under); 6:15 p.m., Adult Bible Study; 6:30 p.m. programs for students.

THURSDAYS: 9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

The Rev. Brian Sullivan – Rector: 526-2968
Sunday: Breakfast; 9 A.M. - Sunday School
10:30 A.M. Holy Eucharist (Rite II)
Sunday Service on Channel 14 at 10:30 A.M.
Monday: 4 P.M. Women's Cursillo Group
Tuesday: 8 A.M. Men's Cursillo Group
4:30 P.M. Education for Ministry
Wednesday: 6:30 P.M. Choir Practice
Thursday: 10 A.M. Holy Eucharist (Chapel)
10:30 A.M. Daughters of the King

• Sunday Service on Channel 14 Sun. at 10:30 a.m.

FIRST ALLIANCE CHURCH OF FRANKLIN

Rev. Mitch Schultz, Pastor • 828-369-7977
Sun. Worship 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.; 6: p.m.
(nursery provided)
Sun. school for all ages 9:45 a.m.

Wed: dinner 5 p.m. followed by children's
Pioneer Club 6 p.m.; Jr & Sr Youth Group 6:30 p.m.;
Adult Bible Study & Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.
Small groups available throughout the week.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Dr. Daniel D. Robinson, 526-4153
Sun.: Worship 10:45 a.m., 6:30 p.m.; School – 9:30 a.m.; Youth – 6:30 p.m.; Choir – 7:15
Wednesdays: Dinner – 5:30 p.m.; Team Kids – 6 p.m.;
Prayer – 6:15 p.m., Choir – 7:30 p.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Mark Kayser, Interim Pastor
Dr. Don Mullen, Parish Associate 526-3175
Sun.: Worship – 11 a.m.; Sun.School – 9:30 & 9:45.
Mondays: 8 a.m. – Men's Bible Discussion & Breakfast
Tuesdays: 10 a.m. – Seekers

Choir – 7

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Sixth Street
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

HIGHLANDS 7TH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Wednesday evening prayer & Bible Study
Call Lloyd Kidder at 526-9474

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Senior Pastor Todd Struble; Asst. Pastor Mike Harris
526-3376

Sun.: school 9:45 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.;
5 p.m. Youth Group

Wed: Supper; 6; 6:15 – children, youth, & adults
studies; 6:15 – Adult choir

(nursery provided for Wed. p.m. activities)

Thurs:12:30 – Women's Bible Study (nursery)

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH – ELCA

Chaplain Margaret Howell
2152 Dillard Road – 526-9741

Sundays: Worship/Communion – 10:30
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MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

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Pastor Jamie Passmore, (706) 782-8130
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Choir – 6 p.m.

Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg. – 7 p.m.

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church, Franklin 369-6871
Friday: Sabbath Eve Services at 7 p.m.

For more information, call (706)-745-1842.

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Tien, Priest
Parish office, 526-2418
Sundays: Mass – 11 a.m.
Saturday Mass: 4 p.m.

(through last Saturday of October)

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Clifford Willis
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg. – 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Alfred Sizemore
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 10:45 a.m.;
Evening Worship – 6 p.m.

Wed: Adult Bible Study & Youth – 7 p.m.

For more information call 526-3212.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Wayne Price
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study – 7

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

828-369-3633
Lay Led Sunday School 10:15 a.m.
Sundays: Worship – 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Cashiers, Rev. Sam Forrester, 743-2122
Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11

Highlands School middle school baseball team

Not pictured are:
Tyler Converse
Tyler Owens &
Coach Christine
Murphy



Emily Murphy



Clayton Dunn



Corbin Hawkins



Cai Roman



Parker Sims



Juliane Buras



Felipe Ruiz



Isaac Beavers



Clayton Creighton



Cody St. Germain

The next home games are against Saturday, March 15 at noon against Tamasee/ Salem, Monday, March 24 at 3:30 p.m. against Fairview and Thursday, March 27 at 3:30 against Scotts Creek.

Photos by Noel Atherton

Scouts awarded at annual banquet



Six Webelo Scouts from Pack 207 Highlands were presented with their Arrow of Light award at the annual Blue and Gold Banquet. The Arrow of Light is the highest award a Cub Scout can achieve and it represents their journey through cubscouting. Following the ceremony the Webelos then participated in a Crossover ceremony to Boy Scouts Troop 207. Pictured in the back row from left: Kenan Lewis, Alex Bronaugh, Philip Murphy. In the front row from left: Taylor Schmitt, Carter Potts, Craig Dalton

Students inducted to Jr. Beta



The Junior Beta Club of Highlands Middle School held its annual induction service on Tuesday, March 4. The new members are eighth-grade students Juliane Buras, Emily Munger, Logan Schmitt, and Cody St. Germain, and seventh-grade students Kalyn Billingsley, Rebecca Johnson, and Alexandra Potter. The officers, Kim Machuca, Emily Murphy, Danielle Shomper, and Kaitlin Lewis, conducted the candlelight induction service. Students eligible for Junior Beta have outstanding performance in both academics and citizenship. Mrs. Michelle Lane is the sponsor.

Photo by Carol Bowen

Students win essay & poster contest



Mike Breedlove, representative from the Macon Soil and Water Conservation District, announced the Highlands School winners of the Essay and Poster Contest. The theme for this year's contest was "We All Live in a Watershed." The contest was open to all students in the sixth grade. The winners were Tatiana Schmitt, poster; Emily Shuler, poster and essay; and Nadya Rogers, poster and essay. Mrs. Sara Mayer is their teacher.

... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING from page 13

say after the Scripture reading) is so generic that you could insert anyone's name and you wouldn't be able to tell the difference.

When my grandfather died, I was hopeful that there would be a few stories about his unique character: how he always hid his stash of Hershey's chocolate (only to have grandma whisper to us the newest hiding place); how he was so thrifty it was like he threw nickels around like they were manhole covers (we weren't allowed to flush the toilet unless absolutely necessary because he had to pay for that town water); how he would always yell at the neighborhood kids for running through his yard to get to the playground behind his house (but he would always mow a path for them to walk on through); or how he would get so mad every time President Nixon came on the news that he would curse at the TV (and grandpa was not, by nature, a cussing man).

But when it came time for the pastor to speak at grandpa's funeral, all the pastor could say was that grandpa was a man "who loved to go camping" and who "enjoyed bowling." I felt robbed by the feeble and paltry remembrance. Besides, grandpa didn't start camping until he retired and he hated putting up that old Viking pop-up. And grandpa wasn't too keen on bowling because he

• See SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING page 19



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Easter bunny!**

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**NATIONWIDE
SHIPPING**

The Mountain Garden Club looks back

by Janet Allison Sossomon

At the February meeting of the Mountain Garden Club, a history of the Club was presented by Virginia Worley, Lee Updegraff, Isabel Chambers, Midge Rothermel and Jolene Niblack. Many of the major highlights and projects throughout the years were described, beginning when the Club was formed in 1979.

In 1979, The Mountain Garden Club was formed when it "spun-off" from the joint club known as the Highlands-Cashiers Garden Club. Twenty-eight women became charter members. By 1980, the Club was approved for Federation, being sponsored by the Kenilworth Garden Club in Asheville.

The Mountain Garden Club has always had fund raisers to benefit the community. In 1981, the Club had its first booth at the Hospital Bazaar. Beginning in 1988, members began designing and making quilts for the Hospital Bazaar. Each member embroidered one or two squares, each square displayed some of 45 different native flowers. The quilts were raffled off and proceeds benefited the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital for many years. Up until 2004, the Club also held a Fall Bazaar. Items sold were jellies, jams, etc., and later members made flavored rice in wine bottles to sell.

The Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale began around 1981, and was in full swing by 1990. The first sale was held at the Highlands Recreation Park. Also in 1981, the Club started "Blooming Sunday" during which flower arrangements were sold. The money was used to beautify the Community Building, including planting a red maple tree, pine trees, flowering peach trees, and flowering pear trees, all still blooming today.

The Plant Sale continues today as the single major fund raiser for the Club. At the first Plant Sale, each member contributed 20 plants. Later, and at present, members hold fun and timesaving plant "digs" where members get together at various private properties to dig many, many native plants for the Sale. The 2008 annual Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale will be held the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend at the Ballpark in Highlands.

The Mountain Garden Club has always planted trees to beautify the area. In the early 1980s a maple was planted at Highlands School, a hickory tree was planted on Hickory Street, and an elm tree was planted on Elm Street. Members also planted many trees provided by the Forest Service; these trees were planted on the Osage Mountain Overlook on NC 106 and on the Blue Valley Overlook on NC 28.

The Club also started Highlands' first

litter pick up in 1982. Also involved in the project were the Rotary Club, the Lions Club, the Jaycees, the Women's Club, Highlands School 6th and 7th graders, the Laurel Garden Club (starting in 1983), and other individuals.

In 1983, the Mountain Garden Club began the beautification of the grounds of Town Hall, planting and maintaining many flowers and trees. Also in 1983, the Mountain Garden Club sponsored the Laurel Garden Club, another garden club in Highlands. In 1985, the Mountain Garden Club established yet another new garden club at the Ensley Rest Home in Sylva, NC.

Also in 1985, the Rainbow Coalition was formed with the Mountain Garden Club, the Laurel Garden Club, and the Highlands-Cashiers Garden Club. The Coalition planted over 1,300 bulbs, beautifying Highlands and Cashiers. Also planted were 36 Dunston hybrid chestnut trees around Highlands. Thanks to the Mountain Garden Club and the rest of the Rainbow Coalition, in 1985, the first week of June was proclaimed National Garden Club Week in Highlands.

The Mountain Garden Club also formed a Junior Garden Club, being one of only two clubs in its district to do this. The Jr. Club was called the "Hummers" and was made up of 5th and 6th graders from Highlands School. Club members helped the Hummers set up planters with flowers on Main Street. They also planted flowers in the Butterfly Garden and made Mother's Day Plants.

Another group started by the Mountain Garden Club, in cooperation with the Laurel Garden Club, was the Land Stewards of the Highlands Plateau. Stated generally, the Land Stewards focus on projects that emphasize, nurture, and preserve the unique environment and natural heritage of our mountains.

Today, the Mountain Garden Club continues to donate time, plants, flowers, trees, and funds to various projects. Some of these include the Cherokee Garden at the Highlands Nature Center, the grounds at the Highlands Historic House, the Highlands Middle School Picnic area, and the Butterfly Garden at the Highlands High school (started in 1995 and also supported by other grants).

Since before 1994, creating and funding scholarships has been a major part of the Mountain Garden Club's contributions to the community. Beginning with proceeds from the 1994 Plant Sale, scholarship donations have increased substantially. Today, the Club donates generously toward its scholarship recipients. The scholarships are given to local students who intend to further their education in fields which will benefit the environment similar to,

but more far-reaching than, the goals of the Mountain Garden Club.

During the years of 2001 through 2004, Club members donated generously toward signs for the Nature Center at the Highlands Biological Station. The signs describe the types of birds attracted by the center's towers. Funds to purchase a special projector for the summer programs at the Nature Center were also provided by the Club.

In 2007, the Club held a program on flower arranging and held its first Flower Show. Experienced judges awarded various awards to members for their work. That year, members also took field trips to gardens, waterfalls, and the like. Starting years back and continuing to date, on members' birthdays the Club donates to state gardens such as the Daniel Boone Native Garden and the Elizabethan Gardens.

The Mountain Garden Club doesn't rest during the holidays, either. At every Highlands Christmas Parade, the members entertain as dancing gardeners. At the first parade, in 1999, the Club's dancing theme was "Let Us Hoe." The club has won hearts and recognition each year, including winning the name of the "dancing babes" in 2007. In times past, the Club worked at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, making wreaths for long term care patients' doors and decorating large Christmas trees. Today, the Club continues to have their annual Christmas party, which always includes a project to benefit others. In 2007, members brought gifts to give to children through the International Friendship Center and the Highlands Emergency Council. Around 1990, members also participated at the downtown Halloween Celebration, handing out goodies and flowers to children.

The Mountain Garden Club has won many awards over the years. The first of these was in 1992, for the Main Street planters project by the Hummers. The Hummers received even more awards from 1993 through 2000. Other awards of the Club include: 2 Petal Grants, one in 1995 and one in 1997; Best Public School Beautification (won twice and once won an SAR award); Club of the Year for clubs 19-40 (won three times); Bird Award; Butterfly Garden; Best Five Year History (for 1999-2003); Conservation Award (Land Stewards); Landscape Design Award (Butterfly Garden); Members' pictures were featured on several covers of the yearly State Garden Club Calendar; the Tomorrow's Legacy and Honor Club awards every year on the state Garden Club President's report.

In sum, the Mountain Garden Club boasts a rich history and a hopeful future. Many thanks go to our members, our former members, the citizens of

Highlands and the surrounding area, the many organizations and agencies in our area, our Town, our County, and our State for helping us continue to meet the purpose of our Club, which remains as it was at that first meeting: "to aid in the protection and conservation of our natural resources; encourage civic beauty and road side beautification; stimulate the study of the fine art of gardening; and cooperate with other agencies furthering the interests of horticulture and conservation."



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The Visitor Information Program
airs at 7 am, 9 am, 4 pm, 6 pm,
9 pm, and 11 pm.

Panthertown gets needed clean-up



During the first Friends of Panthertown work day on Feb. 16, volunteers Aaron Roy, Susannah Brown, Catherine Osborne, Lucy Lowe, Walker Taylor, Robin Taylor, Ben Harris, Mike Purdy, Margo Purdy, Barry Carter, and Shirley Carter worked hard learning basic trail maintenance skills, while also sharing information about the history, geology, ecology and botany of Panthertown Valley. The group, led by Mike Purdy, dug out large quantities of silt and debris from 64 water bars, and installed four new water bars on the Blackrock Trail. The other group, led by Barry Carter, removed low-hanging limbs, lopped thorny green-briars, and cleared brush and logs from the trails leading to Granny Burrells old home place, Frolicktown Falls, and Wilderness Falls. Undergrowth was also removed from a patch of pink lady slippers found growing along the old road bed leading to Granny Burrells home place. For more information about the Friends of Panthertown, call Nina Elliott at 526-9938 (ext 258) or email to panthertown@jmca.org. The Panthertown project scoping will be presented at the March 18 meeting. Officials from the Nantahala Ranger District will present the scoping proposal and provide instructions on how to respond to the proposal. A 30-day comment period will follow the March 18 release of the scoping proposal. For more information contact Nina Elliott, the Friends of Panthertown Coordinator with the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, at 828-526-9938 (ext. 258) or by email at panthertown@jmca.org.

... PARK POLICY continued from page 1

before we turn people away," he said.

Basically the board agreed it would be OK if it was fundraising for a nonprofit organization or a non-commercial venture, but defining non-commercial was sticky.

Commissioner Hank Ross reminded the board that Town Attorney Bill Coward said the board could discriminate in the case of park useage.

Dennis DeWolf clinched the discussion when he suggested the distinction should be if a volunteer pulled a show together rather than a commercial promoter.

Planning Board member Pat Taylor suggested it be a citizen in the community versus someone from Atlanta.

But John Shearl reminded the town that the county sent \$500,000 up to Highlands for parks and recreation each year so people from Macon County should be considered in the scenario, too.

So in the end, non-commercial events organized by residents of Macon County will be considered on a case-by-case basis. As suggested by Commissioner Buz Dotson, town properties can't be reserved more

than 180 days out but must be reserved 30 days prior to the event.

Furthermore fees to use Rec Park space or Pine Street Park will be levied at the discretion of the Rec Park Director who will follow an adopted fee schedule.

The policy was adopted pending suggested changes and approval by the town attorney.

... MULLEN from page 9

Wayne Coleman, who had one of the lead parts, told me this is one of the best teams he has ever worked with.

This is an important year for the visual arts in our community. We have a new name for the art center, "The Bascom" and this year we can look for completion of their outstanding facility on Oak Street along with the many activities that will bring to our area. I certainly hope everyone will take advantage of the many events and classes which The Bascom will bring to Western North Carolina. We are all honored to have them amongst us.

... ORDINANCES continued from page 1

the Outdoor Display of Merchandise ordinance until you look at it again," he said. "Instead of having a sterile Main Street, merchandise displayed on private property makes the town look good."

He said the original reason restrictions were placed on outdoor merchandise was to keep the public right-of-way clear but current displays are on private property.

Planning Board member Mike Bryson agreed.

"We spent a lot of time, conversation and some bickering considering what we thought was a good change to the ordinance. It was sent to you and basically ignored," he said.

Jerry Moore, of Kilwin's on Main Street said he canvassed businesses on Main Street and everyone agreed they want Main Street to look good, but the amended ordinance is very restrictive, even on private property.

"We all want to have a community with character and we agree it has to be reasonable. But people come here and like it because Highlands has character."

He said most of all displaying merchandise outdoors helps businesses.

"We have a short season and rents are very high on Main Street. When people walk by our business, we want to grab their attention and pull them inside. We need all the help we can get," he said. "We are competing for every person who walks by our shops."

Stephanie Nieuwendyk owner of Dutchman's Design admitted that she probably has the biggest outdoor display on Main Street and said she has expanded outside but doesn't believe her actions or those of any other merchant hurts anything "as long as it's done well," she said.

Janet Avery, the new owner of The Little Flower Shop said she just bought \$20,000 worth of merchandise she intended to display in the courtyard outside her shop. "Over the years that courtyard has added so much charm to that corner. If you take it away, I might as well shut down," she said.

Mal Phillips of Twigs said merchants go into each season with a lot of question marks and they work hard to make their shops look inviting. "We want people to come in when they drive by," he said. "You need to ensure that you have a successful business community. Please reconsider this issue."

The board didn't rescind the ordinance but agreed to discuss it on March 24.

Restaurant Parking

The Town Board, Planning Board and now the new Land Use Committee made up of Buz Dotson and Hank Ross, have been considering amending the restaurant parking ordinance for months. Talk began long before the season was set to start, but now, with Easter one week away, the issue is still up in the air.

Though Town Planner Joe Cooley's shared parking scenarios involving public parking spaces, off-hour private parking lots and dual-use parking weren't discarded, a

meeting of the Land Use Committee potentially changed the direction altogether.

Instead of amending the parking ordinance in general, Ross and Dotson suggested amending it just for restaurants outside the B1 area — at least until a full-blown parking study could be completed.

Ross said potential unintended consequences of adopting what the Planning Board recommended could lead to problems.

"The purpose is to limit more impervious surfaces but there's a chance that restaurants would expand if they didn't have to use their property for parking so essentially they would be increasing impervious areas," he said.

Cooley called it building creep.

The Land Use Committee suggested allowing use of public parking spaces to satisfy restaurant parking requirements — where one space equals three seats — only if the public parking is contiguous to the restaurant's property or property a restaurant leases if it too, is contiguous.

Following this scenario, Fireside Restaurant could use six public parking spaces, Wild Thyme could use five spaces but no other restaurant could use any public spaces.

Planning Board member Linda Clark said this scenario didn't help anyone. "Fireside Restaurant gets six spaces and Wild Thyme gets five which doesn't allow them to stay in business. You gave us a problem to address and now you're saying you're not going to do anything about it."

She said the Planning Board understood that they were to address the changes in town — that there is an abundance of public parking and restaurants going out of business.

Mike Bryson said there were more restaurants in Highlands 15 years ago then there are now. "Basically what you're saying is the only people who can use public parking are the Main Street businesses."

Commissioner Amy Patterson said others can use it but restaurants in other zones just can't count it toward their requirements.

Clark said because Main Street businesses don't have to worry about parking requirements, they can expand their business footprint, which could also increase impervious areas. She cited Wolfgang's Restaurant that expanded a few years ago.

But Patterson said it's not likely any other restaurant on Main Street would be able to do that.

In the end, Commissioner Ross said that the comments made at Wednesday's meeting had a lot of bearing about how the board should go. "I'm not trying to railroad anything; I'm just trying to discuss this."

Mayor Don Mullen said the subject would be discussed and an ordinance would be finalized at the special March 24 meeting so a public hearing could be set and an amended ordinance adopted by mid-April.

'Operation Safe Streets' sweeps up offenders

On March 7 the Macon County Sheriff's office conducted phase two of its "Operation Safe Streets" campaign. Deputies and officers from the N.C. Probation and Parole Office arrested 21 individuals on various charges. The offenses ranged from minor traffic and drug offenses to serious child sex offense crimes.

During "Operation Safe Streets," an officer from Immigration Custom Enforcement (I.C.E.) also assisted the Sheriff's office. Eight individuals were detained by Immigration Officers and held in the Macon County Detention Facility for immigration violations. On March 10, those individuals were transported by Macon County deputies to Charlotte where they began the process of deportation.

"As citizens, we understand that there are consequences when we violate the laws of our state and that is true whether you are a citizen of the United States or not," said Sheriff Robert Holland.

- Jose Cortes Matias, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without a bond.

- Crisoforo Rioz, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without a bond.

- Dionisio Ordaz-Vasquez, of Franklin, was charged as Immigration Detainer and held without bond.

- Luis Ruelas Yopez, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.

- Emilano Ramos Diaz, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.

- Charly Matias, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.

- Alfonso Matias, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.

- Celso Ramos Diaz, of Franklin, was charged as an Immigration Detainer and held without bond.

- William Travis Branton, of Franklin, was charged with Driving While Impaired and held on a \$500 bond.

- Phillip Anthony Martin, of Franklin, was charged with Contributing to Delinquency of Minor, Possession of Drug Paraphernalia and Possession of Marijuana and held on a \$1,000 bond.

- Billy Joe Mathis, of Tuckasegee, was charged with Violation of Domestic Violence Order and held without a bond.

- Larry Hurst, of Franklin, was charged with Unauthorized Use of Motor Vehicle and held on a \$1,000 bond.

- Adrienne Nock, of Franklin, was charged with Failure to Appear / Order for Arrest and held on a \$1,500 bond.

• See SAFE STREETS page 20



Planting crew takes a break after restoring part of Satulah Mountain. From left to right Fernando Sylva, Jose Vargas, Brian Cabe, and Sam Chambers.

Your Land Trust at work

by Mercedes Heller

President of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

Winter weather did not deter the Stewardship Committee of the Highlands Cashiers Land Trust from their work of re-naturalizing a section of land trust property on Satulah Mountain. A pump station had been built by a neighboring landowner about four years ago on the site. Upon realizing that it was built on the wrong property it was removed. Unfortunately, a large gouge in the earth was left. Recently Jim Tate, a member of the Stewardship Committee, and a crew of workers supervised by Brian Cabe of Wild Wood Natives, completed the restoration project. Sam Chambers and Executive Director of HCLT, Gary

Wein assisted.

This is the first of several trails in need of repair that will be completed on land trust property before summer. Next will come rebuilding the trails on Satulah that have been damaged by run-off. HCLT has recruited volunteers from the community to assist with this and other trail clearings. You may see them with shovels and axes in hand as they go about their jobs. Stop and give them a word of thanks as they are probably your friends or neighbors working to save the places you love.

To learn more about the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, contact them at (828) 526-1111 or visit their website at www.hicashlt.org.

... SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 15

bowled in the "mixed owls" league on Friday nights and he would get so aggravated at grandma (a polio victim with one leg and foot shorter than the other) because she always brought down the score for the team.

When the time came for my own mother's funeral, I mustered up the courage to speak. Even though I am an ordained minister (and, therefore, should have known better), I said very little about my mother's faith and the promise of the resurrection. I told the stories everyone knew about how my mother never earned a driver's license because the first time she got behind the wheel, she found a way to ram dad's car into the one lonely oak tree in the cow pasture; about how we went camping at Seven Mountains every summer; about spending the week at Grange Fair; about how she took me in and adopted me as her own son.

The "other" preacher turned the rest of the service into an evangelistic altar call and tried to convince everyone that my mother's dying wish was to bring one more soul into the kingdom (which

wasn't true...her dying wish was that she would be able to see again after being legally blind for the past 10 years).

I try to keep this all in mind when I officiate a funeral. I know most grieving survivors want the service to be brief and without fanfare, but there also has to be some awareness of the (hopefully) good and wonderful life this person lived. I am aware that we pastors have an obligation to preach the promise of the resurrection, but the promise only comes alive when you flesh it out in the life of the one now departed.

So, if you are in the unfortunate position of having to plan a funeral, mention to the officiating minister that you don't want the generic John or Jane Doe one-size-fits-all service, but that you would like the real life of the deceased to be shared and celebrated. What makes the gospel message so compelling is not that it's generic, but that it's personal. He died and rose again for the whole world...yes, that's true. But what draws you into the gospel message is that He died and rose again for you.

• ART GALLERIES •

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... SAFE STREETS continued from page 19

• Nicholas Edward Tuccicaselli, of Franklin, was charged with First Degree Rape of a Child and Possession of Firearm by Convicted Felon and held on a \$100,000 bond.

• Brett Charles Aldrich, of Franklin, was charged with Larceny of Motor Fuel and held on a \$500 bond.

• Jeffery Todd Queen, of Franklin, was charged with Violation of Domestic Violence Order and held without bond.

• Loraine Louise Pevia, of Franklin, was charged with Simple Affray and held on a \$500 bond.

• Manuel Guterrez Flores, of Franklin, was charged with Failure to Appear /Order for Arrest and held on a \$500 bond.

• Blake Thornhill, of Franklin, was charged with Simple Poss. of Schedule 2, Poss. of Marijuana and Poss. of Drug Paraphernalia and held on a \$2,500 bond.

• Juan Morales Canseco, of Franklin, was charged with No Operators License and held on a \$170 bond.

• Bobbie Dean Webb, of Franklin, was charged with Assault on Female and held without bond.

• BUILDERS & ARCHITECTS •

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'Risky Behavior' seminar Monday at FHS Fine Art Center

On Monday, March 17, a presentation entitled "Risky Behaviors and What Every Parent Should Know" 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Franklin High School Fine Arts Center, Franklin.

The program will consist of research, personal experiences, and recommendations directly from an area family that lost a child in similar circumstances and the community agencies that were involved in dealing with the tragedy.

The program is co-sponsored by Macon County Schools and the Macon County Sheriff's Dept.

... FORUM continued from page 2

Franklin's 3% room tax and TTA is separate from the TTA the county commission recently voted to form.

In the county's scenario, the 3% room tax money collected in Franklin, Highlands and Nantahala will be sent to its TTA and be disbursed back to each area.

With justifiable "legal" cause, recipients in those areas can be the chambers of commerce, the visitor centers, or any other organization that needs money to promote an event that will draw tourists to the county.

At the final January occupancy tax taskforce meeting, both chamber directors – Linda Harbuck in Franklin and Bob Kieltyka in Highlands – admitted that a portion of their salaries as well as the salaries of their assistants and the entire salary of the visitor center directors is subsidized by room tax money. Kieltyka said about 60% of his time is devoted to visitor center duties thus justifying the chamber's use of room tax money. It's legal to use room tax money to fund visitor center salaries and events.

Clearly, Macon County's chambers of commerce can't live off the membership dues they require as private organizations and fortunately for them some politicians are willing to fight for them.

But it would be good for politicians to remember that their jobs are to represent the taxpayers who elected them and not the special interest groups and private organizations that lobby them at social and civic clubs.

Though the accomodation businesses in Highlands, Franklin and Nantahala collect the room tax, it belongs to the citizens of North Carolina -- those in the county and those in its towns -- and should be used by citizens and their organizations who, through self-perpetuating events and activities, consistently bring visitors to the area.

If Highlands followed Franklin's lead by both imposing its own 3% room tax and setting up its own TTA, organizations like the Highlands Playhouse, the Highlands Community Players, the Instant Theatre Company, the Artisans of the Highlands Plateau, the Summer and Fall Colors Art Show, the Mill Creek Arts & Crafts Fair and the Bascom could request funds -- upwards of \$280,000 a year -- to promote the events, shows and activities

they produce year-round which clearly bring tourists to the area.

Furthermore, the town could use the money to outfit and run the visitor-information kiosk and ticket center currently proposed in the new Town Hall complex.

If a portion of the county's current 3% room tax continues to be used for chambers of commerce salaries, then the additional 3% room tax the town of Highlands could levy would be more important than ever.

With a 3% room tax of its own, the town of Highlands could directly support the organizations that produce the cultural events that enhance the flavor of our town and draw people to Highlands, thereby perpetuating businesses and jobs.

... LETTERS continued from page 26

(a great leap of faith) over the next 20 years the county could spend 20 x \$800,000 or \$16 million to keep the small schools.

Yes, the county would have to spend additional money on renovation. But how much? We have no idea because the commission won't tell us. Or we can spend \$40 million on bricks and mortar and \$18 million in interest at 4% for 20 years (more if the county borrows at 4½%) for a total of \$58 million, and we can have nice new mega schools!

Then we were told to trust our elected officials. So I guess we should just accept whatever they tell us. But then I remembered three little words of Ronald Reagan – "trust but verify." So Mr. Davis, why not declassify these Top Secret documents? Why not publish them in the press? Why not show the prohibitive cost to renovate with each code that you have to meet, and then show the \$40 million to build new schools along with the interest attached to the \$40 million? That way we mere mortals can see exactly how much we can "save."

In fact, wasn't greater transparency one of the objectives you all decided was necessary at the one of your recent work sessions? This would be a good way start that process.

Bob Lavery
Franklin

• See LETTERS page 12

• UPCOMING EVENTS •

On-going

• The Highlands Playhouse is taking reservations for "Always Patsy Cline," Thurs.-Sun., June 19-July 6; "On Golden Pond," Thurs.-Sun., July 10-20; "70th Anniversary Diamond Review," Thurs.-Sun., July 24-Aug. 10; and "Inherit the Wind" Thurs.-Sun., Aug. 14-31. For reservations please call 828-526-2695 or write or PO Box 896, Highlands, NC 28741.

• Highlands Playhouse is taking reservations for its annual Children's Theatre Mond-Fri., July 7-18, taught by instructors with extensive experience in theatre education 9 a.m. to noon for ages 6-10, and 1-4 p.m. for ages 11-16. For reservations please call 828-526-2695 or write or PO Box 896, Highlands, NC 28741.

• Registration is now open for the 2008 summer nature day camps at the Highlands Nature Center. Five different camps are offered: "WOW! – a World of Wonder" (ages 4-6), "Amazing Animals" (ages 7-10), "NatureWorks" (ages 7-11), "Mountain Explorers" (ages 10-14), and "Junior Ecologists" (ages 11-15). Some camps are offered more than once during the summer. Sessions run from Tuesday to Friday each week. For complete schedules, costs, and other information, please call 828-526-2623 or visit www.wcu.edu/hbs.

• Cardio Dance Class. \$5 per calls, MWF at 8:30 am @ the Rec Park (downstairs).

• 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.

• Step Aerobics at the Rec Park, 4-5 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays. \$5 per class.

• 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 Woodward room 201, 10 a.m. until noon. Call Barbara Buchanan at 526-1402 or Florence Flanagan at 743-2567.

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.

Every Monday

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

Every Tuesday

• 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.

• Open Studio Night Figure Drawing: Informal instruction available for beginners. Bring your sketch pad or paint box for a leisurely session of figure drawing/painting. Cost is \$12, \$10 for "Friends" of the Gallery.

Every Wednesday

• Adult handbell rehearsals at Highlands United Methodist Church at 6 p.m. If you're interested in playing call Carroll Harris at 526-3376.

• Gospel of John Bible Study Pastor Todd Struble is leading a study this spring on the fourth Gospel (using the Efid Bible Study Series) 6:15 - 7:15 at HUMC.

• 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.

Every Thursday

• Al-Anon Meetings, noon in the First Presbyterian Church basement at Fifth & Main Street.

Every Friday & Saturday

• Live music at The Rib Shack every Friday and Saturday night from 7-10 p.m.

Dance to the sounds of Lisa Price at ITC's St. Paddy's Day Dance, Saturday at 8 p.m.

What is this St. Patrick's day all about?

St. Patrick was born in Wales about 385 AD into a pagan society. His name was Maewyn. At age 16 he was taken as a slave by Irish marauders and served six years until he escaped to Gaul.

While in Gaul he became a student under St. Germain and studied Christianity for 12 years and took the Christian name Patrick.

During those years he realized his calling to convert Irish pagans to his new found religion. Patrick was appointed bishop to Ireland and proceeded to be very successful in winning converts.

He set up monasteries, schools and churches across Ireland for 30 years. He died March 17, 461 in County Down.

Some of the Irish folklore includes St. Patrick giving a sermon from a hill-top that drove all the snakes from Ireland. Truth be told no snakes were ever native to Ireland, making some people think the myth is a metaphor for his successful conversions of the pagans.

One traditional icon of the day is the three leaf shamrock, which Patrick used to explain the Trinity.

St. Patrick's Day has been a festival since his death in Ireland. America adopted the custom in 1737. The first parade was held in Boston, MA on March 17, 1762.

Today there is so much green worn on St. Patrick's day that it is said to be



Lisa Price

the first greening of spring.

On Saturday March 15 at 8 p.m. in "the best little dance hall in Western NC" the Instant Theatre Company's Studio on Main, The Lisa Price Band kicks off the "bringing of the green" holiday celebration. Time to dress in your best green finery (to avoid being pinched), dust off the dancin shoes and prepare to party.

Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 17 and under. Music starts at 8 p.m. in The Studio on Main, 310 Oak Square, Main Street in Highlands. Please call 828-342-9197 for information.

Every Friday

• The Girls' Clubhouse meets in the school cafeteria 3-4:30 p.m. All 6-8 grade girls are welcome. Come have fun while serving others. For more information, call Kim Lewicki 526-0782.

Every Saturday

• Live music at Cyprus Restaurant in the Dillard Village Shopping Center at 9:30 p.m. \$10 cover.

• Children's classes ongoing at Bascom-Louise Gallery – cost is \$5 per student.

Thursday, March 13

• Highlands School PTO and Junior Class Rib-eye Steak Dinner fundraiser at 4:30 to 6:30. Adults are \$10 and children under 12 are \$6. Reservations required. Call 526-2147.

• Senator John Snow will speak at a program sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Macon County at noon on Thursday at Tartan Hall of the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Franklin. Among the topics he will address are tax reform, campaign finance reform, death penalty moratorium, redistricting, immigration, and education. He will review accomplished and pending legisla-

tion as well. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask Senator Snow their own questions and to talk with him personally. Lunch will be available at noon, by reservation. Call 524-5192. The program will begin at 12:15. The public is invited.

Friday, March 14

• Coweeta Baptist Church will present "The Simple Faith Quartet" on Friday at 7 p.m. 780 Coweeta Road, Otto. 524-5242.

Saturday, March 15

• St. Paddy's Day Dance at ITC. Come and jig your heart out at The Studio on Main as we celebrate St. Patrick's Day a wee bit early. The Lisa Price Band will have all the lads and lassies on their feet with their spirited blend of classic rock and country as well as a bit 'o the more modern. No reservations are required. The doors open at 7:30 and the dance begins at 8 p.m.

• The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy-to-moderate 4.5 mile hike from Sloan Bridge to Upper Whitewater Falls with beautiful wintertime views along the way. Meet at the Cashiers Wachovia Bank (in back) at 10 a.m. Drive 14 miles round trip.

• See **EVENTS** page 22

Ruby Cinemas

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March 14-20

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Mon – Thurs: (4:20)

Fri: (4:20), 9:20

Sat & Sun: (4:20), 9:20

• UPCOMING EVENTS •

Bingo winner makes donation to the Cub Scouts

At the March 6 Bingo game, sponsored each month by the Rotary Club of Highlands, David La Cignina was the winner of the final game. He won \$250 and generously donated a portion of his winnings to Highlands Boy Scout Troop 207. Pictured is David with Boy Scout official Buck Trott and Cub Scout Ben Avery. All net proceeds from the Bingo games are used by the Rotary Club of Highlands to support local projects.



Bring a drink, lunch, and wear sturdy comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20. Call leaders Mike and Susan Kettle, 743-1079, for reservations or more information. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

- Smoky Mountain Beekeepers' one-day beginner bee school 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Swain County Extension Center/Southwestern Community Center (old Almond school) just west of Bryson City, in Swain County. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. There is a \$10 charge, payable at the door. Lunch and resource materials will be provided free of charge.

- The Highlands Memorial Post 370 of the American Legion will meet at the Highlands Civic Center on Saturday at 9 a.m. Following breakfast there will be a meeting. All members and eligible veterans are invited to come and enjoy breakfast and support the organization that supports you. For more information, call Ed Jones at 743-0886.

Sunday, March 16

- The First Baptist Church Choir will present the Easter musical "In Christ Alone" at 10:45 a.m. First Baptist Church is located at 220 Main Street, Highlands, NC. For more information, please call the church at 526-4153.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take an easy 1.5-mile hike around the historic Tessentee Farm, preserved by the Little Tennessee Land Trust. Meet at the Smoky Mtn. Visitors' Center on Hwy. 441 near Otto. Drive 6 miles round trip. Bring a drink, a snack if you wish, and wear sturdy comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20 people. Call leader Kay Coriell, 369-6820, for reservations or more information. Visitors are welcome, but no pets please.

Monday, March 17

- "Risky Behaviors and What Every Parent

Should Know" 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Franklin High School Fine Arts Center, Franklin. The program will consist of research, personal experiences, and recommendations directly from an area family that lost a child in similar circumstances and the community agencies that were involved in dealing with the tragedy. The program is co-sponsored by Macon County Schools and the Macon County Sheriff's Dept.

Tuesday, March 18

- Hunting Heritage Super Fund Auction and Dinner will help benefit the National Wild Turkey Conservation at 6 p.m. at the Dillard House Conference Center in Dillard, GA. Tickets are \$55 and help support wildlife management on public, private and corporate lands and preserve hunting as sport.

- The Friends of Panthertown will host an informational meeting open to the public on Tuesday, at 6:30 p.m. at the Cashiers Library. Officials from the Forest Service will present the scoping proposal and answer questions. A 30-day comment period will follow the March 18 release. For more information contact Nina Elliott, the Friends of Panthertown Coordinator with the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, at 828-526-9938 (extension 258) or by email at panthertown@jmca.org.

Friday, March 21

- Beginning at the Catholic church, participants will stop at various places to read an account of the walk Jesus made carrying his cross to Calvary. Familiar hymns will be sung along the way. It takes about 30 minutes and will finish at the Baptist church. If it is raining, bring an umbrella.

- Amercian Red Cross Blood Drive at Angel Medical Center Blood Drive (120 Riverview Street; Franklin, NC) 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please call 369-

4166 for more information or to schedule an appointment. All presenting donors at the Angel Medical Center blood drive will receive a free t-shirt and can enter a drawing for a cruise for two! Eligible blood donors must be at least 17 years of age, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in general good health. Donors must have a form of positive identification in order to donate.

Saturday, March 22

- Easter Egg Hunt at the Highlands Civic Center (Rec Park) at 11 a.m. The event is for ages 0-3 years; 4-6 years; and 7-10 years.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate-to strenuous 5-6 mile hike in Panthertown Valley to four waterfalls and Little Green Mtn. with an elevation change of 300 feet, one stream crossing, and possibly some icy patches. Meet at the Cashiers Wachovia Bank (in back) at 9 a.m. Drive 16 miles round trip. Bring a drink, lunch, and wear sturdy comfortable shoes. Hikes are limited to 20. Call leader, Walker Taylor, 743-6977, for reservations. Visitors are welcome but no pets please.

Sunday, March 23

- An ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at the amphitheatre behind the Nature Center at 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 25

- Free lectures at Cashiers Chiropractic and Wellness Center. "Why do we take the vitamins we do?" To register, call either the Highlands office at 526-3709 or the Cashiers office at 743-9070.

Thurs.-Fri., March 27-29

- Parallel Lives II/Graceland at ITC. This talented group of ladies (plus others) will be presenting two nights of fun and entertainment with Graceland / Parallel Lives II, directed by Mary Adair Leslie. A joint effort of the Highlands Community Players and The Instant Theatre Company, many familiar faces will grace the stage from last year's sell-out performances of Parallel Lives as well as some new talent. The women will play all roles, both male and female, and include Mary Bynum, Katie Cochran, Bonnie Earman, Carla Gates, Jenny King, Mary Adair Leslie, Dianne Rosazza, Ronnie Spilton, Breta Stroud, and Sandie Trevathan. Graceland, by Ellen Byron is the story of two of "The King's" biggest fans on the day that Graceland opens to the public. A poignant and funny one-act play, Graceland stars Mary Bynum and Carla Gates. Contains adult language and situations. Reservations are strongly suggested. Call the ITC Box Office at 828-342-9197.

Thursday, March 27

- Democratic women want to serve you a fine supper! Everyone is invited to the "Loaded" potato supper from 4:30-7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Franklin. A great selection of of homemade chili, veggies, drinks and dessert are available for adults (\$10) and children under 12 (\$5). Take out is available. So Highlanders if you are in Franklin and want to support the Women's Democratic movement, please stop by. For more information call 526-3363 or 349-1772.

Sat.-Sun, March 29-30

- Auditions will be held at Highlands Playhouse Saturday and Sunday from 2-5 p.m. each day. The plays are "On Golden Pond" and "Inherit the Wind" and anyone interested should come prepared with monologue.

Saturday, March 29

- Amercian Red Cross Blood Drive at Otto Community Blood Drive at the Otto Community Center (Highway 441 South; Otto, NC) 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Please call Phyllis Castle at 524-9307 for more information or to schedule an appointment. All presenting donors can enter a drawing for a cruise for two! Eligible blood donors must be at least 17 years of age, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be in general good health. Donors must have a form of positive identification in order to donate.

- The Nantahala Hiking Club will take a moderate 4 mile hike with an elevation change of

Good Friday Service to feature Brahms' Requiem



Molly McKim

The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation choir and soloists under the direction of Fletcher Wolfe will sing the beautiful music of Brahms' Requiem on Friday evening March 21 at 7 p.m. in the church's sanctuary.

This magnificent choral work seldom heard outside of great concert halls will be presented for the first time in Highlands and has as the soprano soloist, Highlands' Molly McKim.

Ms. McKim, one of 13 McKim children all who sing, is a voice student of Mr. Wolfe, and along with many local appearances was heard last season as featured soloist at the famous St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, Italy. Robert Henry, artist-in-residence at the church will serve as accompanist.

This concert welcomes again the renowned African-American tenor Darrel McGhee. He will sing unaccompanied the very moving Negro spiritual "Crucifixion."

This solemn Good Friday service commemorating the suffering and death of Jesus Christ is under the direction of the church's rector Reverend Brian Sullivan.

Everyone is invited to attend.

• BUSINESS NEWS •

On Saturday, February 2, numerous CENTURY 21 Mountain Lifestyles agents received awards for their 2007 real estate production at a banquet given in their honor at the Asheville Renaissance Hotel.

Individuals awarded the Silver Producer Award were: Sherman Pope, Highlands office; Gary Garren, Highlands office; Elizabeth Matej, Cashiers office.

Individuals awarded the Bronze Producer Award were: Bob Shipp, Highlands office; Bill Bubenick, Highlands office; Cathy Gar-

ren, Cashiers office.

Eddie Palmer of the Cashiers office and Jerry Hudson of the Highlands office were recognized as "Rising Stars." In order to qualify for this distinction, agents must be relatively new in their real estate career and have

demonstrated exemplary character.

The following agents received honors as the Top Listing Agent in their office:

Cashiers: Elizabeth Matej, Top Listing by Units

Cashiers: Cathy Garren, Top Listing by

Volume

Highlands: Gary Garren, Top Listing by Volume & Units

The following agents were recognized as Top Sales leaders in their respective offices:

Cashiers: Elizabeth Matej, Top Sales by Volume, Units & Production

Highlands: Sherman Pope, Top Sales by Units & Production

Highlands: Gary Garren, Top Sales by Volume

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OCEAN FRONT – Beautiful home in Surf City, N.C. zoned residential/commercial. Walk to pier and town. 7-bed, 4 full baths. Separate apartment. Good rental income. Call 919-340-2280.

HOUSE FOR SALE – HFCC 2 story split, 3/2, large lot, lake, golf course, mountain views, membership available but optional. \$795,000. Call 526-4154.

LAND BY OWNER – 3/4 acre lot. Close to Toan. Very, very, level building lot. Community water available. \$79,000. Call Ginger at 828-526-4959.

OCEANFRONT LOT KEY LARGO, FLORIDA – Cleared, buildable with all services. Last unimproved lot in Silver Shores subdivision. \$599,900. For information and photos call Frank (954) 964-7649 or email ft442@bellsouth.net.

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OFFICE DESK – 30x60, 6 drawers, Oak finish, \$150. Pottery Barn corner desk, White, with file drawers. New \$795, sell for \$300. Call Sandy at 369-6263 or 524-7350.

JEEP RIMS – 17-inch aluminum factory rims off 2005 Jeep Liberty 4x4. Brand new! Complete set of 4 \$800. Valued at \$265 each. Call 706-982-2254.

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LOST DOG IN BUCK CREEK/SHORTOFF RD AREA. Australian Shepherd. Blue Merle. Female. No tale. No Collar. Needs seizure medicine. Reward. Call 704-560-2911 or 704-365-9614.

LOST DOG "SALTY" – Black and white female Lab mix. Medium-size. Missing from around Owl Gap Road on N.C. 106. Please call 828-526-4575.

LEGAL

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of William Jesse Munger, deceased, late of Macon County, N.C., this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 5th day of Jne, 2008, or this notice will be pled in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate settlement.
This the 6th day of March, 2007.

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... LETTERS continued from page 2

the left argue their opinions and the bulk of the people, and congress for that matter, listen and discuss. No matter how eloquent the argument, there is always compromise and the country moves forward with new laws, sometimes left of the middle and sometime right of the middle but never to the extreme. Small moves, and the nation moves forward.

One on the negative of American politics is that every candidate's life is ripped to shreds — nothing is left. If he (or she) has any "cloud" in the past you can be sure someone will expose it. The truly sad thing is that if something isn't found they either make something up or take some non-issue and make it seem ominous.

Such tactics are common by those who cannot sell themselves on their own accomplishments and who try to make themselves look bigger by making others look small. Such negative press and tactics must take an incredible toll on the families of candidates, and I dare say on us as well, as we begin to believe the lies as truths.

It's probably good that the American people did not know that both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson suffered from depression, that Abraham Lincoln never joined a church, that Franklin D. Roosevelt suffered from poliomyelitis, which put him in a wheelchair, and that Ronald Regan, who supported McCarthyism, suffered from memory loss (later diagnosed as Alzheimer's) even before his re-election, otherwise they might not have been elected.

In his March 6 column in this paper Don Swanson expressed the position that one presidential candidate might not be trustworthy because he met with someone who 40 years ago once advocated radical principles, and as a child this candidate attended a multi-cultural school and from that he may have a "Muslim heart beat(ing) in his body." And somehow, this candidate is less trustworthy and less able to be president because he has a foreign sounding name.

I wonder how Swanson would feel about the names of Powhatan Clarke, Laszlo Rabel, Mitchell Red Cloud Jr., Van Barfoot, Yeiki Kobashigawa, Yukio Okutsu, Kiyoshi K. Muranaga, and Jose B. Nisperos being entered into this political race. Now those are names that cry out *foreign*. How can they be trusted? Before passing judgment, you should know they all won the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Our 42 presidents have been members of 11 different faiths and I am fairly certain none of those presidents had any say over how their parents named them. I would hope that in this most critical election we as voters choose our candidate based on their worth as a person, their record, and their potential to lead. Not choosing a person because his name "sounds" Muslim isn't consistent with conservative or American values, its bigotry.

Matthew Eberz
Highlands and Atlanta

To build or renovate

Dear Editor,

On Tuesday, Feb. 26, a number of people gathered at the community building in Franklin to express an interest in maintaining the concept of community schools. Three county commissioners and two school board members were present.

This writer raised several questions regarding the cost to renovate the older schools versus building new schools. Commissioner Davis had said at the November continuation commission meeting (in response to a question relative to renovating older schools) that the cost to renovate would be prohibitive because of the requirement to bring the buildings up to code. No further explanation was given at that meeting.

There was some discussion of the Americans with Disabilities Act at the Feb. 26 meeting regarding requirements to renovate older schools, but we were not given much in the way of definitive information.

At this point Davis chastised the people raising questions stating that the questions should have been asked during the 10 forums held prior to the referendum (this writer was at one such forum where questions were asked, but they were swept under the rug, as usual).

I guess some of us thought the message of the referendum was clear – no to the projects proposed. I know I personally had hoped that the commission might get the point and go back to the drawing board and come up with different solutions. But then again us mortals didn't understand that the \$40 million for bricks and mortar plus a substantial amount of interest cost was going to be crammed down our throats whether we liked it or not.

I guess Brian McClellan must be a mere mortal, too, as he was the one who asked the question about renovations back in November.

Davis then pulled out several pieces of paper that must have been marked Top Secret because no one was allowed to see them. Davis read off a bunch of numbers from the Top Secret papers and ended by saying that the small schools were costing the county \$800,000 per year. He was apparently trying to prove that we would have substantial savings from building mega schools. So assuming the \$800,000 is correct

• See LETTERS page 20

FIRE DEPT. LOG

The following is the Highlands Fire & Rescue Dept. log entries for the week of March 6-12.

March 6

- The dept. responded to an accident on N. 4th Street near Twigs. There were no injuries.

March 7

- The dept. responded to an alarm set off by workers at a residence on Woodland Hills Road.
- The dept. responded to an accident on N.C. 28 south. No one was injured.

March 9

- The dept. responded to an alarm at a resident on S. Old Walhalla Road. It was cancelled.
- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call at a residence on Sagee Drive. The victim was transported to the hospital.

March 10

- The dept. responded to an accident on U.S. 64 east near The Briar Patch. Two people were taken to the hospital.

March 11

- The dept. was first-responders to assist EMS with a medical call on Buck Creek Road. The victim was taken to the hospital.

... SCHOOLS continued from page 5

Including upgrading water and sewer at Cullasaja, it would cost \$4 million to renovate the school for just 174 students.

Opponents to schools facilities expansion claim proper long-term planning hasn't taken place but, Brigman said that's not true. "We've taken five years to assess facility needs," he said. "This is not something 'Dan Brigman' initiated when he got here."

In 1992, a facility-needs long-term plan began with meetings and discussions continuing through July 2007 at which time the Board of Education approved the final revised plan as did the Macon County Commission.

High on the priority list is the elimination of 28 portable classrooms at schools throughout the county.

But Bob Lavery, who spoke during the public session of Monday night's meeting, suggested that education in portable buildings wasn't such a bad thing. He said there is a school in Bryson City where parents preferred sending their children over the available public school.

However, Brigman said there is a safety issue concerning the portables and the fact that those classrooms and students and faculty are isolated from the rest of the school. He also said portables aren't economically wise. "You nev-

er recoup money invested in a portable building," said Brigman.

After East Franklin is renovated – which his being done with free QZAB bond money – the plan is to expedite the construction of the 5-6 school across from Macon Middle School and to build the new K-4 school at Iotla.

The new 5-6 school will remove all fifth-graders from the county's current K-5 settings which will gain 17% future capacity at each site and remove sixth-graders from the county's middle schools which will gain 30% for future capacity.

Based on past figures, student populations are expected to increase by 7% by 2011-2012, or to 4752 students.

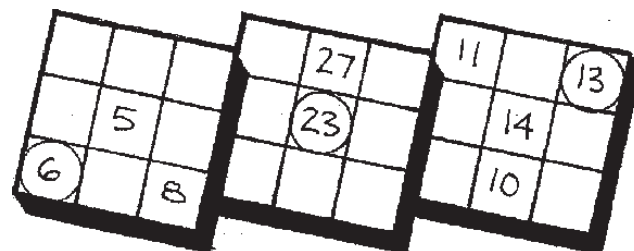
In 2006-2007 enrollment was 4,330, and as of the tenth day of 2007-2008 it was 4,387.

Commission Charlie Leatherman said what the county and school board have collaborated on is "all out in the open. "These plans are not elaborate, but they are what's needed. We need to work together for the betterment of these kids."

Brigman summed up his presentation saying, "schools expire like humans do. Our students deserve a modern learning environment."

• FUN & GAMES •

PseudoCube®



#BZ2D – 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 equaling the total of the three center numbers. One of the diagonals is shown with circles.

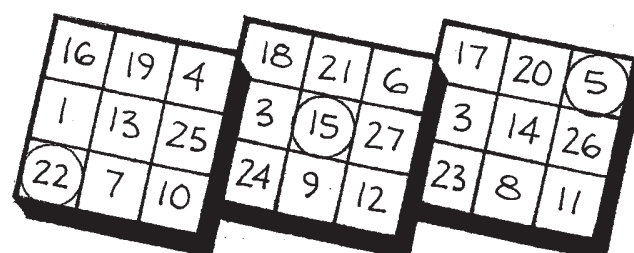
THE CHALLENGE:

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!

The first correct solution emailed earns a coupon for a FREE cup of coffee from Buck's Coffee Cafe on Main Street.

Email: pseudocube8@aol.com

Solution to #AZ1D in March 6 issue



N-Cryptoku®

Object: Assign 9 different letters to each cell of 9 columns and 9 rows. In addition, nine 3 x 3 cells in the layout have the same nine different letters (this is similar to Sudoku but uses nine letters instead of nine numbers). A 'mystery word or phrase' using all nine different letters is designated by circled squares (other short words appear when solving, for which a list of meanings is provided). Every puzzle has a different 'mystery word or phrase' (no spaces).

How to Solve: Determine the nine different letters among those given. Try to solve the mystery word using the clue given and write it in. 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 all blank squares according to the rules noted above. Focus attention where the least number of letters are needed to complete a line, column or 3 x 3 cell.

Mystery Word
"Assured Outcome"

Across

- U.S. soldier (slang) (2)
- Color tone (3)
- Corrosion (4)
- Skinny (4)
- She (poss.) (3)

Down

- Embrace (3)
- Melodies (5)
- Yes! (Sp.) (2)
- Get! (slang) (3)
- Hello! (2)

U				G				E
	G		T				U	
		H			S	T		
G			N	U	S		H	
	U			T			N	
T		N	S		G			U
		T			I	H		
	E		R				I	
I				N				T

Solution to March 6 puzzle

I	E	Z	M	S	Y	L	B	O
Y	M	S	L	B	O	E	I	Z
O	L	B	E	I	Z	M	S	Y
E	Z	I	S	Y	M	B	O	L
S	Y	M	B	O	L	I	Z	E
B	O	L	I	Z	E	S	Y	M
L	B	O	Z	E	I	Y	M	S
M	S	Y	O	L	B	Z	E	I
Z	I	E	Y	M	S	O	L	B

Find It All On This Map

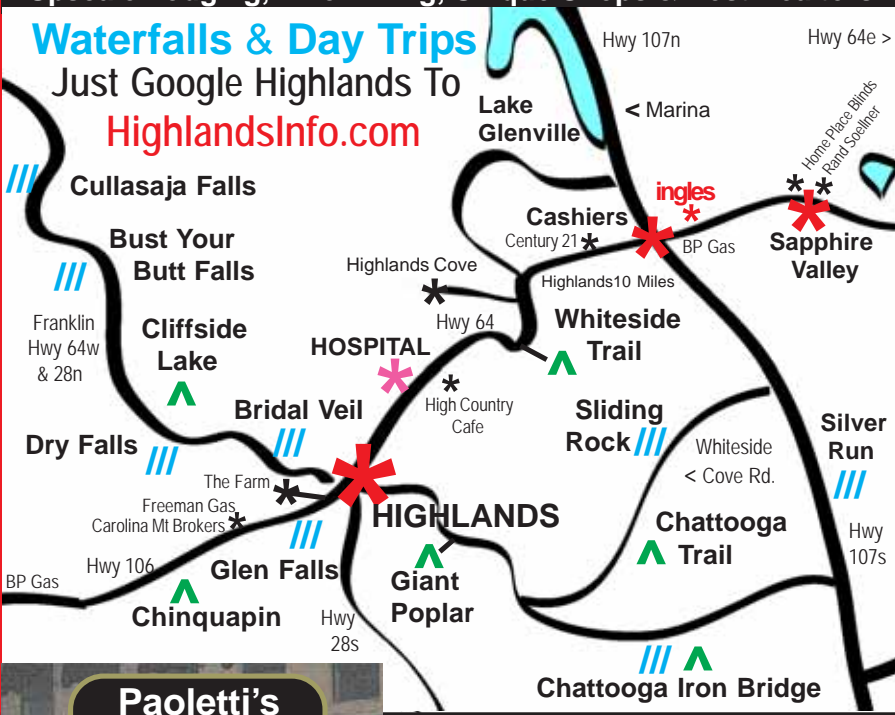
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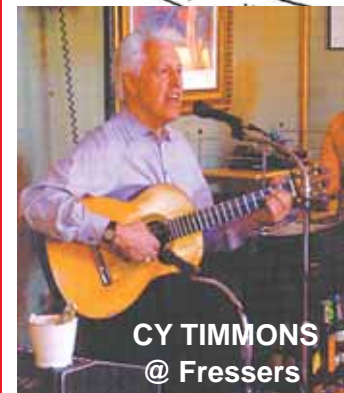
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Paoletti's
Wine Spectator



Wolfgang's
Wine Spectator



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Cyprus 1
Taylor Barns

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1 Mile Hwy. 106
Summer House & Tin Roof
2 Miles Hwy. 106

Manley's Auto Service
J&J Lawn & Landscaping
<<< 1 Mile Hwy. 28s

Bryson's Foods
Gourmet Wines
Cheeses Meats
Produce

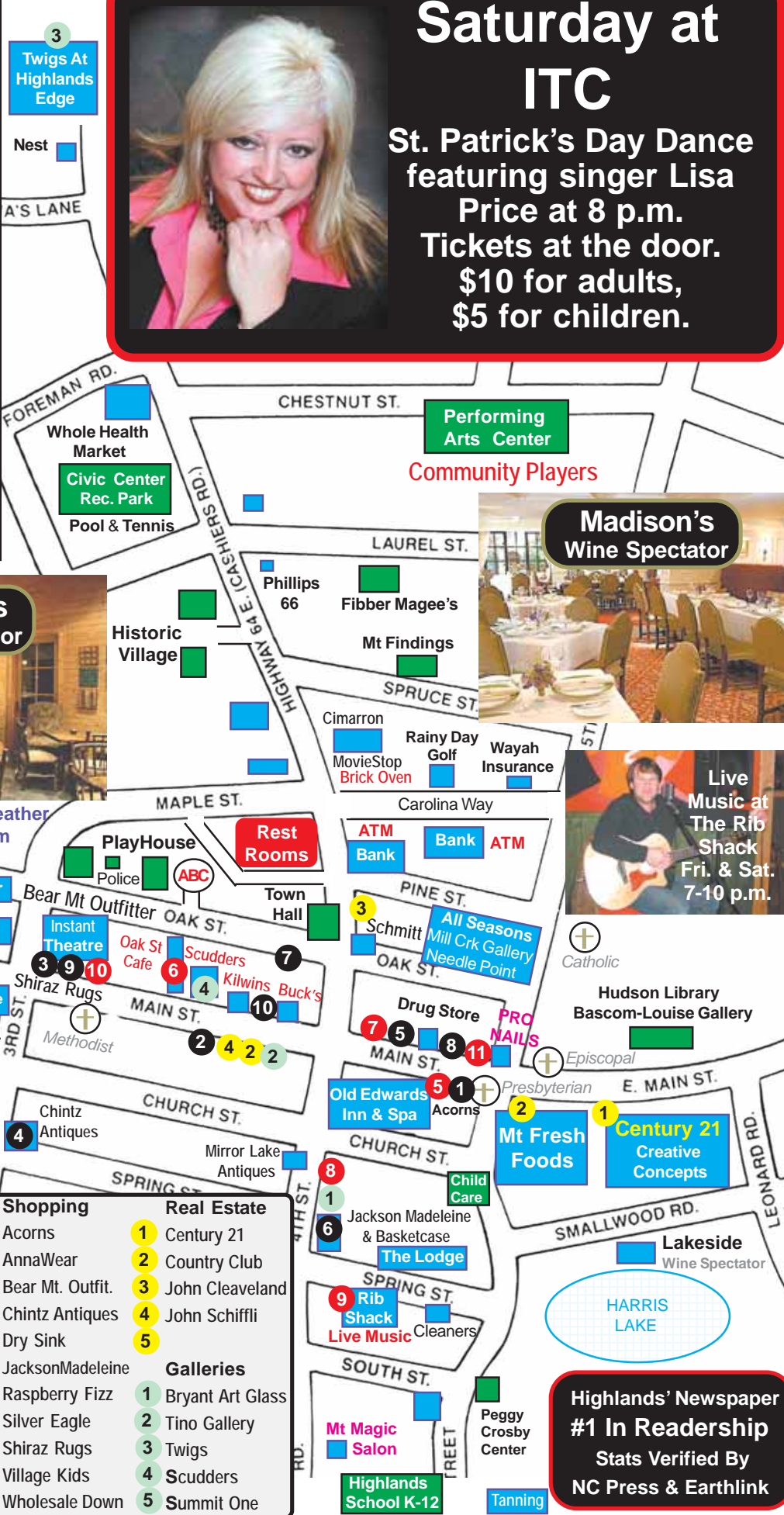
DINING	Shopping	Real Estate
1 Cyprus	1 Acorns	1 Century 21
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3 Golden China	3 Bear Mt. Outfit.	3 John Cleaveland
4 Log Cabin	4 Chintz Antiques	4 John Schiffli
5 Madison's	5 Dry Sink	5
6 Oak St Cafe	6 JacksonMadeleine	
7 Paoletti	7 Raspberry Fizz	
8 Pescado's	8 Silver Eagle	
9 Rib Shack	9 Shiraz Rugs	
10 Sports Page	10 Village Kids	
11 Wolfgang's	11 Wholesale Down	

2008 Highlands Map



Saturday at ITC

St. Patrick's Day Dance
featuring singer Lisa
Price at 8 p.m.
Tickets at the door.
\$10 for adults,
\$5 for children.



Madison's
Wine Spectator



Live
Music at
The Rib
Shack
Fri. & Sat.
7-10 p.m.

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Episcopal

Presbyterian

Acorns

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The Lodge

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Highlands School K-12

Peggy Crosby Center

Tanning

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